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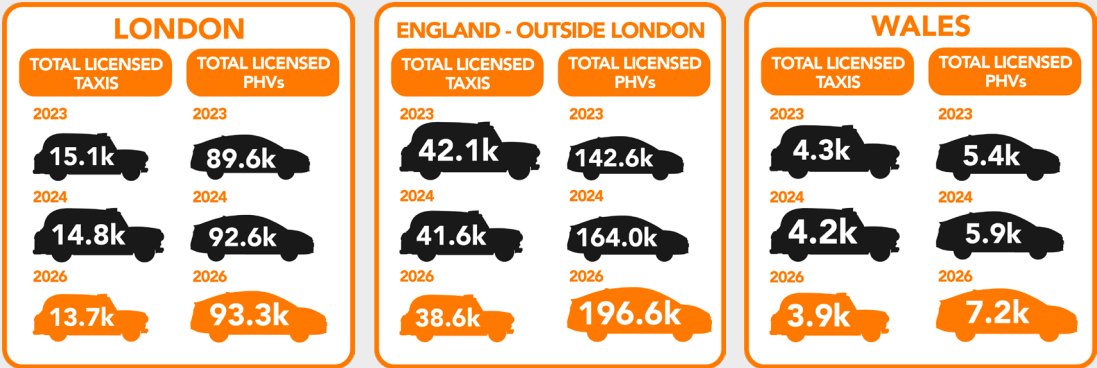
ALL OF ENGLAND & WALES

	TOTAL LICENSED VEHICLES	TOTAL DRIVER LICENCES	TOTAL OPERATOR LICENCES
1 APRIL 2023	299,146	357,092	15,775
1 APRIL 2024	323,097	392,341	17,099
1 APRIL 2026	353,347	429,458	19,895

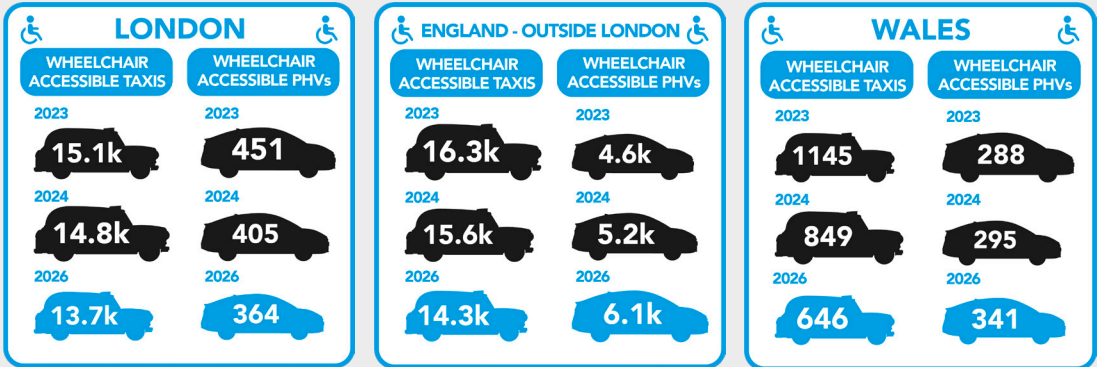
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Number of Taxi, Private Hire Vehicles & WAVs [CLICK HERE](#)
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INFOGRAPHICS BELOW COMPARING LATEST DfT STATISTICS FOR:
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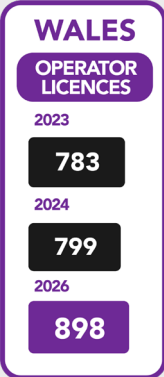
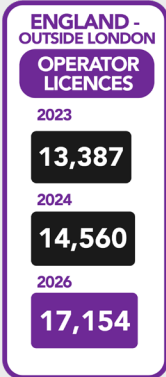
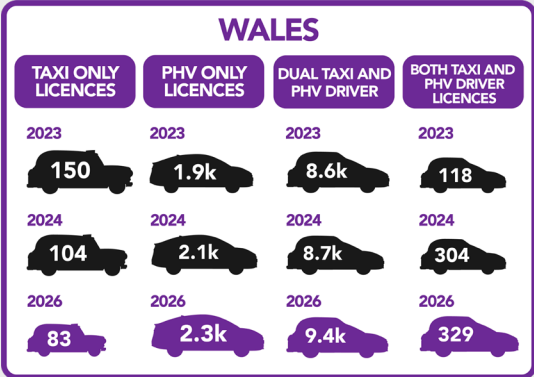
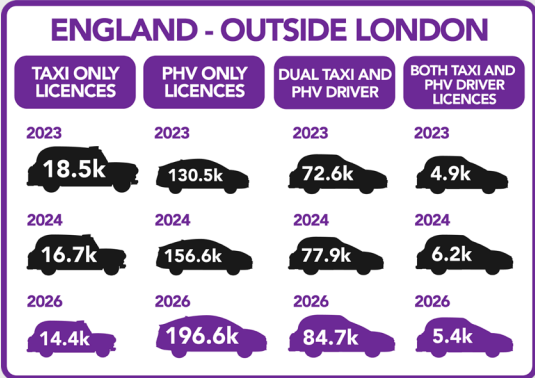
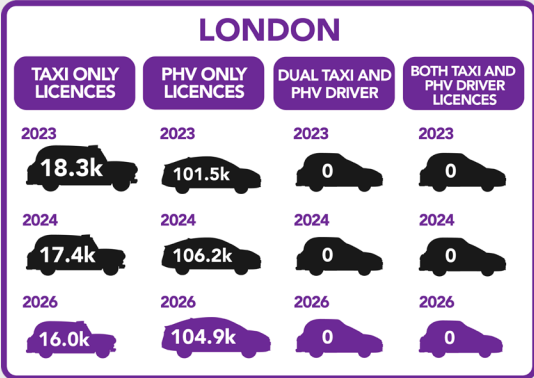


WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES

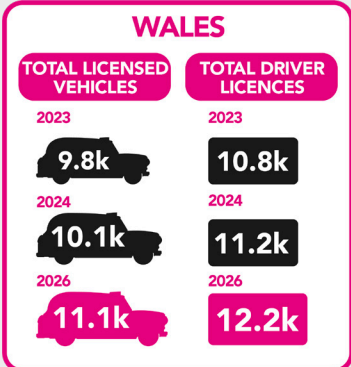
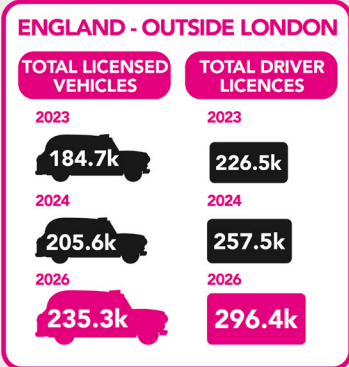
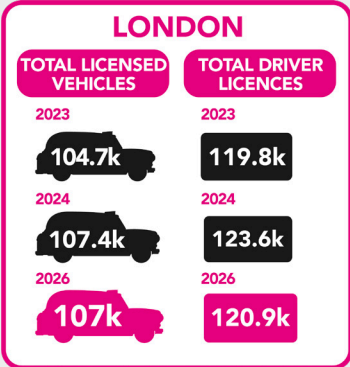


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DEVOLUTION AND NATIONAL STANDARDS – WHERE ARE WE NOW?

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



*So much has happened since the **PHTM EXPO**. David Lawrie looks at where the Government's proposed reforms currently stand, what has been discussed behind closed doors, and what they could mean for taxi and private hire licensing.*

It seems remarkable just how much has happened since the **PHTM EXPO**, where we discussed the Transport Select Committee investigation, out-of-area working, national standards and what was potentially on the horizon for our industry.

On the day of our seminars, the King's Speech also set out proposals affecting taxi and private hire licensing. Many of the issues raised reflected recommendations subsequently made by the Transport Select Committee - and, importantly, many were matters that we within the trade have been raising for a very long time.

Shortly afterwards, the Committee published its findings in: **Raising the standard: licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles**.

At the same time, the wider devolution and local government reorganisation programme is moving ahead, with new unitary structures bringing together responsibilities previously spread across smaller local authorities and wider highways and education authorities.

These new authorities will ultimately be responsible for the full range of council functions - planning, education, highways, street lighting, waste collection and, importantly for us, **taxi and private hire licensing**.

Within the enormous scale of local government reform, taxi and private hire may represent only a relatively small part; but don't mistake small for insignificant.

The work affecting our sector is already seriously under way.

There have been numerous workshops and stakeholder discussions involving the Department for Transport, licensing authorities, trade representatives, disability organisations, safeguarding bodies and others. And there is a huge amount to resolve.

National Standards – what will they actually mean?

We have made the same point throughout this process: if national standards simply standardise the requirements placed upon **drivers, vehicles and operators**, they will not solve some of the fundamental problems within the current licensing system.

- Licence shopping could still exist.
- Different turnaround times could still exist.
- Huge variations in licensing fees could still exist.

That is why national standards must also address the **licensing authorities themselves - the regulators and decision-makers responsible for administering the system**.

We were therefore extremely pleased to see clear recognition that reform must extend beyond those being licensed.

One of the first discussions took place with the then Transport Minister, Lilian Greenwood, where we went through a broad overview of the proposed changes.

One important question was: **What exactly does "national minimum standards" mean?**

If *minimum* means *minimal*, that would hardly represent progress.

The response was reassuring. The national minimum would effectively represent an **absolute floor** below which no licensing authority could go.

That does not necessarily mean every licensing policy across England would become identical.

For example, if a national standard established a maximum vehicle exit age of ten years, no authority could permit an older age.

NPHTA UPDATE...NPHTA UPDATE

However, where a council had clear evidence demonstrating deteriorating vehicle standards or repeated MOT/compliance failures, it could potentially impose a stricter local requirement.

In other words, national consistency at the base level, while allowing justified local variation where there is evidence to support it.

That principle is going to be extremely important.

The work has already started

The initial discussions have been followed by lengthy working sessions throughout June, July and August with the Department for Transport.

A wide range of stakeholders have been involved, including local authorities, trade representative bodies - including your very own **NPHTA** - disability organisations, national safeguarding organisations and many others.

The scale of the discussions should not be underestimated.

Take vehicle licensing alone. Among the issues requiring consideration are:

1. Vehicle entry and exit age limits.
2. Frequency of vehicle testing.
3. Whether licensing compliance tests should continue separately or whether an actual MOT certificate could finally be issued, potentially removing duplicated cost and inconvenience.
4. Tinted windows - and whether we could finally see an end to the confusing variations in permitted percentages.
5. First-aid kits and fire extinguishers - and whether these should continue to be mandatory in licensed vehicles nationally.

6. Seating configurations for larger vehicles.

And that is only one part of the discussion.

Wheelchair accessible vehicles – one size does not fit all

One area we *have* discussed in considerable detail is accessibility. A half-day session took place during August, with several potential options on the table.

One suggestion was whether private hire operators should be subject to a WAV quota - for example, requiring an operator with ten or more vehicles to provide one wheelchair accessible vehicle for every ten vehicles operated.

That suggestion met with strong opposition, both from **NPHTA** and from the local authorities present.

Another question was whether the hackney carriage sector should ultimately become **100% wheelchair accessible**. While there was some support for this approach, the majority were against it.

Why? Because policy cannot ignore practical consequences.

Forcing every taxi proprietor to purchase a wheelchair accessible vehicle could impose substantial additional costs upon a sector where, in many areas, demand simply does not justify a 100% WAV fleet.

The unintended consequence could be a significant reduction in hackney carriage numbers.

And if taxis disappear from the road because proprietors can no longer justify the cost of replacing them, accessibility has not improved. It has actually been reduced - not only for disabled passengers, but for the travelling public generally.

We also highlighted another problem: councils have duties surrounding lists of designated wheelchair accessible vehicles, but simply counting licensed WAVs does not necessarily tell you how many are genuinely available to the public.

Some may be specialist vehicles dedicated to Special Educational Needs (SEN) transport; others may be committed to contract work.

Some drivers may operate under restricted licences permitting only certain types of work, such as school transport or airport journeys.

Those vehicles may therefore never be available for immediate public hire or even ordinary pre-booked journeys.

A list of WAVs is not the same thing as a list of available WAVs.

That distinction matters when assessing whether an area genuinely has adequate accessible transport provision.

NPHTA UPDATE...NPHTA UPDATE

Localising licensing – and a very important change of language

This is perhaps one of the most significant areas of discussion.

I am personally delighted that we are increasingly moving away from the expression **“cross-border working”** and instead talking about:

Predominant out-of-area use

That terminology describes the problem far more accurately.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with a licensed private hire vehicle undertaking a legitimate pre-booked journey across local authority boundaries.

In fact a journey can cross one boundary or ten boundaries.

It can travel inbound or outbound.

That has always been part of private hire operation and must remain perfectly legal.

That is not the problem.

The mischief we are trying to address is the practice of obtaining a licence from one authority while working solely - or predominantly - in an entirely different licensing area.

Those are two completely different things, and it is vitally important that legislation recognises the distinction.

During discussions, we have also made clear that any new system must recognise legitimate specialist transport operations.

There may need to be carefully defined exemptions or provisions covering areas such as:

- NHS and patient transport contracts;
- school and SEN contracts;
- specialist airport operations; and
- chauffeur and executive transport.

But whatever mechanism is eventually adopted, something has to address predominant out-of-area use once and for all.

If standards are national, why does it matter where you are licensed?

This is an obvious question.

If national standards are introduced and every driver, vehicle and operator meets the same minimum requirements, why should it matter which council issues the licence?

There is some logic to that argument.

National enforcement powers would further strengthen consistency and remove some of the present enforcement difficulties between authorities.

But there is another fundamental principle at stake.

If you have no intention whatsoever of providing a service within the district that licenses you, then quite simply, you are licensed by the wrong authority.

The purpose of local licensing should surely include providing a service to the community whose authority issued that licence.

National standards should remove incentives to licence shop.

They should not remove the relationship between licensing and the community being served.

Intended use – why only taxis?

Intended-use policies were therefore discussed at length. They are sometimes misunderstood as mechanisms designed to prevent taxis travelling outside their licensed area.

They are not.

A properly constructed intended-use policy does not stop a hackney carriage undertaking legitimate journeys outside its district. What it addresses is the extent to which that vehicle is being used predominantly **for pre-booked work somewhere else.**

And that raises an obvious question:

If intended-use policies can legitimately address predominant out-of-area pre-booked work undertaken by hackney carriages, why should the same principle not apply to the sector specifically licensed to undertake pre-booked work - private hire?

NPHTA UPDATE...NPHTA UPDATE

Enforcement can only be evidence-based.

Where intended-use policies already operate effectively for taxis, there is experience to draw upon.

It can also provide evidence that supports other enforcement activity.

The principle really can be that straightforward.

Drivers and operators – perhaps the easier part

Standardising driver requirements should arguably be relatively straightforward because many common elements are already established.

These include areas such as Group 2 medical standards and enhanced DBS checks.

There remain details to resolve - including the curious concept of mid-term medical *“self-declarations”* - but compared with some of the structural reforms, driver standards should be achievable.

And yes, we are **still** pushing for improvements to the DBS Update Service payment system.

Requiring subscriptions to depend upon expiring or replaced payment cards creates completely avoidable failures.

Moving towards a more reliable recurring payment arrangement would remove a problem the trade has complained about for years.

Operator standards should also be comparatively straightforward, as many requirements are already similar across authorities.

Vehicles will undoubtedly take longer.

But even that may prove considerably easier than aligning the policies, procedures, fees, turnaround times and decision-making processes of the new and reorganised licensing authorities.

So - where are we now?

The encouraging answer is that this is no longer simply a debate about whether taxi and private hire licensing needs reform.

The detailed work has begun.

- The DfT is engaging with stakeholders.
- National standards are being discussed in detail.

- Accessibility is being examined.
- Predominant out-of-area use is firmly on the agenda.
- National enforcement is part of the conversation.

And crucially, there is recognition that reform cannot simply impose new national requirements upon drivers, operators and vehicle proprietors while allowing regulators themselves to continue operating under dramatically different systems.

There is still a very long way to go. Many of the most difficult questions have yet to be resolved, and we still have a great deal more to discuss.

The hope is that proposals will move towards public consultation before the end of the year, potentially allowing further announcements during 2027.

Nothing should therefore be regarded as a done deal.

But after years of talking about a fragmented licensing system, licence shopping, inconsistent standards, predominant out-of-area use and enforcement difficulties, there is now a genuine opportunity to reshape the system.

The important thing is that we get it right.

National standards must mean meaningful national standards.

Local flexibility must be evidence-based, not arbitrary.

Accessibility policy must improve actual provision rather than simply improve statistics.

And local licensing must once again have a meaningful connection with the communities that licences are intended to serve.

There is still plenty of work ahead.

But finally, the conversation has moved from **“does the system need fixing?”** to **“how are we going to fix it?”**

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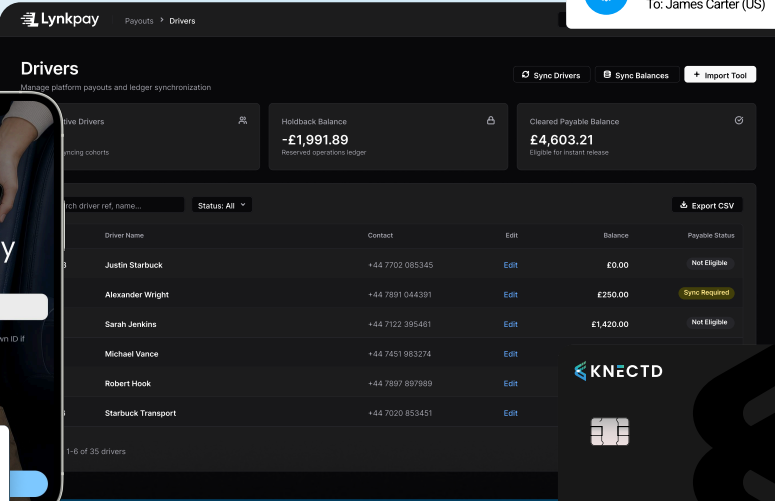
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Holdback Balance **-£1,991.89**
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Alexander Wright	+44 7891 044391	Edit	£250.00	Sync Required
Sarah Jenkins	+44 7122 395461	Edit	£1,420.00	Not Eligible
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THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME

A NEW TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE BILL

By Andrew Wescott
Corporate and Government
Affairs Director, Veezu
www.veezu.co.uk



The recent Lunar eclipse may have been a rare occurrence – having last taken place nearly 30 years ago – but rarer still is the opportunity facing the Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) and taxi sector over the next two years. After decades of false starts and unfulfilled promises, the sector has finally been gifted what it has been asking for – the chance to reframe and recast the legislative framework that determines how it is regulated.

Back in May, the King's Speech included a new draft **Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Bill**. It follows a year of scrutiny, first through the Casey Audit and then through the Transport Select Committee inquiry. Both inquiries shone a light on some of the challenges faced by the sector. They also revealed that addressing them may not be as simple as some may think. But then, getting things right rarely is.

The Transport Select Committee inquiry highlighted the complexity of the taxi and PHV sector. For decades successive layers of legislation have been added, like a multitude of ill-fitting blankets that never quite cover the bed and still leave you exposed to a cold draught. The changes brought in by these reforms solved one problem, but then created others, leaving one stakeholder group happy, while another felt let down.

The current patchwork of legislation has also struggled to keep pace with the technological changes that have taken place across the sector. Perhaps this is the first lesson to take into this new legislative process. We should create regulations that future proof the sector. This does not mean making them so rigid that they impede the adoption of new technology. It means creating a more flexible regulatory framework that embraces and encourages innovation.

The Department for Transport (DfT) has, so far, taken a refreshingly open approach to the pre-legislative scrutiny. They have homed in on the more contentious issues and brought a very wide range of stakeholders

together to debate and discuss these weighty topics. Based on experience of the workshops and roundtables people with quite different viewpoints have been able to disagree, agreeably. This is a promising sign.

Prioritising safety

Safety is core to the way the sector should be regulated. People trust licensed operators and driver-partners to transport them, their loved ones and their employees safely. There has been much debate around the need for national standards and whether local authorities should retain some discretion when it comes to standards. But if there is any room left for discretion when it comes to fundamental safety standards, then those national standards are not high enough.

Stronger safeguards, better information-sharing and joined-up enforcement are essential if national standards are to reflect how the sector operates today. That is why the draft Bill's proposal to mandate a national database of licensed drivers, vehicles and operators, alongside stronger enforcement powers, is so vital.

An important part of this debate has already been settled. Last year, the Supreme Court unanimously ruled in **D.E.L.T.A. Merseyside and Veezu v Uber** that the **Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976** does not require an operator to contract with a passenger as principal. It found that it was *"by no means clear"* that forcing every operator into that model would better serve passengers or wider public safety.

Put simply, a contract between an operator and passenger does not, on its own, make a journey safer. The principal-versus-agent debate should therefore not distract from the task ahead - ensuring operators and licensing authorities have the tools they need to keep passengers safe.

We can all agree that public safety must sit at the heart of reform. For women (a group that take around 25 per cent more PHV trips than men) travelling alone at night, shift workers, older passengers, disabled passengers and those returning home when other transport has stopped running, trust in the system is fundamental. But we cannot detach safety from supply. If reform makes it harder for responsible

THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME

A new Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Bill

veezu.'s view



operators and licensed driver-partners to provide services, it risks creating new safety gaps rather than closing existing ones. Safeguarding is not served by measures that reduce supply.

The risk is not a licensed driver taking a booking in a neighbouring area. It is a passenger with no ride home at midnight because the rules made it harder to provide one. Ideas for restricting journeys across borders include only allowing licensed driver-partners to pick up and/or drop off in the areas where they are licensed or implementing a monthly quota on the number of bookings a licensed driver-partner can complete in another area.

We should rightly discuss these ideas, but if the aim is to improve and simplify regulation, then these are not the answers. They will create unnecessary complexity within the sector and place an additional burden on licensing authorities.

National standards, consistently applied and properly enforced, will do more for safeguarding than blunt restrictions on where a licensed driver can undertake bookings. Such restrictions have the potential to leave passengers waiting longer, or with no service at all, at exactly the moments when reliable transport matters most.

Improving accessibility is a given

People do not plan their lives around council boundaries, and regulation should not pretend that they do. The framework must therefore be robust enough to strengthen safety, but practical enough to preserve the availability, flexibility and coverage

passengers rely on, particularly where alternatives are already limited. Nowhere is this lack of alternatives more keenly felt than in the availability of accessible vehicles.

Safe transport is only meaningful if people can access it, including older passengers, disabled passengers, wheelchair users, assistance dog users and those who rely on PHVs because other options do not meet their needs or are not available. The draft Bill's commitment to removing barriers for disabled passengers and introducing a unified national framework is a direct response to what operators and passengers have been raising for years.

People with mobility difficulties already make almost 70 per cent more PHV trips than people without mobility difficulties, so this is an area where the Bill can make a real difference. Disability awareness training should be mandated and standardised, accessible provision should be expanded, and the sector should be supported to meet passenger needs.

Wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) are more expensive, there are fewer suitable models available and not every vehicle can meet every passenger's needs. The approach should therefore include appropriate incentives to increase the availability and reliability of accessible services.

Stronger incentives for drivers to accept WAV bookings are paramount. The Government should explore reductions in licensing fees for WAVs, based on the number of WAV bookings a driver completes each month. The direction of travel in the Bill is right. The proof will lie in its implementation.

Conclusion

For too long, grey areas, delayed responses and gaps in information-sharing have left passengers, driver-partners and operators navigating a system that is more complex than it needs to be. This is the Government's opportunity to do more than modernise taxi and PHV regulation. It can create a framework that is safer, fairer, future ready and more workable for every community, from rural villages and regional towns to major cities.

The sector has been calling for change for years, and now is the time to turn patchwork rules into practical reform.

UNSUNG HEROES

VIGILANT UBER DRIVER PRAISED BY LEICESTERSHIRE POLICE AFTER STOPPING £3,000 COURIER FRAUD

An alert Uber driver has been commended by police fraud officers after stepping in to protect an elderly woman in Earl Shilton who was tricked into handing over her bank card.

The victim, a woman in her 80s, had already lost over £3,000 to a scammer impersonating her bank who later booked a cab to collect her card under the guise of destroying it.

The driver became suspicious after picking up the envelope destined

for a London address and immediately alerted the police.

Detective Constable Dan Thorpe from the Leicestershire Police Economic Crime Unit praised the driver's "vigilance and quick thinking," noting that while the victim had suffered an initial loss, "the driver's intervention allowed us to attend, safeguard a vulnerable victim and prevent what could have been significantly greater financial losses."

Police explained that the scam is a

classic example of courier fraud, where criminals manipulate both the victim and legitimate cab drivers who are unwittingly used to transport stolen valuables.

As part of Operation Blue Mountain, officers are working closely with taxi and private hire companies to spot these warning signs, urging drivers and the public to stay alert, ask questions about unusual collections, and immediately report any suspicious packages to the police.

WEYMOUTH CABBIE HAILED FOR RESCUING DISABLED WOMAN FROM BLAZING CAR ON DORSET ROAD

A Weymouth cabbie has been widely praised for his quick actions after pulling a disabled woman from a burning vehicle moments before it was entirely destroyed.

Paul Best, a 62-year-old chauffeur who runs Best Exec cars and works as a mayor's chauffeur, was driving for Fleetline in his taxi on Thursday morning, 20 August.

He was returning from a drop-off at Dorset County Hospital in Dorchester when he noticed flames erupting from a white Peugeot on the A354 between Weymouth and Dorchester, noting that other motorists had simply driven past without stopping.

Mr Best pulled his taxi over near a farm entrance off the Ridgeway and rushed to help, recalling: "I saw flames coming out of the car. I pulled my taxi in, looked across at the car and could see that I needed to get the woman away



from there."

Finding the disabled woman on the ground by the passenger side, he immediately switched to emergency mode. While two other occupants panicked and tried to grab their personal belongings, Mr Best intervened forcefully, stating: "I grabbed hold of the woman and dragged her away from the car. I told the people with her to get away from the car."

Alongside rescuing the woman, he used his taxi to help block traffic and successfully flagged down an ambulance that was returning to its Weymouth depot, allowing

paramedics to use a body board to transport the patient safely.

The car was completely reduced to ashes within 10 to 15 minutes. Mr Best admitted he feared the flames would leap to the dangerously dry roadside grass, bringing back memories of a severe A31 wildfire.

Although he suffered a few scrapes and singed arm hairs, Mr Best firmly brushed off any label of bravery. "I was just doing what I do," he said. "I'm not a hero, I'm just a normal person." He added that he hopes to be reunited with the family one day just to hear they are recovering well, noting they were extremely grateful.

Mr Best is now using the terrifying episode to urge the public never to turn back toward a burning vehicle for material items, warning, "Stuff is stuff... It can be replaced. The whole thing could have been a lot worse if I hadn't got her away."



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SWALE COUNCIL ORDERS iCARS TO REMOVE POPPIES AND STICKERS FROM VEHICLES

A local taxi boss has spoken of his disbelief after Swale Council ordered his company to remove Remembrance poppies and Royal British Legion stickers from his fleet following a single complaint. Neil McLennan, owner of iCars, was told by a licensing officer that the displays violated council advertising policies.

The magnetic stickers, featuring military vehicles, a Union Flag and the phrase: "Lest We Forget", and poppies had been proudly displayed on the taxis for several years to support veterans and raise awareness for the charity.

Along with the poppies and RBL stickers, Neil was also told to peel off names from his cabs. These are used to make it easier for people with dementia, learning difficulties or disabilities to know what car is picking them up.

Speaking about the incident, Mr McLennan said: "I was in disbelief



when I received the phone call. I just thought it was ridiculous and I was disgusted. I'm not a veteran but feel strongly about supporting those who fought to protect us."

The ruling sparked widespread anger from local leaders and politicians. Cllr Richard Palmer, a former soldier, demanded an immediate apology, stating: "It is absolutely disgraceful that a council would order people to remove such things which honour those who served. The council should apologise."

Local MP, Kevin McKenna, also intervened, writing to the council to urge a reversal and noting that the taxi firm provides an invaluable service to the community.

Following public backlash, the local authority has withdrawn its demand regarding additional name labels used to help disabled passengers.

A sub-committee meeting is now scheduled to discuss a potential policy exemption for the charity displays.

A council spokesperson maintained that the action was taken solely due to a formal complaint regarding vehicle policy compliance rather than the cause itself, adding that the policy will be reviewed to ensure future clarity.

iCars has now set up a petition to allow taxis and PHVs to display Remembrance poppies.

You can sign the petition here:

<https://shorturl.at/le4Xx>

LONDON CABBIE FINED £60 FOR DROPPING OFF DISABLED PASSENGER IN LONDON

A veteran London black cab driver has been hit with a £60 parking fine after stopping briefly to help an elderly woman with a cane to her door. Gary Taylor received the penalty after dropping off the passenger at 10.30pm in the Brentford Lock area.

Despite explaining to Parking Collection Services (PCS) that he was a professional licensed driver assisting a vulnerable customer, his appeal was rejected. The company stated that conditions of

parking apply to all motorists and that "being a taxi driver does not provide an exemption". Mr Taylor, 58, was warned the charge would rise to £100 if unpaid.

"I'm normally very careful as it is so easy to get a ticket in London. I had no idea it was private land and did not see the signs as it was dark. I was on double yellows, but cabbies have an exemption to let customers out. We are normally permitted to stop and allow customers in and out of the cab safely."

Local MP Ruth Cadbury expressed deep concern over the incident, calling it another example of a private parking firm acting unfairly against a driver who was simply helping someone home.

Steve McNamara, LTDA general secretary, slammed parking firms for operating like the "Wild West" with a "licence to print money", warning that CCTV and ANPR cameras trap law-abiding road users while criminals who doctor number plates evade detection.



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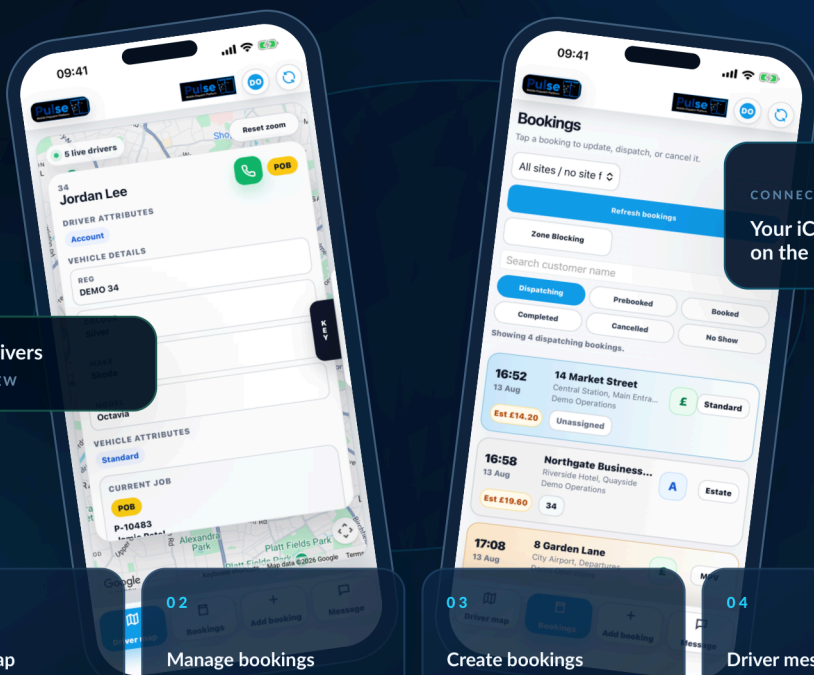


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OPERATORS BE WARNED

IS A FIXED CIRCUIT FEE A THING OF THE PAST?

Article by Conor Nolan
Boira Consulting
<https://boira-consulting.co.uk>



A landmark Supreme Court ruling in *Augustine v Data Cars Limited* [2026] UKSC 30 may have just upended the private hire industry once again (*Uber BV and Ors v Aslam and Ors* UKSC/2019/0029 also springs to mind).

In a unanimous decision, the Supreme Court permitted Mr Augustine's appeal to pursue detriment he alleges to have suffered as a part-time worker whereby he had to pay a fixed fee for £148 per week to access Data Car's dispatch system.

Facts you need to know

Prior to the Supreme Court's judgment, Mr Augustine was found to be a worker and an employee of Data Cars by the Employment Tribunal.

During the relevant period, Data Cars charged a "circuit fee" of £148 per week to drivers to access its dispatch system regardless of whether a driver worked full- or part-time.

During his engagement with Data Cars, Mr Augustine worked on average 43 hours per week.

The average driver worked 60 hours per week for Data Cars during the relevant period.

Mr Augustine argued that the "circuit fee" contravened Regulation 5 of the Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000.

Mr Augustine's chosen comparator (used by the tribunal to assess whether there was a difference in treatment) worked over 90 hours per week for the purposes of assessing detriment under the Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000.

The Court (and indeed the initial employment tribunal) was satisfied that Mr Augustine was a "part-time worker".

What the Supreme Court found

The Supreme Court found by having to pay £148 per week to access Data Car's dispatch system, Mr Augustine was, paying more per hour he worked to access the dispatch system than a full-time driver would. The Supreme Court stated that Mr Augustine took home a lower proportion of his earnings compared to a full-time worker due to the fixed fee.

Paragraph 1 of the judgment highlights the crux of the matter:

"The question raised by the appeal is whether the right only applies where the part-time worker establishes that part-time status was the sole ground or reason for the less favourable treatment in question, rather than simply an effective cause of it"

The importance of this question could not be overstated as the Supreme Court's judgment could open the floodgates for protection from detriment of part-time workers around the country (and not just in the private hire sector).

The Supreme Court established that the test for assessing whether a part-time worker has suffered detriment under the Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000 now boils down to whether part-time status is the effective and predominant cause of the less favourable or adverse treatment, not the sole cause.

This bar is much lower than it being the "sole cause" for the detrimental treatment.

What does this mean for operators?

This judgment highlights yet another risk private hire operators face in 2026. Should an operator be

OPERATORS BE WARNED

found to be engaging “workers” (a lower burden to establish than full “employment status”), they could now face the additional threat of their “radio rent”, “circuit fee” or “settle”, adversely affecting part-time drivers as happened with Mr Augustine. This means that operators could face a new battleground in employment litigation.

This scenario invites the question: are fixed fees a thing of the past? In our opinion they very well could be.

The Supreme Court's reasoning was clear, the fixed “circuit fee” Data Cars charged adversely impacted Mr Augustine as a part-time worker.

The question of “worker” status is as prevalent as it has ever been in the private hire industry, with this judgment providing prospective claimants another arrow to their quiver.

Now would be a good time for operators to assess their charging structures and driver engagements to mitigate future exposure to employment claims.

We are here to help

Employment law is often obscure, ever fluctuating and perilous. “Where to start in assessing your driver engagement model?”, “What is a worker?”, “Who decides who is a worker?” “What criteria makes a driver a worker?”, to name but a few considerations.

Boira Consultants specialises in employment law matters for both the private hire and the gig economy.

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UBER UPDATE

UBER FACES MASSIVE €825 MILLION FINE FOR AUTOMATED DRIVER BANS

Ride-hailing giant Uber has been hit with a €825 million penalty by the Dutch Data Protection Authority after automated computer systems were used to deactivate driver accounts without proper warning, transparent information, or adequate human oversight.

This enforcement action marks the second-largest fine ever issued under strict European data protection rules, trailing only a €1.2 billion penalty previously handed down to Meta. The sprawling investigation was originally triggered by formal complaints from French drivers regarding troubling incidents occurring between 2018 and 2022. Because Uber maintains its official European HQ in the Netherlands, Dutch regulators took charge of the case, stepping in to examine how algorithmic management impacts the everyday lives of gig economy workers.

Officials highlighted the severe human and financial cost of these automated decisions, noting that affected taxi and ride-hailing workers suddenly found themselves stripped of their livelihoods overnight without any meaningful recourse. Expressing deep concern over the unchecked power of software, Monique Verdier, deputy chair of the Dutch agency, stated: "A computer should not make decisions on its own that have such major consequences." Emphasising the sudden devastation faced by drivers who relied on the platform to support their families, Verdier added: "From one moment to the next they no longer had any income."



The core dispute centres on how Uber managed driver suspensions and account closures. The company utilised automated systems to temporarily suspend drivers suspected of fraud, such as taking unnecessary detours to inflate fares, accepting trips without finishing them, or maintaining low customer ratings. While Uber maintained that these suspensions were usually brief and insisted that permanent deactivations never happened without human review, the regulator claimed that some drivers were permanently banned purely by computer algorithms.

The investigation gained significant momentum thanks to former Uber driver Brahim Ben Ali. After his own account was abruptly deactivated in 2019, Ben Ali collected testimonies from 170 other disgruntled drivers and eventually brought the complaint to the Netherlands. He was heavily assisted by PersonalData.io, a Swiss digital-rights nonprofit.

Paul-Olivier Dehaye, founder of the nonprofit, pointed out the precarious nature of algorithmic ratings, explaining that a driver "can complete a thousand journeys with satisfied passengers, but if just one person reports a very serious problem, the consequences can be enormous."

Dehaye also revealed plans to launch a comprehensive class-action lawsuit to secure financial compensation for the affected workers through a new entity called StartClaims.

Uber strongly disputed the decision and confirmed it will appeal the ruling, calling the massive penalty entirely disproportionate. The company argued that it never automates permanent deactivations and pointed out that only a small number of workers were impacted, with just 126 drivers deactivated across the whole of Europe for low ratings in 2021.

Furthermore, tech commentators and company representatives have argued that automated monitoring is necessary to protect riders from scams and fraudulent behaviour, comparing account suspensions to standard workplace disciplinary procedures. However, regulators and digital rights advocates counter that when a tech platform acts as a global transport provider, it must take full responsibility for its governance rather than hiding behind automated software.

European data protection laws strictly forbid decisions made entirely by algorithms when they significantly affect people's lives, demanding meaningful human oversight, transparency, and a clear appeals process.

As this legal battle unfolds, it highlights the growing tension between major American technology corporations and European regulatory bodies regarding accountability in the modern gig economy.

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THE PARTS ARE ON BACK ORDER!

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



Ask any operator what keeps them awake at night and you'll hear tales of woe around driver shortages, rideshare, rising costs etc. etc. Now go ask the fleet or workshop manager for that same operator and you'll get a much simpler answer.

The parts are on back order!

Whilst I don't want to focus on any particular model or manufacturer (my local taxi dealer is still talking to me - just), we've never really managed to get away from the supply issues that ravaged every industry since Covid.

Speak to any fleet operator and they'll be able to wax lyrical about that one car that's been parked up for six weeks awaiting parts, and I'm not talking niche models, having personally experienced issues with various odds and sods not being available for Toyota Corollas, Skoda Octavias and Superbs and other genuine bread and butter fleet vehicles. And if you think the mainstream stuff is bad, try getting into purpose-built vehicles, it's a whole other world of pain.

Twenty years ago a taxi (or private hire vehicle, dependent on your persuasion) was fundamentally a straightforward mechanical and slightly complex machine. If an alternator or starter failed, you would pop it off and recon it - no coding required, a couple of bolts, a few connectors and you were back on the road. Today's vehicles are a very different proposition.

Modern cars are rolling computers. They're packed full of sensors, coded modules, cameras and control units all needing dealer-level software to update, change or even interrogate. A warning light that was a quick fix and a set of oily hands on a Saturday morning on the driveway is now a two-week wait to get into the dealer and a "diagnostic fee", only to be hit with: *"I'm afraid that's on back order..."*

One phrase guaranteed to strike fear into the heart of any fleet manager or operator. Whilst mainstream manufacturers will usually come good... eventually, operators running purpose-built hackneys are playing an entirely different game, with wait times measured in quarters rather than weeks for certain parts.



But even run-of-the-mill fleet favourites have their issues. Need a set of clocks for a Corolla? Two months. Need a side panel for a Transit? Six months. The list goes on and on. Not exactly ideal if your car is now VOR and you're not earning.

It's just as bad for fleet operators. There's nothing worse than when you get the question: *"Is that one back on the road yet?"*

Usually followed by a sharp intake of breath and a response that I can't put on paper.

What makes this particularly frustrating is that a car in our industry earns precisely nothing whilst it's off the road waiting for parts, and it doesn't matter if it's a £14 sensor or a £1,400 module, the outcome is exactly the same. The meter's not on and turning, the bookings aren't being covered, a radio is not being collected by the office and the direct debits for insurance and finance are still sitting waiting to be collected.

There's a new elephant in the room though which no one's really talking about enough. The new wave of manufacturers from China.

Now before I start getting dog's abuse, this isn't an attack on Chinese manufacturers. Competition is healthy and, if I'm honest, the new wave of cars arriving on our shores are, in my opinion at least, pretty darn good. Option lists that are basically *"select a paint colour"* as everything you could possibly want is fitted as standard. (No more subscriptions for heated seats - looking at you BMW.)

But they do raise a question that should concern every operator eyeing up the latest gadget-filled bargain off the ferry.

THE PARTS ARE ON BACK ORDER!

Historically the taxi industry expects to buy a new asset and be able to utilise that for five or six years at a minimum. Many of us wouldn't even consider a vehicle as being run in until it has six figures on the odometer. Longevity isn't a nice-to-have in our industry, it's an expectation.

This philosophy doesn't translate all too well to parts of the world where vehicles are treated as disposable white goods. Reports suggest that the average EV ownership period in China is around 1.8 years and that vehicles are facelifted and superseded at a pace that would make mobile phone manufacturers blush.

And that's the rub.

What does the parts supply chain look like for a five-year-old Chinese EV that is now two facelifts, four software revisions and an entirely new architecture from the new model that's launched this week?

Will the parts still exist?

Will the software still be supported?

Will the brand even have a UK dealer network in five years' time?

More importantly, will the manufacturer care enough to consider the vehicle commercially relevant?



It sounds like an outlandish concern until you remember we're already struggling with mainstream European manufacturers, as previously mentioned. We run our vehicles harder, longer and further than almost anyone else and that makes our industry uniquely exposed to one simple question:

Can you still get parts once the manufacturer has moved on?

A taxi isn't a mobile phone or a washing machine. You can't simply throw it away every two years and get the latest shiny model. And if the future of fleet vehicles for our trade really is disposable motoring, perhaps the biggest threat to the trade isn't Uber or AVs, it's finding out your five-year business plan only comes with twenty-four months of manufacturer support.

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ROUND THE COUNCILS

MID SUSSEX:

EV AGE LIMIT EXTENDED TO 15 YEARS

Plans to relax age restrictions on electric taxis in Mid Sussex have received backing from the district council's licensing committee following an eight-week public consultation. The vehicle age limit has been in place for eight years, reviewed and consulted on three times, with no amendments being made.

Under the proposal, which will now go to full council for final approval, the current ten-year age limit on licensed vehicles will be increased to 15 years exclusively for electric models.

The policy shift was sparked by taxi driver Baiju Cherukattu Paily, who urged the council to reconsider the rules after investing in an electric car. Mr Paily explained that buying electric was "a significant decision" financially and environmentally, warning that the ten-year cap placed "considerable pressure" on cabbies due to higher vehicle costs taking longer to recoup.

He argued that "allowing a limited extension for well-maintained EVs that continue to pass all safety inspections could support both environmental objectives and the sustainability of drivers."

Councillors warmly supported the adjustment, bringing Mid Sussex into line with neighbouring authorities such as Brighton & Hove, Adur, and Wealden, which already allow 15-year limits.

Supporting the recommendation, Cllr Simon Hicks noted that the change was fairer to drivers, adding that "electric vehicles have fewer mechanical wear points, are cheaper to run and deliver environmental benefits in line with our net zero aspirations."

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE:

JUDICIAL REVIEW OVER NEW TAXI POLICY

A revised taxi licensing policy scheduled to take effect across Buckinghamshire this autumn is facing a formal legal challenge. Buckinghamshire Council has confirmed it has received a claim for a judicial review regarding "certain aspects" of its updated Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, which was originally approved on 19 March.

The council is defending the claim, though official reports have not named the claimant or detailed the exact areas of the policy under dispute.

A report presented to the authority's Licensing

Committee noted: "As the matter is subject to ongoing legal proceedings, it is not appropriate to comment further at this stage."

Despite the legal action, officials confirmed that "no determination has been made by the Court as at the date of this report and the Policy remains scheduled for implementation on September 1, 2026, unless directed otherwise by the Court."

The authority declined to provide further details, stating it would be inappropriate to comment beyond the published report.

Council officers are continuing preparations for the September rollout while proceedings remain unresolved. Work underway includes updating administrative systems, briefing staff, advising the local trade, and revising guidance materials to ensure the rules are applied fairly. Future reports will monitor how the changes affect local service delivery and compliance once introduced.

EAST SUFFOLK:

VEHICLE SPECIFICATION CONSULTATION

East Suffolk Council (ESC) is inviting views on minor proposed changes to the Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Specification, which helps ensure licensed vehicles are safe, suitable and meet the standards expected by passengers. The proposed changes have been developed in consultation with the council's appointed testing garages. They include updates to clarify existing requirements, align the specification with current legislation, provide greater flexibility in vehicle seating layouts, and introduce requirements relating to vehicle safety recalls.

Whether you are a licence holder, regular taxi/PH user, or simply have an interest in local licensing standards, ESC would welcome your feedback.

Your comments will help ESC understand the level of support for the proposals, identify any potential impacts, and consider whether any amendments are needed before the changes are considered by the Licensing Committee.

All comments received will be included in a report to the Licensing Committee in October 2026 and will form part of a public document.

The consultation, which can be found on: <https://shorturl.at/LF8ke>, is open for six weeks and closes on 21 September 2026.

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ROUND THE COUNCILS

FOREST OF DEAN:

TAXI CRISIS OVER FALLING NUMBERS

Rural communities in the Forest of Dean are facing a severe transport shortage after new figures revealed there are just 58 licensed taxis and PHVs serving a local population of nearly 90,000 people.

According to DfT statistics from April 2026, this equates to a mere 0.6 vehicles for every 1,000 residents, placing the district among the areas most vulnerable to becoming a rural taxi desert.

The local fleet consists of just six licensed HCs and 52 PHVs, leaving residents with very few options as local bus routes and public services are scaled back.

The stark local figures reflect a wider national divide between urban and rural transport availability. While major towns and cities boast an average of 7.6 licensed vehicles per 1,000 residents, intermediate rural areas manage only 1.9.

Across England as a whole, total licensed vehicles rose by 9% to 342,300 since 2024, though this growth was driven entirely by a 13% in PHVs, while traditional HC numbers fell by 7%.

The true availability of local cabs in the Forest of Dean may be even lower than the figures suggest. Licensing records do not account for whether vehicles are actually on the road at specific times, and many registered cars are tied up with school contracts or operate outside the district entirely, leaving rural passengers struggling to secure rides.

CALDERDALE:

SAFETY FEARS SPARK MOT DEBATE

Taxi drivers in Calderdale are facing a clash over vehicle safety checks after a council meeting heard that a cab's handbrake completely failed just weeks after passing an MOT at a private garage.

The alarming incident was highlighted by senior councillors as the local authority rejected calls to allow private garages to carry out mandatory taxi tests.

The debate began when Councillor Mohammed Shazad Fazal asked the cabinet to introduce approved private garages, cut licensing delays and improve access to the council's Battinson Road transport centre in Halifax to better support local drivers.

Cllr Fazal said his ward is one of the area's most deprived and that constituents rely heavily on the taxi trade. He argued that changes would reduce delays,

support drivers' incomes and strengthen a vital local service. However, Cllr Peter Hunt, Cabinet member for Public Services, firmly rejected the idea of using private garages, insisting that public safety must come first. He explained that the council would still hold ultimate legal liability for vehicle standards even if testing was outsourced.

Cllr Hunt said: "Through our transport team we have also reported several local MOT certified garages to VOSA where taxis and PHVs have passed a recent MOT test that subsequently failed the council's compliance tests on the same inspection points."

He added: "On one occasion this resulted in a dangerous fail where the vehicle's handbrake was found not to be functioning only a couple of weeks after passing a MOT at a private garage."

Defending the council's current system, Cllr Hunt stated that keeping compliance testing in-house ensures vehicles are genuinely fit to transport customers. He also noted that testing appointments are typically available within a week, and licences are issued the next day once legal checks are complete.

GLASGOW:

VITAL RANK SAVED AFTER BACKLASH

A prominent 24-hour taxi rank in Glasgow's west end will remain open after a proposal to scrap it faced a massive backlash from drivers. Glasgow City Council's licensing committee unanimously rejected a request to revoke the historic rank on Queen Margaret Drive, which has served the area for over 70 years.

The resident had petitioned to remove the rank, claiming it was "overcrowded and not fit for purpose" warning that "it's only a matter of time before a serious accident happens due to the position of the rank."

A representative for the applicant argued that modern taxis are too long to fit four vehicles in the space, leading to illegal double parking, hazardous U-turns across four lanes of traffic, and early-morning anti-social behaviour in the residential street.

However, there were more than 30 objections from the trade. Dougie McPherson of Glasgow Taxis stressed the importance of the site at a major intersection near popular venues. Robert Finlayson noted that the taxis serve the local nightlife and argued: "Whilst there may be objections to drivers committing traffic offences, I don't believe that's an issue that should be up to the licensing committee. That's something that should be taken to Police Scotland."

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A TAXI/PRIVATE HIRE OPERATOR'S VIEW

Article by Rev'd Paul Newbery
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If you run a taxi or private hire company at the moment, you could be forgiven for feeling as though someone has changed the road signs overnight, moved the one-way system, and then asked you why you are not already at the destination.

The industry has always had its challenges. Fuel prices go up, insurance renewals arrive with all the charm of a parking ticket, drivers come and go, customers expect instant service, and the phone always rings just as you finally sit down with a cup of tea. But now there is a new collection of questions on the dashboard: new legislation, autonomous vehicles, electric fleets, charging infrastructure, specialist contracts, accessibility requirements, and the small matter of working out what any of it actually means for your business.

New rules, old worries

Legislation is changing, and like many things written in official language, it can sometimes feel as though it has been designed to test your eyesight, patience, and will to live. Taxi and private hire operators are trying to understand how proposed licensing changes, national standards, cross-border working, accessibility expectations and automated passenger service rules may affect day-to-day operations.

For operators, the key question is not simply: *"what does the law say?"* but: *"what does this mean on a wet Tuesday night when three flights land late, two drivers call in sick, and Mrs Jones needs her regular hospital run?"* Regulation has to work in the real world, not just on a consultation document.

And of course, every new rule tends to arrive with a familiar parade of questions. Will it affect existing licences? Will standards become more consistent from one area to another? Will operators need new systems, new reporting processes, new training records or new evidence that everything is being done properly? Will there be transitional arrangements, or

will everyone be expected to leap into compliance like a startled cat?

For many companies, especially small and medium-sized operators, the worry is not opposition to higher standards. Most good operators welcome anything that improves safety, professionalism and public confidence. The concern is whether changes will be clear, practical and affordable. A large national platform may have a compliance team, a legal department and a spreadsheet for every occasion. A local operator may have Dave in the office, three ringing phones and a printer that only works if spoken to nicely.

That is why operators need to keep close to consultation outcomes, local licensing updates and trade body guidance. Waiting until a rule lands on the doormat is rarely the best strategy. By then, the doormat may already be on fire.

Are autonomous vehicles a threat?

Autonomous vehicles are no longer science fiction. The UK is moving towards pilot schemes for taxi, bus and private hire-style self-driving services, with strict safety checks and local authority consent expected to play a central role. That naturally makes operators wonder whether the future is full of driverless cars gliding silently around town while the rest of us stand at the depot wondering who has taken the biscuit tin.

But threat is not the only way to look at it. Autonomous vehicles may suit some predictable routes and controlled environments, but taxi work is often gloriously unpredictable. Passengers have luggage, mobility needs, pets, prams, shopping, vague directions, unusual pick-up points and, occasionally, the firm belief that "just round the corner" is a precise navigational instruction.

The legal direction is worth watching carefully. Automated passenger services are being given a route into the market through permits, and where a service resembles a taxi or private hire service, local consent is expected to matter. In other words, driverless services are not simply going to appear everywhere overnight like mushrooms after rain, though that will not stop some headlines from making it sound as if your next airport transfer will be driven by a toaster with ambition.

COPING WITH THE ROAD AHEAD

Even if autonomous vehicles become more common, they are likely to arrive first in carefully defined settings: mapped routes, controlled areas, specific operating conditions and tightly monitored pilot schemes. That may eventually affect parts of the market, especially routine short trips or shuttle-style work. But the everyday reality of taxi and private hire work is messier than the technology demonstrations. Roads close. Passengers change their destination. Someone has forgotten their bag. Someone else insists the sat nav is wrong because *"it always takes you the long way"*. Sometimes the sat nav is wrong. Sometimes the passenger is. Sometimes everyone is wrong and there is a diversion.

Operators should therefore treat autonomy as a serious strategic issue, but not as a reason to panic-sell the fleet and retrain as alpaca farmers. The sensible approach is to monitor where pilot schemes are developing, understand which types of journey might be most exposed, and identify where the business provides value beyond simply moving a vehicle from A to B.

Specialist work still needs specialist people

Many operators already provide services that are not easily replaced by automation: wheelchair-accessible vehicles, school transport, patient transfer, executive travel, community contracts, rural routes, airport meet-and-greet, event transport, and journeys where reassurance matters as much as the ride itself.

In those areas, the vehicle is only part of the service. The real value is in reliability, judgement, local knowledge, safeguarding, communication and care. A driver who knows that a passenger needs a little extra time, that a road floods after heavy rain, or that a regular customer prefers the side entrance is offering something no software update can fully replicate.

This is where many traditional operators may have an advantage if they recognise it in time. Specialist transport is built on trust. Schools, councils, healthcare providers, care homes, airports, hotels, businesses and community organisations often need more than a cheap fare. They need consistency, safeguarding, documentation, punctuality and drivers who understand the passengers they are carrying.

A wheelchair-accessible journey, for example, is not just a booking with a ramp. It may involve safe positioning, patience, clear communication, understanding the passenger's needs and making sure the whole experience feels dignified rather than hurried.

The same applies to school transport, where reliability and safeguarding procedures matter enormously. No parent wants to hear that the school run was delegated to an experimental robot because it had excellent lane discipline.

Executive and corporate work also has its own protections. Clients paying for a professional service expect presentation, discretion, punctuality and the ability to deal calmly with last-minute changes.

A good operator can build a reputation around those qualities. In a changing market, reputation may become one of the strongest forms of defence.

The EV question: charge ahead or wait?

Then there is the electric vehicle question. Many operators are considering whether to move towards EVs, hybrids, or a mixed fleet. On paper, the direction of travel looks clear. In practice, it raises a boot-full of questions: vehicle range, charging time, depot charging, public charging availability, battery warranties, finance, grants, maintenance, driver acceptance, insurance and whether the charger will be free when you need it most.

Going electric may be the right move, but it needs planning. A fleet that spends more time looking for chargers than carrying passengers is not a green strategy; it is an expensive treasure hunt. Operators need advice that understands taxi work, not just glossy brochures showing cars parked in front of wind turbines.

The EV route also forces operators to think differently about the working day. With petrol or diesel, refuelling is quick and familiar. With electric vehicles, range and charging have to be built into scheduling. A car that is perfect for a light day may be less perfect when the airport work starts stacking up, the weather is cold, the heating is on and the driver has already done more miles than expected. Range anxiety is real, especially when the last available charger is occupied by someone who appears to have gone for a three-course meal.

COPING WITH THE ROAD AHEAD

There are also financial questions. EVs can offer lower running costs and may suit certain urban work very well, but the upfront cost, finance structure, residual values and insurance position need proper analysis. Operators should look at total cost of ownership rather than the showroom price alone. They should also consider whether depot charging is possible, whether the local grid can support it, whether drivers can charge at home, and whether public charging is reliable enough for commercial use.

For some businesses, the answer may be a phased approach: trial one or two EVs, collect real data, learn the practical lessons and then expand. For others, hybrids or a mixed fleet may be the sensible bridge. The key is not to be dragged along by fashionable language. *"Future-proofing"* sounds wonderful until it means buying vehicles that do not fit the work. The future still has to pay its way.

Finding the right advice

With so much changing, the danger is not just making the wrong decision; it is making a rushed decision because everyone else appears to be doing something. The best operators will take time to understand the legislation, model different fleet options, speak to licensing authorities, compare charging solutions, review insurance implications and ask awkward questions before signing anything with wheels attached.

Good advice should be practical, independent and grounded in the realities of running a taxi business. It should help operators decide what to do now, what to monitor, what to avoid, and what can safely wait until the dust settles. Preferably it should also come with coffee.

Advice should also come from more than one direction. Speak to accountants about tax and finance. Speak to insurers before changing vehicle types or operating models. Speak to licensing officers before assuming a plan will be acceptable. Speak to charge-point providers, but remember they are there to sell chargers, not to run your dispatch desk at 1 a.m. Speak to other operators too; the trade has always been good at sharing hard-won wisdom, usually beginning with the words: *"Don't do what I did."*

A simple plan can help. Map the journeys your business actually does. Identify which work is

vulnerable to technology, which work depends on human service, which vehicles are due for replacement and which contracts may require environmental improvements. Then prioritise. Not every question needs answering this week. Some need watching. Some need testing. Some need a firm decision. And some need putting in a folder marked *"later"*, preferably not the same folder where old MOT certificates go to disappear.

Steering forwards

The future of the taxi industry will not be decided by one technology, one new rule or one headline about robotaxis. It will be shaped by operators who adapt without panicking, invest without gambling, and remember what customers value most: safe, reliable, human service that gets them where they need to be.

What matters most is that operators stay in control of the conversation. If the industry does not explain its value, others will define it for them. Taxi and private hire companies are not just vehicles on an app or names on a licence plate. They are local knowledge, employment, community service, late-night safety, accessibility, school transport, medical journeys and the reassuring sight of a familiar car arriving when promised.

There will be winners and losers as the industry changes, but the winners are unlikely to be those who either ignore the future or believe every shiny new idea will solve everything. The winners will be the businesses that ask good questions, gather good advice, invest at the right pace and keep their passengers at the centre of the journey.

In other words, the operators who still know that the most important technology in the taxi trade is not always in the car. Sometimes it is the person answering the phone, calming the customer, finding the driver, solving the problem and somehow making it all look easy.

So yes, the road ahead may have a few potholes, diversions and confusing signs. But taxi operators have been navigating those for years. The trick now is to keep asking the right questions, take advice before taking big turns, and make sure that whatever comes next, your business is not sitting at the rank with the meter running and no destination set.

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FLYING TAXIS

GIANT ELECTRIC AIR TAXI SEEN AT **MEDIACITY** COULD BE FUTURE OF URBAN TRAVEL IN THE UK

Visitors to Salford Quays recently had the chance to inspect a helicopter-sized electric air taxi displayed at the MediaCity Piazza as part of a UK tour by Joby Aviation and Virgin Atlantic. Designed to cut through traffic and avoid train delays, the futuristic aircraft aims to let passengers whizz between cities at speeds of up to 200mph. Following appearances at London's Tower Bridge and the Farnborough Air Show, the craft has drawn curious crowds wanting to look inside. The all-electric aircraft takes off like a helicopter and flies like a plane, powered by four cross-wired batteries and six propellers equipped with dual motors for high safety standards.



Max Coppin, the UK lead for Joby, explained the vision to the Manchester Evening News, stating: "We're hoping to bring aerial ride sharing to the UK and to Manchester and the Northwest. It will be bookable through an app, ultimately in the same way that you can book a ride sharing today." Carrying a pilot and four passengers with light luggage, the quiet craft - operating at around 45

decibels - could trim a 45-minute drive from central Manchester to the airport down to c. five minutes. While Joby has already completed thousands of test miles and demonstration flights in the United States, commercial rollout depends on approval from the US Federal Aviation Administration and subsequent validation by the UK Civil Aviation Authority. Operating via designated vertiports where batteries can be charged in 20 minutes, the service plans to launch in key locations such as London and Manchester. Through a partnership with Uber, passengers will be able to book combined car and air taxi journeys on their phones, with fares projected at the Uber Exec range.

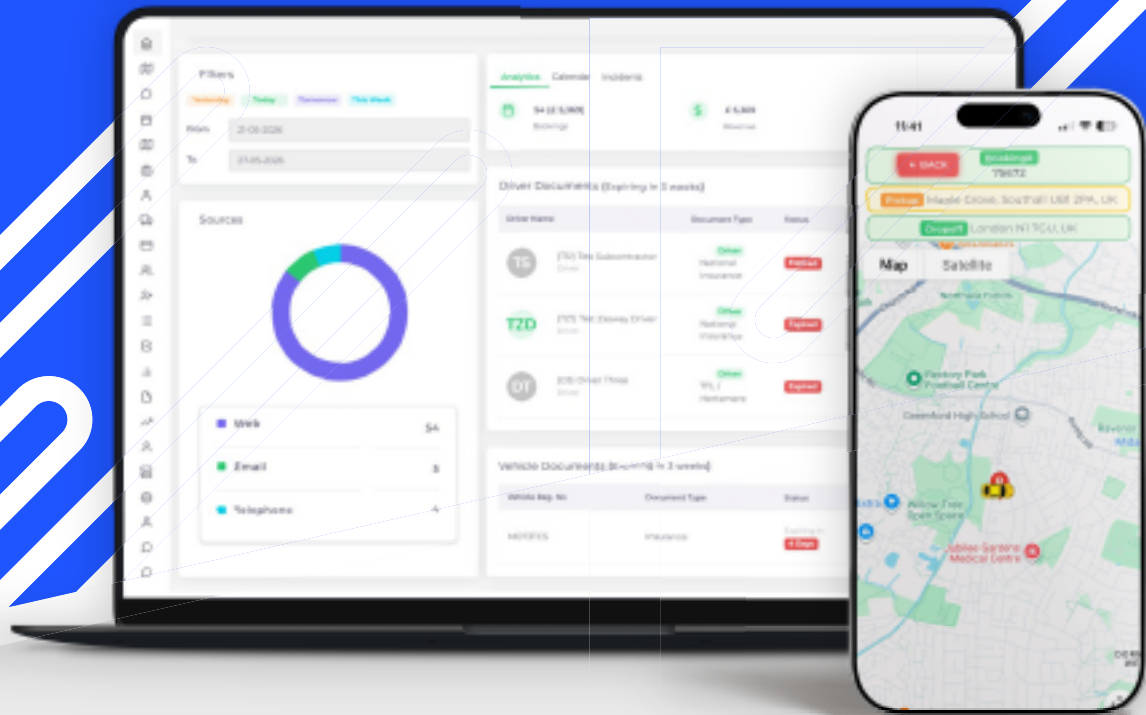
BRISTOL FLYING TAXI PIONEER SECURES \$100M TO FUEL UK MANUFACTURING PLANS

Bristol-based aviation firm Vertical Aerospace is raising \$100m in fresh equity to accelerate its commercial electric flying taxi plans and create 1,000 new jobs in Britain. The funding package is being secured primarily from major current shareholders Mudrick Capital Management and Yorkville Advisors, alongside \$35m from existing institutional backers. The capital will help the company review designs, open a new battery energy centre, and prepare its third prototype for hybrid-electric flight testing by early 2027. Vertical Aerospace chief executive Stuart Simpson said: "We are focused on converting operational progress

and partner engagement into continued advancement of our certification and commercialisation strategy." He added that the funding demonstrates strong confidence in the firm's market position and progress. Founded a decade ago by Ovo Energy creator Stephen Fitzpatrick, the business is developing an all-electric vertical take-off and landing aircraft designed to serve as a commercial flying taxi. The company's six-seater flying taxis, branded Valo, have generated international interest, securing orders from customers such as JetSetGo in India and Heli Air Monaco.

Following recent milestones, including a historic public transition flight and demos at the Farnborough Air Show, the business anticipates receiving full aircraft certification in 2029, with deliveries to airline customers following thereafter. Vertical is currently in advanced discussions with the UK government for a grant worth up to £10m to support a new factory near Kemble in Gloucestershire, adding close to £50m in prior public funding. In addition, the business has received confirmed interest from the Ministry of Defence for its hybrid-electric and autonomous technology.

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PHTM EXPO PRIZE DRAW WINNER WINS £2,000 OFF INSURANCE

Article by The Taxi Insurer
www.taxiinsurer.co.uk



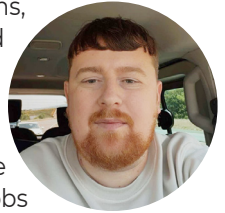
Having only been a private hire driver for two years, Tommy Corcoran certainly entered the trade at a time of upheaval and uncertainty, as well as financial hardship for many. With the taxi and private hire sector among the five industries worst affected by inflation over the past decade, and in the face of inconsistent fare commission from ride-hailing apps, drivers are currently operating in a testing environment.

It was against this backdrop that Tommy attended this year's **PHTM EXPO**, along with his colleagues from SAS Travel Stoke.

"It's a great day out for us," he explains. "There are nine of us that go down in the minibus, and we go for a curry afterwards. We help ourselves to all the free cups, pens and other things they give away, but it's also a good opportunity to catch up with our colleagues in the trade. It's always helpful chatting to other drivers, because they might know something that you don't."

Apart from being a good opportunity to network and share knowledge with industry colleagues, the Expo also gives one lucky visitor to The Taxi Insurer's stand the chance to win £2,000 off their next insurance policy. Tommy and the rest of the team duly entered and then continued networking and socialising.

Fast forward a couple of months, and Tommy was having a bad morning. He'd got up at 6am to find that his minibus wouldn't start, his insurer was refusing to send a recovery vehicle before 9am and he'd lost a couple of jobs as a result.



"And then, just as I got the minibus recovered, I received an email telling me that I'd won The Taxi Insurer's prize draw," he says. "So, I had a big smile on my face after that!"

You've got to be in it to win it!

Tommy's win was even more satisfying as it was the first time he'd entered the giveaway, and it came in the year when the prize was increased from the £1,500 that had been on offer in previous years.

"Honestly, I never thought anything of it when I entered," he confesses. "It was a real surprise. You never expect to win when you enter a prize draw, do you?"

Unlike former winners, who used the money they'd saved to pay for trips abroad to visit friends and family, Tommy had a much more tangible and immediate idea in mind of how he was going to use his windfall.

"I treated myself to a new motorbike," he reveals, gleefully. "My hobby is riding enduro bikes, so I upgraded my bike. I part-exchanged my previous one and then spent the money I'd saved on my insurance on a new bike."

So, before Tommy departs to don his boots and helmet, there's just one more question to be asked: will he be entering the prize draw again at next year's Expo?

"Well, it'd be rude not to, wouldn't it?" he replies, with a grin.





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PASSING THE BUCK

WHEN A LICENSING AUTHORITY SIMPLY REFUSES TO APPLY THE LAW

Article by Christopher Johnson
London Cab Drivers' Club

There is a law. There is consumer law. And in the private hire trade, there is now a documented, on-the-record example of what happens when a licensing authority decides that the second of those simply doesn't apply to it.

The authority in question is Elmbridge Borough Council. A private hire operator it licenses was found to be recorded, on the council's own statutory public register, at an address that did not match the address the operator had actually supplied - a discrepancy Elmbridge itself has now conceded.

But the address error, serious as it is, is not the real story. The real story is what happened when the obvious next question was asked: if a private hire operator is a trader in law, and traders are required to disclose their identity and trading address to consumers before they're bound to a contract, who is checking that operators actually do that?

The answer, it turns out, is nobody. Not because the law doesn't say so. Because every body with the power to enforce it has decided, in writing, that it's someone else's job.

The law is not in dispute

This isn't a grey area dressed up as one. Regulation 13 and Schedule 2 of the Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013, section 68 of the Consumer Rights Act 2015, and sections 227 and 230 of the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024 all require a trader - and a private hire operator is a trader - to give the consumer its identity and geographical address

before a booking is confirmed. Regulation 17 of the 2013 Regulations puts the burden of proving compliance on the trader, not the passenger. None of this is contingent on a complaint, a test purchase, or something going wrong. It bites at the invitation-to-purchase stage, before a booking exists at all.

Section 55 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 requires a district council to be satisfied that a private hire operator is fit and proper before granting or renewing its licence. If an operator cannot demonstrate that it meets its statutory consumer-disclosure obligations, the licensing authority has not properly tested fitness and propriety in respect of that operator at all - it has simply not asked the question.

Other authorities have worked out how to close that gap without waiting for new legislation. One council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy already requires operators, as a licence condition, to tell passengers before the booking is confirmed which authority actually licenses the vehicle and the driver fulfilling it - with suspension for non-compliance. A neighbouring authority is now considering the same approach. There is nothing stopping any other authority doing the same under its existing section 55 powers.

What Elmbridge said instead

Elmbridge's Stage 1 complaint response, dated 8 July 2026, upheld the complaint about the register address. On the substantive point - whether consumer law compliance forms part of its fit and proper assessment - it stated plainly that this does not sit *"at the heart of"* that assessment, and that it would have regard to consumer law only *"in individual circumstances and where relevant."*

PASSING THE BUCK

Read that again. The licensing authority whose statutory job is to satisfy itself that an operator is fit and proper to hold a licence has told a complainant, in writing, that whether the operator complies with consumer protection law is not central to that judgment. It is optional. It is discretionary. It is, in Elmbridge's own words, only sometimes relevant.

Everyone agrees whose job it is - except the people whose job it is

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), responding via Surrey Trading Standards, was unambiguous: *"This is a licensing matter for Elmbridge to determine, not a consumer protection enforcement matter for the CMA"*. Trading Standards, for its part, has repeatedly said it cannot make formal findings of non-compliance without a complainant's evidence of harm or a test purchase, and that systemic questions of this kind belong with the CMA or the licensing authority.

So, the CMA says it's a licensing matter. Trading Standards says it's a licensing or CMA matter and Elmbridge, the licensing authority, says consumer law compliance isn't at the heart of what it does. Three bodies, three positions, and between them, not one is willing to apply the fit and proper test that all three agree exists.

That is not a gap in the law. The law is settled and has been for years. It is a gap in who is answerable when the law goes unapplied - and it is a gap that a licensing authority has created for itself, by declining to exercise a function Parliament gave it.

The training gap underneath the buck-passing

Follow the buck far enough and it stops being a story about one council's discretion and becomes a story about competence. The DfT's own position, confirmed in a written parliamentary answer, is that consumer law compliance is relevant to the fit and proper assessment - that a licensing authority

delegated the power to license correctly is expected to use it correctly, including on the consumer protection side, and that this is not the DfT's job to police case by case.

The CMA and Trading Standards, in turn, both locate the duty to check that operators-as-traders comply with consumer law at exactly the same point: the local authority's licensing department, at the moment it assesses fitness and propriety.

Elmbridge Borough Council says that's a matter for Trading Standards. Trading Standards says it's a licensing matter. The DfT says it delegated the power and expects it to be used properly. Everyone is pointing at everyone else, and the one thing all four positions have in common is that none of them results in the test actually being applied.

That circularity is not really a dispute about where the duty sits - on the law, it sits with the licensing authority, and none of the four bodies above seriously argues otherwise. It is a demonstration that the officers responsible for applying it, do not appear to understand what a fit and proper assessment is actually meant to test.

Fit and proper is not a synonym for "has a valid DBS check and a car that passes its inspection." It means, and has always meant, compliance with the whole body of law that governs how the operator conducts that business - consumer law included.

When a licensing department tells a complainant that this doesn't sit *"at the heart of"* its assessment, that is not a defensible policy choice. It is a training failure, dressed up as a considered legal position. And when that failure is pointed out, the response is too often not engagement but affront - correspondence characterised as unreasonable, scrutiny treated as a nuisance to be managed rather than a question to be answered.

A licensing officer who understood the scope of the test they were applying would not need to take refuge in defensiveness. One who doesn't will.

PASSING THE BUCK

This is why the case for a root-and-branch DfT review of how the fit and proper test is actually being applied - and how poorly licensing officers are trained to apply it - is now hard to avoid. Not another consultation on the law, which is settled but an honest look at whether the people applying it understand what it requires.

Not an isolated council

Elmbridge is one borough. But the pattern - a licensing authority disclaiming responsibility for the consumer-facing side of a trade it alone has the power to regulate - is not confined to it. It recurs, in different forms, wherever a council treats consumer protection as somebody else's department:

Trading Standards', the CMA's, an operator's own conscience. Multiply that abdication across the c. 300 licensing authorities in England and it stops looking like local administrative drift and starts looking like the structural condition of the trade itself: a fit and proper test that quietly excludes the one obligation that actually protects the passenger, and no single body prepared to own the consequence.

The only lever left is a courtroom

Ask what happens to a licensing department, or the individuals within it, when it declines to

perform a core statutory function, and the honest answer at present is: nothing. There is no regulator of regulators here. The CMA won't step into licensing. Trading Standards won't make findings without more evidence than a member of the public can usually gather alone. And the licensing authority itself is marking its own homework, with no external check on the marking.

That leaves one route, and it is the one this correspondence has now been pushed toward: judicial review, funded not by the public purse but by whichever member of the public is prepared to pay for it, to compel a public body to do what the statute already required it to do.

That is not accountability. It is a workaround for the absence of accountability - and it should not be the only mechanism standing between a licensing authority's discretion and the consumer protection Parliament intended every PH passenger to have.

Until that changes, the position remains exactly as stark as it looks: there is a law, there is consumer law, and in Elmbridge's case, there is a licensing authority that has decided, on the record, that the second one is not really its problem.

ELMBRIDGE BOROUGH COUNCIL RESPONSE

An Elmbridge Borough Council spokesperson responded: *"Elmbridge BC takes its duty to safeguard residents very seriously and is satisfied that its current policy, together with its wider licensing and enforcement arrangements, provides a robust framework for ensuring public safety and maintaining high standards within the licensed trade."*



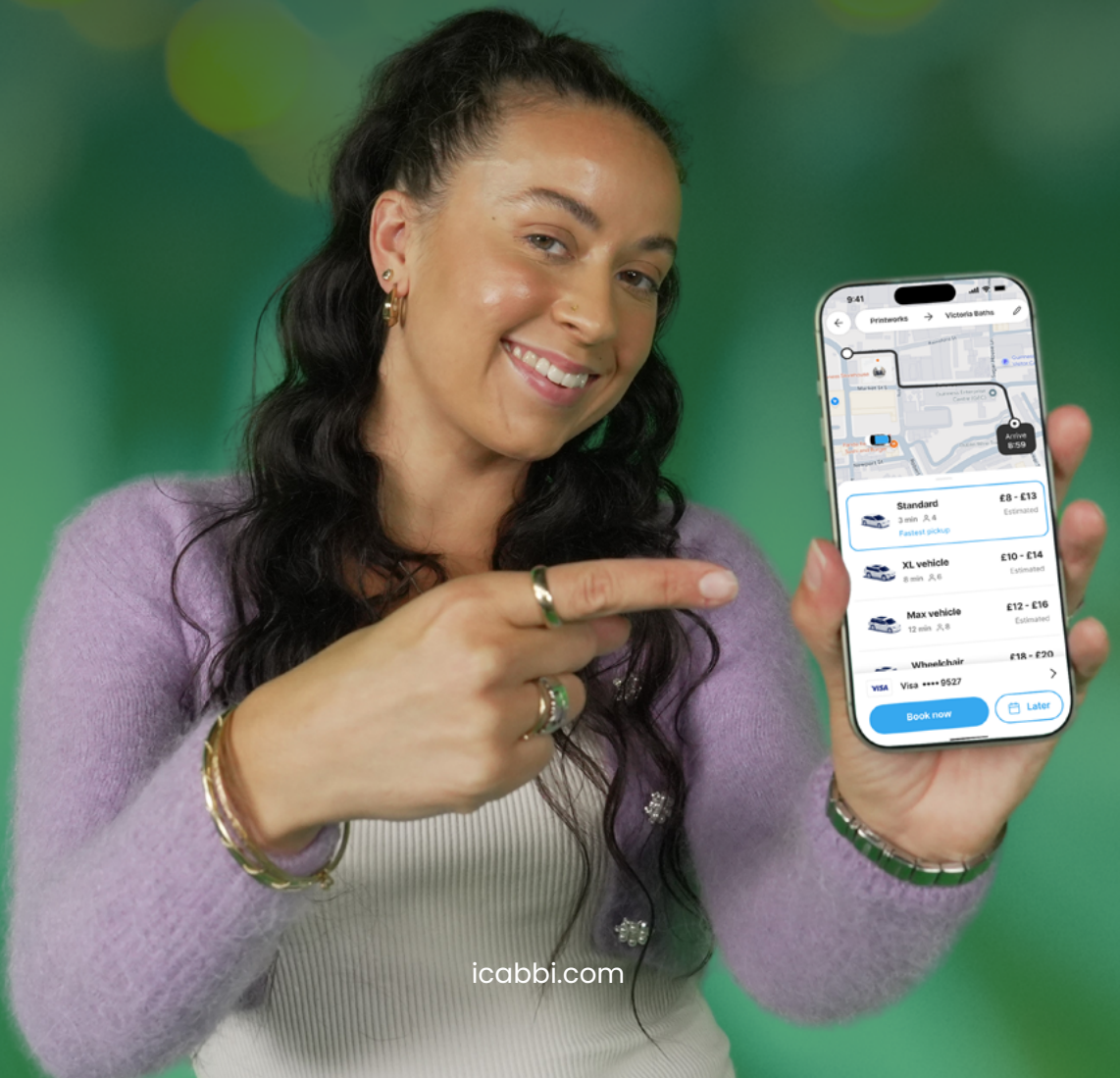
"We thank Mr Johnson for his input and engagement on this matter. However, for the reasons already explained to him, we do not consider that an amendment to the policy is necessary at this time."

"We remain confident that our existing approach enables us to deliver a safe and effective service for residents while exercising our statutory functions in a proportionate and lawful manner."



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WORCESTER TAXI DRIVER ASSAULT LEAVES PASSENGER JAILED FOR NINE MONTHS

A Worcester man has been locked up after attacking a local taxi driver inside his cab in front of a child. Stuart Halliday, 44, appeared at Worcester Magistrates' Court on Thursday 20 August, facing charges including assault by beating against cabbie Azanuhr Rahman. The attack took place in Wychbold on 9 May 2025. Magistrates noted that while the assault was over quickly, it was

made worse because it happened within the confined space of a car with a child present. The court heard

that Halliday was later caught driving a BMW in Worcester on 10 June while already disqualified and without insurance. Magistrates also pointed out that



these latest crimes were committed while he was serving a suspended sentence. Halliday was handed a nine-month prison sentence, split into five months for assaulting the taxi driver and four months for driving while disqualified. He was also ordered to pay £154 in compensation to Mr Rahman, alongside a driving ban lasting three years and 137 days.

CABBIE THOUGHT IT WAS HIS LAST DAY ON EARTH AFTER AIR RIFLE THREAT FOLLOWING YORK PICK-UP

A terrified taxi driver thought it was his "last day on earth" when an intoxicated customer pointed an air rifle at him following a fare dispute in the early hours'. Dominic Trynka-Watson, 40, had been dropped off at his home in Newton upon Derwent after taking a ride from York when the driver approached his door to collect the unpaid £26.80 fare.

Twenty seconds later, Trynka-Watson emerged from a side door carrying a long-barrelled air rifle and walked towards the vehicle. The driver sped away. Police later arrested Trynka-Watson and seized two air rifles, a crossbow, knives, and shot-gun cartridges. Hull Crown Court heard that the defendant had been heavily drinking and had only a vague

recollection of his behaviour. Trynka-Watson, who admitted possessing a firearm with intent to cause fear of violence, was handed a fifteen-month suspended prison sentence, two hundred hours of unpaid work, and twenty days of rehabilitation. He was also ordered to pay £561 in compensation and £187 victim surcharge.

DRUNK FARE DODGER WHO PUT CARLISLE CABBIE IN HEADLOCK GIVEN SUSPENDED SENTENCE

A Carlisle cabbie who was put in a headlock by a drunk passenger refusing to pay a £28 fare fought back by biting his attacker. Sheldon O'Neil, 28, from Belah, initially lied to police by claiming the driver had assaulted him, but later admitted to making off without paying and assault by beating at the city's crown court. The incident began on March 29,

2024, after O'Neil and two other men hired the cab. Prosecutor Tanya Elahi told the court that after the other passengers were dropped off, O'Neil "grabbed the cabbie from behind and placed him in a headlock, with his right arm across his [the driver's] throat. In an attempt to free himself, he bit the defendant on the wrist." O'Neil then got out, punched the

cab window and kicked the vehicle. The court heard that O'Neil has 28 previous offences on his record, including violence and dishonesty. The victim stated that the ordeal caused him such severe anxiety that he is now considering changing jobs. O'Neil was sentenced to six months in jail, suspended for one year, 25 rehabilitation activity days and 60 days of alcohol treatment.

27 MONTHS' JAIL FOR DARTFORD THUG WHO STAMPED ON CABBIE'S HEAD MULTIPLE TIMES

A violent thug who punched, kicked and repeatedly stamped on the head of a taxi driver during a brutal, unprovoked assault was been jailed for two years and three months on 11 August.

Oliver Dryden, a 30-year-old from Orpington, launched the savage attack after a minor road traffic collision on Crossways Boulevard in Dartford on January 15, 2025.

The incident began when the victim's taxi collided with a Peugeot, prompting both drivers to pull over to exchange insurance details. However, Dryden, who was a front-seat passenger in the Peugeot, stepped out of the vehicle and immediately targeted

the taxi driver, punching him in the chest, face and jaw. When the victim attempted to retreat

to his cab, Dryden dragged him to the ground, kicked him in the face and repeatedly stamped on his head while hurling racist abuse. Bystanders attempted to intervene, but the attacker threw an object at the taxi and smashed one of its windows then fled the scene before police arrived.

Officers tracked Dryden down to a pub in Bromley a week later and arrested him. He pleaded guilty to



racially aggravated assault, racially aggravated criminal damage and affray, and was sentenced at Maidstone Crown Court.

Investigating officer PC Ellie Boden condemned the violence, stating: "This was a completely unprovoked attack on an innocent man. The assault was carried out in daylight in front of witnesses.

"The victim was also subjected to racist abuse, which makes Dryden's actions all the more unacceptable.

"I welcome the sentence handed down by the court and hope it provides the victim with some reassurance that Dryden has been held accountable for his actions."

BATH MAN FINED AFTER LAUNCHING RACIST TIRADE AT TAXI DRIVER

A sixty-year-old man who launched a tirade of racial abuse at a taxi driver after being challenged for allegedly operating as an unregistered cab has been handed a fine in court.

Stephen Woods appeared before Bath Magistrates' Court on August 5, following the ugly confrontation that unfolded on May 10 outside the Bath Spa railway station.

The court was told that the incident began when a licensed taxi driver started taking photographs of Woods at the station rank, acting on instructions from a council taxi official following complaints that Woods was illegally picking up fares without being licensed.

The confrontation later spilled over

to the forecourt of a nearby service station, where Woods hurled racist slurs at the driver in front of horrified onlookers, with part of the abuse captured on a mobile phone video.

During the outburst, Woods told the victim: "This is not your country. Go back to your country. This is my country."

Police were subsequently called to the scene and arrested Woods, who then directed xenophobic remarks at the arresting officers by asking: "Why don't you go down to the beach and stop all these immigrants from coming into our country?"

Woods, a local resident, pleaded guilty to a racially aggravated offence involving threatening or

abusive words or behaviour likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress.

His defence solicitor, Lisa Rowley, explained to the magistrates that her client had originally been at the station to collect a friend's autistic children and grew anxious when he realised he was being photographed, noting that he struggles with anxiety and various health issues.

Addressing the court directly, Woods offered an apology to the magistrates, stating that he had been "anxious about what is happening in this country".

Magistrates ordered Woods to pay a total of £197, comprising an £80 fine, £85 in prosecution costs, and a £32 court surcharge.

PAYMENT SOLUTIONS

PAID ON YOUR TERMS: LYNKPAY'S NEXT CHAPTER

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Every driver in this trade is running a small business. A vehicle to finance, fuel and insurance to cover, servicing and an MOT to plan for, income that changes week to week. It is one of the hardest small businesses to run, and financial services have barely acknowledged it.

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Pay frequency should be a choice, not a habit

Most of this trade still runs on one payment cycle, set years ago and rarely revisited. That is the wrong way round. Some drivers want their money the moment the job ends. Some want a clean daily figure. Plenty are happy waiting until Friday. Some want a mix, a share as they work and the balance at the end of the week.

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I mention it not to wave the flag, but because scale changes what we can do for the driver on a rank in Bolton. More volume across the same rails buys better terms and technology. It also raises the bar: three regions means meeting the compliance, safeguarding and financial crime standards of regulated partners in each one, which is what this trade should demand of anyone handling driver money.

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The next piece is aimed at the cost side of a driver's week. We are building LynkPay Rewards, a benefits and discounts programme for every driver on the platform. The intention is simple: serious buying power over what a driver actually spends on: fuel, tyres, servicing, MOT, breakdown cover, insurance. Then beyond the car: the weekly shop, the mobile bill, the family day out.

Drivers cannot control the fare. They can control what their money buys. A programme that takes a meaningful sum off a driver's annual household costs is worth more than most of what this industry offers, at no extra cost. More on that shortly.

None of this is charity. A driver paid on the terms that suit them, with real buying power over the costs that eat into their week, stays with their operator and in the trade. That is good for us as well as for them. The question for operators is no longer whether drivers can be paid better. It is why they still aren't.

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SEND TRANSPORT

BRADFORD'S LARGEST SCHOOL TRANSPORT PROVIDER ISSUES IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO ITS DRIVERS

As Bradford Council begins allocating school transport runs for the new academic year, Local Cars Bradford has sent a message to its drivers to explain why it has chosen not to lower its pricing structure or standards, rather than accept rates it believes are financially unsustainable.

In the message which was forwarded to **PHTM** by one of the drivers, the company says it will "not race to the bottom" on school transport contracts if doing so risks the financial sustainability of its drivers or the quality and reliability of the service provided to children.

A focus on send children:

Local Cars says school transport is not simply another journey. For SEND and vulnerable children, having a familiar driver, being collected on time and maintaining a consistent routine throughout the school year can be extremely important.

The company says it would rather operate fewer school runs at realistic rates than accept contracts at prices that could make it difficult to maintain those standards.

Drivers must also make it pay:

Local Cars says drivers are central to providing a reliable service and school runs must be financially worthwhile for them too.

The company acknowledges that drivers may be approached by other operators offering school transport work and, while it has no intention of preventing drivers working elsewhere, reminds them that Local cars pay drivers weekly,



despite sometimes waiting up to eight weeks itself to receive payment for account work.

It also urges drivers to consider the true cost of taking on school contracts including fuel, insurance, vehicle running costs, their time, and the planned requirement for CCTV to be installed in all school contract vehicles from January 2027.

"Quality should not be sacrificed for price." A wider concern:

There is also a wider question about whether operators accepting school transport work actually have the drivers, vehicles and resources available to fulfil them.

If a firm doesn't have the drivers or availability to provide a service, should it really be advertising on social media for resources to cover a council contract it has already accepted?

And shouldn't a council consider an operator's actual capacity to deliver the work before allocating it, rather than relying on operators finding the necessary resources afterwards?

Ultimately, the priority must be a reliable, properly resourced, and consistently covered transport service – particularly when vulnerable and SEND children are involved.

The bigger question...

Should Bradford Council be looking more closely not only at the prices being accepted, but also whether operators actually have the drivers, vehicles and capacity to deliver those contracts reliably throughout the school year?

Local Cars says that sustainable prices, committed drivers and consistent care for children must come before simply securing another contract.

Dave Lawrie, Director **NPHTA** commented: *"Well said local cars. All too often we see unscrupulous operators reaching out on social media for drivers and indeed passenger assistants to cover school contact work, which clearly verifies one of the issues raised within this post; operators should only be bidding for the number of contracts to match the number of drivers and vehicles they have in place to fulfil them."*

"We see all too often bids being undercut and left unaffordable and unsustainable to maintain. This does indeed have an impact on the drivers' hourly rate versus their overheads which are constantly increasing."

"School contracts should not be a race to the bottom, as doing so impacts the very children who rely on our services the most."



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ROBOTAXIS...ROBOTAXIS

MINISTERS URGED TO HAND TfL FULL CONTROL OF DRIVERLESS TAXIS AHEAD OF LONDON ROLLOUT

Ministers are facing growing pressure to hand full control of autonomous taxi trials to TfL as the capital prepares for the arrival of "robotaxis."

While the DfT previously stated plans to fast-track small-scale driverless testing in 2026 ahead of a wider rollout in 2027, companies such as Uber, Wayve, and Waymo are already seeking approval or actively testing fleets in London.

Under current rules, the DfT authorises driverless vehicles on public roads, but TfL holds licensing power over paid passenger services and must grant consent before

commercial operations can begin. Senior transport officials argue that central government intervention undermines local governance and risks diluting city transport oversight.

Caroline Russell AM, chair of the London Assembly Transport Committee, criticised ministers for overriding local authority, noting: "The regulation of all of this is being controlled by the government when TfL should have a licensing role in this."

She emphasised city regulators need oversight over operational rules, data sharing, and safety,

warning: "London has to get on top of many issues before anything gets unleashed on our streets."

Echoing these concerns, TfL Commissioner Andy Lord warned of a "risk" that the DfT could bypass devolved authorities during the rollout. He told the transport committee: "There's a risk the DfT would have greater regulation on autonomous vehicles (AVs) than TfL."

Transport leaders are now urging ministers to streamline the framework by giving TfL complete local authority to manage and regulate AVs across London's transport network.

LONDON ASSEMBLY AND GMB UNION RAISE URGENT SAFETY & JOB CONCERNS OVER UBER ROBOTAXI TRIAL

Tf has sparked fierce debate after granting private hire licences for a supervised robotaxi service involving up to 15 vehicles operated by Uber and Wayve over a one-year trial. While the initial phase will feature a licensed PH driver behind the wheel rather than full automation, the decision has drawn swift criticism and caution from officials and labour representatives alike.

Caroline Russell AM, Chair of the London Assembly Transport Committee, noted that the approval was "not entirely unexpected," following months of deep investigations by the committee involving industry experts, operators, DfT, and international insights from cities such as San Francisco and Oslo. However, she stressed that significant worries remain.

"The Committee still has many questions about the safeguarding of passengers, so we would not be expecting TfL to give consent at this stage for full autonomous operation," Russell stated, adding their findings and recommendations will be published soon.

Parallel to the committee's investigation, the GMB Union voiced alarm over what it views as a perilous path toward driverless transport. GMB Regional Organiser Matthew Wright described the move as "a worrying development" that threatens thousands of local PH drivers. Urging authorities to slow down, Wright warned: "We can't charge ahead with new technology without considering the implications of AVs on all parties." The union raised questions about the economic and social fallout of

automation, asking: "For drivers; how will they be supported to reskill and redeploy if their jobs go? How will society cope with the lost tax revenue and increases in unemployment? For the public, how will their safety be impacted? Who is liable for accidents? What implications are there for disabled passengers?"

Wright also emphasised the human interaction aspect, stating: "For passengers, driverless cars cannot replace the knowledge, experience, and human connection that a skilled driver offers."

With both the London Assembly and GMB Union demanding rigorous scrutiny, the call for restraint is clear. Concluding his warning, Wright said: "GMB urges TfL to proceed with extreme caution."

ROBOTAXIS...ROBOTAXIS

LONDON ROBOTAXI LAUNCH **DELAYED** AS REGULATORS FAIL TO ISSUE CRUCIAL GUIDANCE

Robotaxis have moved a step closer to London's streets after Transport for London (TfL) granted private hire vehicle licences to Uber and British artificial intelligence firm Wayve. The decision allows them to deploy a fleet of autonomous, pure-electric Ford Mustang Mach-Es equipped with custom camera pods and radar units, making London the first city to use Wayve's commercial autonomous technology. However, a trained human driver must sit behind the wheel to monitor journeys for now. Despite this milestone, The Guardian reports that a fully driverless rollout is unlikely to happen this year due to regulatory and technical hurdles. TfL has still not published the guidance that companies must follow to win approval for driverless operations.

Christina Calderato, TfL's director of strategy, recently told the London assembly's transport committee that the transit authority would not be ready to accept applications "for some time," adding, "I do not think we are in a rush to get [the guidelines] out. There is a huge amount of work going on behind the scenes."

Passenger demand remains high, with over 100,000 Londoners registering their interest. Uber confirmed that selected members from this waiting list will be offered trial rides with a safety driver to provide feedback ahead of a full commercial launch. Operating entirely without a human driver requires separate approval through an automated passenger

services permit from the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), and no vehicles have been approved by the DVSA yet.

Wayve's chief executive, Alex Kendall, clarified that his company never claimed it would have a fully driverless operation this year. "I don't want to put a timeline on it because we want to make sure we pass through [the regulatory process]," he said. "This work is continuing at pace. London is a significant step up in complexity compared to Phoenix or San Francisco."

Meanwhile, global competitors are also looking at the market. Google-owned Waymo is working through safety approvals with the transport department, while Baidu began testing vehicles in London recently and plans public rides next year. While Sarah Gates, Wayve's vice president for global affairs, hailed the new licences as an important step toward cleaner and quieter streets, London passengers will experience the technology with a human supervisor behind the wheel while regulators finalise the necessary framework.

ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONS ARISE AS ROBOTAXIS HIT THE **U.S.**

USA Federal regulators recently approved the commercial deployment of Zoox's steering-wheel-free robotaxis - a major milestone for AV technology. Passengers in Las Vegas will soon be able to pay for rides in these vehicles. While AVs are promoted as a way to improve road safety, their arrival introduces complex legal questions over who is accountable when collisions occur.

In traditional traffic accidents, investigators typically examine human behaviour such as speeding or failure to give way. AVs shift that focus toward tech and corporate factors. Investigators will have to evaluate whether vehicle sensors failed to detect pedestrians, if software misidentified obstacles, or system updates created performance issues. These investigations will

require analysing digital evidence, e.g. camera recordings, sensor data, software logs, which must be kept following an incident.

Regulatory approval of AVs does not eliminate the possibility of accidents, and regulators have mandated additional reporting for crashes and safety-related incidents. Historically transport innovations show that real-world deployment often reveals challenges that testing environments cannot fully replicate.

Legal standards for negligence, reasonable care, and product safety remain applicable despite the absence of a human driver. Courts will have to evaluate whether companies adequately tested systems, provided proper warnings, and prevented avoidable injuries.

VEHICLE CHECKS ARE VITAL

THE COST OF IGNORING MINOR DEFECTS

Article by CheckedSafe

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A warning light that has only just appeared. A slightly damaged tyre. A cracked mirror. A light that has stopped working. On their own, these might seem like relatively small issues. The kind of thing that can be dealt with later. But that is often where bigger problems begin.

In the taxi/PH industry, vehicles are constantly on the road. They carry passengers day in, day out, often covering significant mileage in the process. That means even a minor issue can quickly develop into something more serious if it is not spotted, reported and dealt with early.

A tyre that is beginning to show signs of damage could deteriorate further. A faulty light could go unnoticed until the vehicle is being driven in poor conditions. A warning light that is ignored could indicate a problem that becomes more expensive to fix the longer it is left.

Of course, not every small defect will lead to a major issue. But the point of regular vehicle checks is to make sure operators are not taking that chance.

Spotting a problem is only the first step

Daily vehicle checks play an important role in helping drivers identify issues before they become more serious. But simply noticing a defect is not enough - it needs to be reported. And that is where the process can sometimes break down.

If a driver has to fill in a paper sheet, find the right person to speak to or remember to report something at the end of their shift, there is always a risk that a small issue gets forgotten or delayed. For busy drivers and operators, particularly those managing multiple vehicles, keeping track of every reported defect can quickly become difficult.

The easier it is to report an issue, the more likely it is to be reported properly.

That is why many operators are moving away from paper-based processes and towards digital vehicle checking systems.

Making it easier to report defects

With CheckedSafe, drivers can complete guided digital vehicle checks and report defects as part of the same process. Issues can be recorded clearly, helping operators understand what has been found and take action where needed.

For operators, this provides greater visibility across the fleet. Instead of relying on paper forms, verbal updates or messages being passed between different people, vehicle check and defect information is all kept in one place. That can make a real difference when managing multiple drivers and vehicles.

It also creates a clearer record of what was checked, what was reported and when an issue was identified. If the same type of problem keeps appearing, operators are in a much better position to spot the pattern and investigate further.

But perhaps the biggest benefit is prevention.

The best time to deal with a defect is before it gets worse

A small issue caught early is often easier, quicker and less costly to deal with than one that has been allowed to develop. More importantly, early reporting can help operators avoid unnecessary vehicle downtime. Taking a vehicle off the road unexpectedly can mean lost earnings, disruption to passengers and additional pressure on the rest of the fleet.

Daily checks should not simply be seen as another task for drivers to complete before starting work. When carried out properly, they are an opportunity to identify potential problems before they become bigger ones.

For drivers, it is about having confidence that the vehicle they are taking onto the road is safe and ready to work.

For operators, it is about having the visibility to know what is happening across the fleet and the information needed to act quickly when something is reported.

Because sometimes, the biggest problems start with the smallest defects. And catching them early could make all the difference.

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AYR FARE-DODGER PUNCHED TAXI DRIVER AND LEFT HIM WITH BRAIN INJURY

A heavily intoxicated fare-dodger who punched a taxi driver in Ayr, leaving the cabbie with a bleed to the brain, has admitted to the attack in court. Craig Lucas pleaded guilty to assault to severe injury during a hearing at Ayr Sheriff Court.

The incident began when Lucas and a woman were picked up from the Boswell Park taxi rank and asked to be taken to Prestwick without giving a specific address.

During the journey, Lucas was singing loudly, prompting the driver to use the intercom and

ask him to stop.

The vehicle stopped after the female passenger asked to get out.

According to the prosecutor, Lucas exited the taxi, began arguing, and started to walk away without paying. When the driver reminded him that the fare was unsettled, Lucas "started to "dancing about like a dafty" before landing a punch to the left side of the cabbie's face.

The blow knocked the driver off the kerb and onto the road, while Lucas callously remarked "that is embarrassing" before

walking away.

Although the victim initially drove off and attempted to finish his shift, he woke up in severe pain the following morning. Hospital examinations later revealed he suffered a bleed to the brain, elbow bruising, and ongoing headaches.

Police arrested Lucas roughly a week later after gathering CCTV evidence. Sheriff Siobhan Connelly warned Lucas that the crime was serious and ordered background reports before sentencing, while his bail was continued.

LANARKSHIRE THUG FACES JAIL AFTER SMASHING CABBIE'S FACE WITH ROAD SIGN OVER UNPAID FARE

A Hamilton man is facing a potential prison sentence after striking a taxi driver in the face with a heavy metal road sign when challenged over an unpaid fare. Scot McCluskey, 37, pleaded guilty at Hamilton Sheriff Court to assaulting the cabbie to his severe injury and permanent disfigurement.

The violent attack, which occurred on Glenlee Street in Hamilton on 12 August 2024, left the victim with a severe lip gash and three knocked-out teeth.

The court heard that McCluskey had initially agreed to provide a down payment for the journey after the driver raised concerns

about his demeanor upon picking him up in Ferniegair.

After being driven to Larkhall, McCluskey redirected the taxi to Glasgow Road in Hamilton. When he got out of the vehicle, the driver repeatedly asked him to pay the remainder of the fare. Prosecutor Rosemary O'Neill stated that McCluskey responded by picking up a large metal road sign and charging at the victim, striking him full in the face before fleeing the scene.

The injured driver managed to grab hold of the sign to prevent further harm before emergency services arrived to find him distressed and bleeding heavily.

Police arrested McCluskey six months later. Defence lawyer Gerry McGuire noted that his client was "less than clear" about the events of that evening, while the court was advised that McCluskey already had previous convictions on his record.

Sheriff Linda Nicolson admitted she was "just persuaded" to request background reports rather than send McCluskey straight to prison.

Deferring sentence until September and granting him bail in the interim, the sheriff delivered a sharp warning to the attacker, advising him that "all options are on the table."



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LICENSING LESSONS

LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE: WHAT TO EXPECT

Article by Talal Malik, Solicitor
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For many private hire drivers, the first indication that a licensing matter has become serious is a letter requiring attendance before a licensing sub-committee. The terminology varies between authorities. It may be called a review, a driver hearing or a referral to members. Whatever the description, the significance is the same: the authority may well be deciding whether the driver should continue to hold a licence.

A licensing sub-committee is not a criminal court, but neither is it an informal meeting with the council. It is a regulatory hearing in which public protection is the principal consideration. That distinction is fundamental to understanding how the case will be approached and why matters which would not necessarily result in criminal proceedings can still have serious licensing consequences.

What is the committee deciding?

A sub-committee will usually comprise elected councillors, supported by a licensing officer and legal adviser. The officer may make a recommendation, but the decision rests with the members.

The central issue is often whether the driver remains fit and proper to hold a licence. For existing licence holders, the **Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (LGMPA)** also allows suspension or revocation on statutory grounds, including “*any other reasonable cause*”.

The committee is therefore not simply deciding whether an allegation is proved. It is assessing whether the information undermines the regulatory trust required of a licensed driver, particularly given that drivers often work alone with vulnerable passengers and without direct supervision.

The fit and proper assessment

The DfT suggests asking whether decision-makers would allow someone they care about to travel alone with the driver at any time of day or night. It is a deliberately demanding, safeguarding-focused test.

The assessment is forward-looking. Past conduct matters because of what it may indicate about future risk, including concerns around honesty, aggression, safeguarding, drugs, alcohol, discrimination or regulatory compliance. A good licensing history may assist, but it will not necessarily outweigh conduct suggesting an ongoing public safety concern.

What if there was no conviction?

Licensing proceedings are not criminal proceedings. Decisions are generally made on the balance of probabilities, and authorities may consider conduct that did not result in a charge or conviction.

However, allegations must still be assessed carefully. Their source, consistency, reliability and supporting evidence all matter. The driver must also have a fair opportunity to respond. Where an allegation is disputed, the response should address the evidence itself rather than rely solely on the absence of a prosecution.

The authority's policy

The authority's taxi and private hire licensing policy will usually be one of the most important documents before the sub-committee. Policies commonly address convictions, complaints, safeguarding matters, motoring offences and other conduct. They may indicate periods during which certain matters will ordinarily result in refusal or place an existing licence at substantial risk.

Policy is important because it promotes consistency, but it is not legislation. Members must still consider the individual circumstances of the case and exercise the discretion given to them by statute. A driver seeking a different outcome from the policy approach will ordinarily need to identify a proper basis for departure. Simply saying that losing the licence would cause hardship is unlikely to be enough.

The effective case therefore addresses both the policy and the evidence. It explains why the policy does or does not apply and, where a departure is sought, why the circumstances justify one.

The driver's response matters

By the time a case reaches a sub-committee, members are assessing more than the original incident. The driver's response can itself become relevant.

LICENSING LESSONS

Members may want to know why something happened, what the driver now understands, what has changed and whether there is any realistic prospect of repetition. Where the case concerns failure to comply with licensing requirements, they may test whether those requirements are now properly understood. Where safeguarding is involved, they may examine the driver's understanding of professional boundaries.

A driver who disputes an allegation does not have to admit wrongdoing in order to demonstrate insight. It is entirely possible to maintain that an allegation is false while recognising why, if true, it would be serious and why the authority was required to investigate it.

Conversely, dismissing every concern, attacking complainants indiscriminately or refusing to engage with established facts can reinforce doubts about judgement or regulatory attitude. The manner in which the driver gives evidence can therefore become part of the committee's assessment.

Mitigation must answer the regulatory concern

Mitigation is most useful when it addresses risk rather than merely consequence.

The financial impact of suspension or revocation may be severe, but hardship does not in itself demonstrate that the public will be protected. More persuasive material may include a long and previously good licensing history, relevant training, evidence of changed circumstances, medical evidence where appropriate, credible references or a significant period without repetition.

The quality of that evidence matters. A generic reference describing the driver as a good person may carry limited weight. Evidence from someone familiar with the concern and able to comment meaningfully upon subsequent conduct is likely to be more useful.

Similarly, completing a training course is not significant simply because a certificate exists. Its value lies in whether it demonstrates understanding and meaningful change.

Suspension, revocation & immediate effect

If members conclude that regulatory action is required, they may, in an appropriate case, suspend or revoke an existing licence.

A separate and important question is whether that decision should take immediate effect. Under **section 61 of the LGMPA 1976**, immediate suspension or revocation may be imposed where the authority considers that the interests of public safety require it.

That should not be treated as automatic. It requires a specific public safety assessment. The question is not simply whether the underlying conduct is serious, but whether the perceived risk is such that the driver should cease licensed work immediately rather than under the ordinary statutory arrangements.

Where immediate effect is imposed, clear reasons are particularly important.

A driver will generally have a right of appeal to the Magistrates' Court, ordinarily within 21 days of notification of the decision. The written decision and appeal provisions should therefore be examined promptly.

The existence of an appeal right should not, however, lead a driver to treat the sub-committee hearing as merely preliminary. An appeal involves further litigation, cost and uncertainty. The committee hearing should be approached as the point at which the case needs to be properly presented.

That means reading the papers carefully, identifying factual errors, understanding the authority's policy, providing relevant evidence in good time and ensuring that the representations answer the actual regulatory concern. Turning up intending simply to "*explain what happened*" is rarely an adequate substitute.

Ultimately, the committee is deciding whether it can continue to place regulatory trust in the driver. The strongest representation combines careful scrutiny of the evidence with a credible answer to the public safety issue. Where the evidence is weak, that should be demonstrated precisely. Where mistakes are accepted, the case should explain why they do not indicate an unacceptable future risk. Where policy points towards an adverse decision, any proposed departure must be justified by the individual facts.

I specialise in transport, regulatory and licensing law, including representation before licensing sub-committees, Traffic Commissioners and appellate forums.

Drivers and operators facing investigation, licence review, refusal, suspension, revocation or licensing sub-committee referrals are welcome to make contact for advice or representation.

BLACK CAB SHORTAGE THREATENS LONDON HACKNEY CARRIAGE DRIVERS

London taxi drivers are facing a severe shortage of new black cabs as production cuts and strict environmental rules squeeze the trade. Drivers and fleet operators in London are currently enduring 9-month wait times for LEVC vehicles, which remains the only available manufacturer for purpose-built London taxis says *The Telegraph*.

The manufacturing slowdown comes as TfL forces older diesel vehicles off the road under net zero targets, leaving cabbies scrambling to buy new electric models. With mainstream car makers such as Ford, Stellantis and Nissan choosing not to build London taxis due to financial viability, the trade is heavily reliant on LEVC, owned by Chinese giant Geely.

Mick Walker, secretary of the

London Cab Drivers' Club, said: "Everyone is starting to realise the trade is in serious trouble. There are drivers being put out of work now because they cannot get a vehicle." While the secondhand market remains relatively healthy for individuals, fleet operators that rely exclusively on new vehicles are bearing the brunt of the shortfall. Colts Cabs, London's largest fleet operator with over 1,000 cabs, was recently offered just 10 vehicles after attempting to order 30 in March.

Steve McNamara, general secretary of the LTDA, said: "Fleets are really struggling to get hold of new vehicles. In recent weeks and months, there have been attempts to place orders for 200 cabs and people are being told they can only have 25 and not until February next

year at the earliest."

LEVC defended its position, stating that it regularly adjusts manufacturing output to meet expected market demand while preparing for the launch of a new model. A company spokesman insisted that operations continue as normal.

However, industry figures show that the number of licensed taxi drivers in London has plunged from c. 20,400 in 2020 to 15,900. Cabbies argue that LEVC's build-to-order policy fails to keep pace with replacement needs, creating a vicious cycle as prices soar. When the electric TX model launched in 2018, it cost under £55,000, but financing deals now push the total cost above £90,000.

Under local air quality rules, black cabs must be retired after 12 years, meaning c. 1,300 cars will be taken off the streets in the next 11 months. At the same time, traditional recruitment has slumped: 3,400 people applied for the Knowledge test in 2000, but only 809 applied last year, with just 107 passing.

Mr Walker blamed the decline on competition from ride-hailing apps, noting drivers can obtain a PH licence in weeks compared to the years required to master the Knowledge. Pointing out that only one black cab driver qualified recently compared to over 600 PH drivers, he warned: "There's no one coming into the trade, really."

A TfL spokesman said it continues to work closely with the taxi trade and vehicle manufacturers to ensure the capital maintains enough licensed vehicles to meet customer demand while upholding required environmental standards.

TAXPAYERS LEFT WITH £7M BILL AS TfL LICENSING DELAYS HIT DRIVERS

Sadiq Khan has faced fierce criticism from the Conservatives after TfL ran up a compensation bill exceeding £7m due to severe delays in issuing licences to taxi and PH drivers.

Almost 18,000 drivers have received payouts of between £300-£500 under a Goodwill Payment Scheme, which was introduced to support those whose livelihoods were disrupted.

The backlog stemmed from the introduction of new licence processing software combined with an earlier cyber security incident.

TfL had previously faced threats of legal action over the "significant hardship" caused to PH drivers waiting months for renewals.

Mid-June figures obtained through a FoI request revealed that 17,972 payments totalling £7,642,120 had been made, leaving London fare payers to foot the bill for drivers whose renewed licences were issued between Sep 2024 - Dec- 2025.

Shadow Transport Secretary Richard Holden said: "Labour's Mayor of London once again proves his woeful administration is wasting Londoners millions of pounds and holding our capital back," calling the situation "simply a disgrace."

In response, a TfL spokesperson apologised to the affected drivers and confirmed that extra staff were recruited alongside issuing short-term licences to ease the backlog.

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DANGEROUS DRIVING

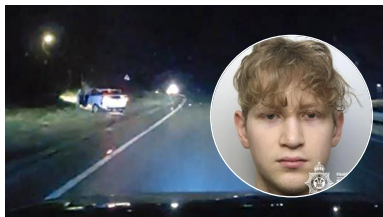
UNINSURED **141MPH** DRIVER JAILED AFTER CRASHING INTO TAXI SERIOUSLY INJURING CABBIE ON A48

An 18-year-old BMW driver who reached an extreme speed before crashing into a taxi has been sent to a Young Offender Institution.

Max Dangerfield overtook police on the A48 at Cross Hands at high speed and accelerated away when they activated their blue lights, before officers soon discovered the horrific collision scene.

Crash investigators later revealed that Dangerfield was travelling at over 141mph in a 70mph zone at the moment of impact.

The force of the crash pushed the taxi into the central reservation and back to the nearside verge, trapping the taxi driver inside and



requiring fire crews to free him before he was rushed to hospital.

The taxi driver suffered severe injuries, including seven fractured ribs, lung bruising, a liver laceration, and bleeds on the brain. In a statement read to Swansea Crown Court, the driver shared that he was bed-bound for months, unable to work for half a year, and

forced to give up night shifts as he continued to deal with long-term health issues from the crash.

Two passengers in the taxi were also taken to hospital for checks.

The defendant, of Felinfoel, pleaded guilty to causing serious injury by dangerous driving.

Judge Huw Rees stated: "This was an atrocious example of bad driving. You could have killed a number of people. All this is due to your selfish want to drive at an extreme speed."

Dangerfield was sentenced to 28 months in custody, a 50-month driving disqualification and an extended retest requirement.

SENTENCE INCREASED FOR SNAPCHAT DRIVER WHO KILLED CABBIE IN **100MPH** CRASH

A 21-year-old cleaner who filmed herself driving at nearly 100mph on Snapchat before causing a fatal head-on collision has had her prison term increased to nine years and three months.

Liberty Mitchell, who had passed her driving test just three weeks prior to the December 2022 crash, was originally sentenced to six years and eight months at Gloucester Crown Court.

Senior judges at the Court of Appeal lengthened the sentence after Attorney General Ellie Reeves KC MP referred the case as unduly lenient, pointing to Mitchell's reckless behaviour and history of sharing dangerous speeding videos on social media.

The tragedy unfolded when Mitchell attempted to overtake three vehicles at once on the



wrong side of a 60mph road, eventually clipping a car and causing a major pile-up. The crash claimed the lives of taxi driver Octavian Codreanu and his passenger, Moyra Whelan, who was travelling to a wedding.

Mitchell pleaded guilty to multiple charges, including causing death and serious injury by dangerous driving, as well as driving without valid insurance since her policy did not cover work-related travel.

Other passengers involved

suffered catastrophic injuries, including broken bones, severe abdominal wounds, and long-term psychological trauma.

While defence counsel argued that Mitchell's actions stemmed from "inexperience rather than irresponsibility," Judge Lowe condemned her conduct, telling her she was "a reckless and immature young driver suffering from the, frankly common, teenage delusion that you were invulnerable and free to do as you wished."

Welcoming the extended sentence, the Attorney General noted that Mitchell showed a complete "disregard for the danger she posed to others," leaving lives irrevocably shattered by her decision-making behind the wheel.

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SHAME SHAME

FORMER ARMY TRANSLATOR JAILED FOR 7 YEARS FOR RAPING TEENAGE PASSENGER NEAR EDINBURGH

A former military translator who became a PH driver after moving to Scotland from Afghanistan has been sentenced to seven years in prison for raping a vulnerable teenage passenger.

Abdul Nabizada, 36, was sentenced at the High Court in Edinburgh on 11 August, after being found guilty of the horrific attack on a 19-year-old woman who had trusted him to take her home safely following a night out in November 2021.

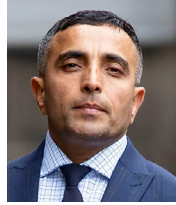
Instead of driving the intoxicated passenger to her destination, Nabizada seized her mobile phone, drove her to a secluded area near Edinburgh, detained her against her will, and subjected her to a

serious sexual assault.

Judge John Morris KC described the crime as a “crime of opportunism,”

noting that the victim “was particularly vulnerable because she was intoxicated and that should have been obvious to you” given that he was responsible for transporting her home.

The victim managed to escape from the vehicle and find her friends, who discovered her distressed and frightened before reporting the terrifying ordeal to the authorities.



Police used CCTV footage, mobile phone data, witness testimony, and DNA found on the victim's clothing to track down Nabizada, with cameras showing him repeatedly returning to the scene of the crime in the hours following the attack.

During the court proceedings, Nabizada continued to deny his guilt. Despite submitting positive references and noting he was a family man with no prior convictions, Judge Morris handed down a seven-year prison sentence, placed him on the sex offenders' register indefinitely, and issued a non-contact order to protect the victim.

NEWCASTLE UBER DRIVER WHO RAN RED LIGHT AND KNOCKED MAN DOWN AVOIDS JAIL

An Uber driver who felt under pressure to rush a passenger to a hospital appointment jumped a red light and knocked down a grandfather in Newcastle.

Shak Rahman, 48, struck the victim as he crossed Percy Street after finishing work, throwing him into the air and onto the windscreen before he landed heavily on the road. Prosecutors told Newcastle Crown Court it was “quite remarkable” the pedestrian was not more seriously injured.

The victim remembered nothing between crossing the road and waking up in hospital.

Although Rahman gave his details to ambulance staff, he left the scene. When police went to his home, they saw his car was

damaged from the impact. A tyre was more than 10 years' old, his brakes were rusted and there was a loose cover on the steering wheel but this did not contribute to the crash.

With no previous convictions, Rahman pleaded guilty to dangerous driving. Defence solicitor Spencer Downey explained: “He believes his passenger was going to an appointment at the RVI and they were complaining they were running late, adding to the pressure on him.”

Recorder Tony Hawks condemned the “completely reckless act,” telling Rahman: “You took an enormous risk by ignoring a red light and you ran over a pedestrian, who had to go to hospital.

“Fortunately, he was not seriously injured but he could have been killed or seriously injured, in which case you would undoubtedly go to prison immediately.”

Rahman was sentenced to 10 months in prison, suspended for 18 months, handed a 12-month driving ban, and ordered to pass an extended test.

The judge told him: “I’m not going to send you to prison immediately because you have been punished significantly as a result of this completely reckless act on your part, namely you have lost your livelihood as a private hire driver and from what I know of the city council you are unlikely to get your licence back with a conviction for dangerous driving.”

SHAME SHAME

BAN AND LICENCE REVOCATION FOR PH DRIVER CAUGHT ON PHONE WHILE DRIVING IN LEEDS

A Leeds private hire driver has been banned from the road for three years and stripped of his licence after nearly colliding with a police car while using a mobile phone at the wheel.

The incident unfolded in Harehills when two West Yorkshire Police Special Constables - one experienced and one a student - were on patrol.

According to the force, the private hire driver pulled out directly in

front of their vehicle while distracted by his phone. Realising he had cut off police officers, the motorist panicked and threw his phone onto the floorboards.

As he fumbled around to retrieve it, he nearly smashed into the police patrol car.

When officers directed him to pull over, the student officer approached the cab to address the dangerous driving. Instead of cooperating, the taxi driver started

shouting abuse.

The more experienced officer then stepped in to deal with the motorist. The driver was booked for using a mobile phone while driving, driving without due care and attention, driving without being in proper control of a vehicle, and operating a vehicle with three illegal tyres.

Following a court summons, the driver received a three-year driving ban, had his private hire licence revoked and was fined £1,492.

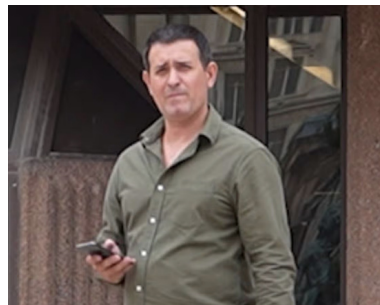
LIVERPOOL CABBIE HANDED SUSPENDED SENTENCE FOR PET INSURANCE SCAM

A Liverpool private hire driver who fabricated an elaborate insurance fraud scheme involving dead dogs has been handed a suspended prison sentence after struggling financially when his cab repeatedly broke down.

Robert Cretu, 40, submitted 30 fraudulent claims to five separate insurers for fictitious dogs that had supposedly died in tragic circumstances, netting a total of £31,700 between December 2023 and August 2025.

Cretu concocted dramatic stories to support the scam, claiming one dog had leapt from Blackpool Pier into the sea while chasing a seagull and another had been struck by a lorry in the Lake District.

He produced forged documents and veterinary records using false identities and bank accounts, though several claims actually failed or were rejected due to suspicious circumstances and



excessive costs.

Defending barrister Sarah Griffin told Liverpool Crown Court that Cretu had stopped working as a factory supervisor to become a taxi driver, but suffered from low income after his vehicle broke down multiple times.

She noted that he was the sole financial provider for his partner and her 10-year-old child, stating he intended to pay the relevant insurers back from his ongoing work.

Judge Gary Woodhall sentenced Cretu to 20 months in prison,

suspended for 18 months, with a rehabilitation activity requirement of up to 20 days.

Judge Woodhall remarked: "Those insurance companies and the insurance business generally has to invest heavily to try to stop the sort of things that you did. That increases fees for everybody else.

"There is some detail provided suggesting that your employment was the cause of your offending due to debt that you had incurred.

"Your dates do not stack up, as far as that is concerned. You started working as a taxi driver in October 2024, and this offending started almost 12 months earlier."

However, the judge was ultimately persuaded to suspend the sentence due to Cretu's lack of previous convictions, genuine remorse, and the severe impact an immediate custodial sentence would have on his family.

FIT AND PROPER

SOUTH CAMBS COUNCIL REFUSED PH LICENCE OVER DRIVERS POOR ENGLISH & DISHONESTY CONCERNS

A PH licence has been denied to a driver by South Cambs DC after a licensing review panel raised concerns about his language skills and honesty. During a private meeting, officials examined the driver's application and heard oral evidence from both the applicant and a licensing officer.

The panel concluded the driver lacked a sufficient command of the English language to comply with standard licence conditions. Minutes of the meeting stated the applicant "failed to understand and accurately complete the council application form" and gave verbal testimony that "did not

match the legislation at the time," leading the panel to state that he "appeared to be dishonest." Further, a background check revealed multiple road offences plus "lack of awareness and failure to comply with the law." These suitability, compliance, and honesty concerns led to the refusal.

THREE CABBIES FINED AFTER BEING CAUGHT IN ILLEGAL **TRAFFORD** PICK-UPS CRACKDOWN

Three cabbies have been fined after illegally picking up passengers outside Old Trafford football ground and Lancashire County Cricket Club. The drivers accepted unbooked fares from undercover licensing officers.

Among those prosecuted was Manchester-licensed HC driver Ka Lun Wong, 59, of Radcliffe, who was at Manchester Magistrates' Court of unlawfully plying for hire

and driving without valid insurance. Wong was ordered to pay a £660 fine, £264 victim surcharge, £660 costs plus 8 points on his driving licence.

A second driver, Wolverhampton-licensed PH driver Muhammad Adnan, 40, of Bolton, pleaded guilty to plying for hire, driving without insurance, and failing to wear his driver's badge. Adnan received eight points, was fined

£430, plus a £172 surcharge and £198 in costs. Both cases related to pick-ups at the England v India Test match.

In a separate case heard at Tameside Magistrates' Court, Tahir Islam, 65, of Bury, pleaded guilty to similar offences taking place ahead of a Manchester United fixture. Islam was fined £484, ordered to pay £182 surcharge and £200 costs, plus eight points.

SLEAFORD CABBIE HANDED 6-MONTH BAN AND MUST PAY £2,500 FOR OPERATING UNLICENSED CAB

A Sleaford cabbie has been banned from driving for six months after using an unlicensed vehicle for his business.

Mohammad Karim, 27, was sentenced at Boston Magistrates' Court for driving a Skoda Kodiaq without a taxi licence or valid insurance on two separate occasions in Sleaford town centre. The court heard he originally had permission to drive a different car, but switched to the unlicensed

vehicle when his regular cab became "undriveable".

Prosecutor Lottie Tyler told magistrates that Karim used the Skoda on 15 September and on 7 October last year. "The defendant used a Skoda in Sleaford town centre as a taxi without a licence for himself or the vehicle," Miss Tyler explained.

North Kesteven DC revoked Karim's licence on 25 September following the first incident, but he

returned to the roads less than a fortnight later. Miss Tyler noted: "He admitted to NKDC he hadn't used the vehicle for which he was licensed as it was undriveable and used this vehicle instead to carry out business."

Karim already had six points on his driving licence, so the six received for the insurance offences, triggered a six-month ban. He was also fined £1,320, plus a £525 victim surcharge and £620 court costs.

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FIT AND PROPER

LUTON PH DRIVER TO PAY £1,600 AFTER OBSTRUCTING MILTON KEYNES ENFORCEMENT OFFICER

A PH driver licensed by Luton BC has been ordered to pay £1,600 after being found guilty of obstructing a Milton Keynes enforcement officer.

The incident happened at Milton Keynes Central Station in December 2025, when an enforcement officer approached a private hire

vehicle as part of routine licensing checks.

Driver Mohsin Kazmi, from Luton, was asked to provide his PH driver badge details but failed to do so and drove away. Following an investigation by Milton Keynes City Council, Mr Kazmi was identified and prosecuted. He was sub-

sequently found guilty at Milton Keynes Magistrates' Court of obstructing an authorised officer.

He was fined £770, ordered to pay a £308 victim surcharge as well as £518 costs; totalling £1,596.

Luton BC has also been informed of the conviction and is considering whether to take further action.

NORTH AYRSHIRE CABBIE SUSPENDED FOR THREE WEEKS AFTER REPEAT SMOKING OFFENCE

A North Ayrshire taxi driver has been suspended for three weeks after being caught smoking in his cab for the second time, despite having previously received a written warning.

Alister Gill, who has held his licence since 2007, was spotted driving slowly with the driver's window

partially down while holding a cigarette in his right hand before picking up a hire. Licensing standards officer Drew Robertson traced Mr Gill and informed him that he would be reported to the council's licensing committee.

During the hearing, committee members highlighted that the

previous warning letter had failed to deter him, with Cllr Christina Larsen noting he should have been fully aware of the regulations given his long experience in the trade.

Cllr Larsen's proposal to suspend the licence for three weeks was unanimously approved by the committee.

BRISTOL PH DRIVER BANNED AFTER MULTIPLE ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT & DISHONESTY

A PH driver operating in Bristol has been stripped of his licences with immediate effect following three separate allegations of sexual misconduct targeting lone female passengers. City councillors on the public safety and protection sub-committee concluded that the driver, identified as CB, demonstrated a very concerning pattern of behaviour.

The panel heard that Uber permanently deleted the driver's account in March due to initial reports of misconduct, while subsequent complaints surfaced regarding incidents involving

another operator.

During the hearing, the driver denied all allegations, claiming that his comments were polite, respectful and misinterpreted by passengers. He defended his record by highlighting his extensive experience, stating he had completed over 17,000 journeys and maintained high ratings and only these complaints had been made, which he described as exaggerated or untrue.

CB stated that "His conduct was consistent with professional standards," the meeting minutes noted. However, the licensing

panel dismissed his explanations as implausible. Applying national safety standards the committee unanimously ruled he was no longer a fit and proper person.

In addition to the misconduct findings, the committee uncovered evidence of dishonesty related to traffic offences. Police records showed the driver was linked to a speeding violation which he attempted to pin on a housemate. The committee rejected this defence, concluding he had lied to avoid penalty points, which provided sufficient grounds to revoke his licences.

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Brighton & Hove Cab Trade View

Andy Peters

Brighton & Hove Cab Trade Association

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DEVOLUTION AND QUESTIONS

A different one this time - a question that I have sent to two Brighton & Hove councillors regarding Devolution and how this will affect the B&H taxi/PH trade now that there has been an official announcement by the government on what is going to happen here.

Background: Brighton & Hove became a Unitary Authority in 1997. The worst-case scenario under Devolution was the possibility that the council could have been swallowed up into a new 'Sussex' authority with a single taxi/PH licence. However, what the council wanted was to remain a Unitary Authority and land-grab three smaller neighbouring areas from Lewes DC, which is to the east of Brighton.

So, I think that is a partial relief at the moment. However, we still have the prospect of a new Sussex Mayor, which Brighton and Hove will fall under. As it seems that such Mayors will have control over transportation, I am still holding my breath about the future of the BH taxi/PH trade until I get assurance in writing. So, the following letter details what I have asked and I intend to publish the reply in the October edition of **PHTM**:

Councillor Bella Sankey
Councillor Trevor Muten
Brighton & Hove Taxi/PH Licensing

Dear Councillor Bella Sankey and Councillor Trevor Muten

Devolution and the Brighton & Hove Taxi/Private Hire Trade

I have previously corresponded on the unknown major changes that Devolution will bring, not only to the local Brighton & Hove taxi/private hire trade but also the trade on a national scale.

Trevor, you will recall I asked various questions at the Brighton & Hove taxi/PH trade meetings that you

attended last year. Indeed, I was very straightforward with you about the possible consequences that Devolution would have for us.

However, you were not in a position to provide any answers at that point. You will also recall that my questioning made it very clear to all present that, at the time, the local trade was effectively in limbo with the prospect of being wiped out should any plans involved encompassing other licensing areas.

However, it has now been officially announced that the new Brighton & Hove devolved area will be taking over Saltdean, Peacehaven and Telscombe, that are currently in the area controlled by Lewes District Council. This means that Brighton & Hove will remain as a Unitary Authority albeit increased in size. So, on this basis I feel slightly relieved for the local licensed taxis/ph trade here. Nonetheless, there are still questions that need to be addressed.

New Sussex Mayor

Importantly, we now also have to consider that major changes may be made that will still affect the local trade here with the prospect of having a Sussex Mayor who will 'rule' over Brighton & Hove in 2028.

With that election now having been delayed, it is fortunate that we will be having you Bella (being Leader of Brighton & Hove City Council) serve as chair of the interim authority ahead of the future mayoral vote.

One responsibility of the new Sussex Mayor will be transportation and we do not know if the local Brighton & Hove taxi/PH sector will fall under this.

It is imperative, even at this early stage, that all of the Brighton & Hove licensed drivers, proprietors and operators should be given absolute assurances that the local Brighton & Hove taxi/PH trade will continue to function in exactly the same way as it does now.

This means that assurances must be given to the local trade that the new Sussex Mayor will not be decreeing that there will be a Sussex taxi/PHV licence encompassing the whole of Sussex incorporating Brighton & Hove.

Whilst I consider that this is probably not going to be the case, and that taxi/PH licences to drive and operate hackney carriages and private hire vehicles will remain



Brighton & Hove Cab Trade View

exclusively within the Brighton & Hove Unitary Authority...we need to know where we stand.

We also need full assurance that this includes the Brighton & Hove taxi/PH Licensing department that exclusively deals with taxis/PH drivers, vehicles and operators where we in the trade here have a very good, strong and close relationship. This is unlike most other areas where taxi/PH licensing is thrown in with the licensing of sex shops, poodle parlours and ice cream van vendors.... and everything else that needs to be licensed.

I must make it very clear that the Brighton & Hove taxi/PH trade has effectively been punished for a number of years by being flooded with 'out-of-town drivers' from Portsmouth, Southampton, Chichester, Lewes, Fareham, Havant, New Forest and Mid-Sussex, all encouraged under Uber to predominantly work here, that Brighton & Hove Licensing has absolutely no control over. Many of whom break their own respective licensing conditions and even illegally use our taxi ranks. Very recent examples of this can be provided.

As a consequence of this, the Brighton & Hove taxi/PH trade has dwindled in numbers.

This is due to drivers retiring or giving up their licences, because they have just... 'given up'. There are now fewer applicants to join the local trade here as they are unable to meet our local conditions of licensing and so seek licences in lower condition requirement areas. There are even drivers who actually live here who seek licences elsewhere to predominantly work here.

Number of Licensed Vehicles – Hackney Carriages & Private Hire Vehicles

- In 2015 the total number was 1,022*
- As of April 2026, this number has reduced to 940*

Number of Dual Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Driver Licences & Standalone Private Hire Licences

- In 2015 the total number was 1,789*
- As of April 2026, the total number was 1,051*

This massive 41% drop in driver licences emphasises the jolting reality of where we are today. This also affects the sustainability of the taxi/PH licensing department with the massive drop in fees. The irony

is that fees paid by 'out-of-town' drivers to their respective licensing authorities should be paid here.

**Figures taken from the government taxi/PH stats as of April 2026, published August 2026.*

Lewes DC Operators

Currently, Saltdean, Peacehaven and Telscombe are all controlled by Lewes DC and no doubt there are Lewes licensed operators being sole traders or as cab companies with registered offices based in those three areas.

As Brighton & Hove council is preparing to take over those areas which will then no longer be under the control of Lewes DC, what will happen to those operators/cab companies that run Lewes licensed taxis/PH vehicles currently registered in those areas? Will they be forced to cease trading as they will no longer fall under Lewes DC Licensing? In fact, it is understood that Lewes DC will no longer exist as such under Devolution.

It is presumed that you now know more than you did when I first asked these questions last year, so ultimately, we need to know the following:

- 1: Will Brighton & Hove retain the full licensing powers for the city's hackney carriage/private hire licensing of drivers, vehicles and operators post Devolution and when the new Sussex Mayor is put in place.**
- 2: What will happen to those operators/cab companies currently licensed by Lewes DC that are registered in Saltdean, Peacehaven and Telscombe?**

Our next trade forum meeting is on 26 August 2026 so, if possible, it would be beneficial to have a reply by then.

The above will also be published in my monthly column in the September edition of the national trade magazine, Private Hire & Taxi Monthly. I would then like to be able to publish your reply in the October edition.

Andrew Peters

BHTCA

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

OFFENCES COMMITTED BY ROBO TAXIS – WHO IS CRIMINALLY LIABLE?

Robotaxis are no longer something confined to science fiction or trials on the other side of the world. Transport for London has granted private hire vehicle licences to a fleet of autonomous cars intended for supervised use in London.

But the question we are being asked is: “What happens if one commits an offence?” What happens if it speeds, goes through a red light or, worse still, knocks over a pedestrian or cyclist? What happens if it collides with your car and you maintain that you were not at fault? Who will be criminally charged?

The current position

Historically, if a criminal offence arose from the way a vehicle was driven, responsibility fell immediately upon the driver of that vehicle. That remains the position for vehicles which have driver-assistance or autonomous capabilities (a Tesla, for example) but still require a human driver. In those circumstances, the buck still stops with the driver.

There are well-established examples of that principle in practice. A driver cannot avoid penalty points for speeding simply because the satnav displayed the wrong limit. The court expects the driver to observe the road signs and street lighting, rather than relying blindly upon the speed shown by an electronic system.

Likewise, we have dealt with cases at Patterson Law in which drivers were convicted after an autonomous function in their vehicle failed to operate properly. One example involved a gentleman driving an ordinary vehicle fitted with lane assist. He engaged the autopilot mode, but the system failed to negotiate a bend. The vehicle continued straight ahead and collided with an oncoming vehicle. He argued that he was not at fault because the vehicle had caused the collision. The court found against him because he remained the driver and retained responsibility for the control and direction of the vehicle.

The transitional phase

The position becomes more complicated with the robotaxis that are now being introduced onto UK roads.

Although these vehicles are capable of driving themselves, they are not operating as completely driverless vehicles. The current London rollout still requires a trained and licensed safety driver to remain onboard and capable of taking control if necessary. In many respects, that means the current position remains comparatively straightforward because there is still a human being present who is responsible for the vehicle.

However, where it will become complex is in the future with the **Automated Vehicles Act 2024**, which has been designed to prepare for a future in which vehicles are authorised to drive themselves. The legislation begins to distinguish between the actions of the human supervisor and the driving decisions taken by the automated system itself. That distinction becomes important under the future.

It is unclear whether these new laws are going to be in force in time for this trial, but it's unlikely they will be.

The future position

This is where it may become much more complex.

The **Automated Vehicles Act 2024** provides the framework for vehicles that may be authorised to drive themselves, but the main regulatory scheme is not yet fully in force and remains dependent upon provisions, secondary legislation and authorisation processes. The Act provides for two different types of authorised automation feature: a user-in-charge feature and a no-user-in-charge feature.

For the present supervised trials, the person behind the wheel is the driver or safety driver and remains legally responsible under the existing law. A statutory ‘user-in-charge’ will be a different role under the future regime: an individual in a position to exercise control of an authorised automated vehicle while an authorised user-in-charge feature is engaged, but who is not actually controlling the vehicle at that time.

When brought into force, section 47 may generally protect the ‘user in charge’ from being criminally liable for offences that the vehicle committed without their input. However, there will instead be different offences for users-in-charge.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS



- The new Section 54 states a user-in-charge would commit an offence where, at the time the authorised feature was engaged, it would have been obvious to a competent and careful user that the vehicle's state made its use dangerous. That offence would carry a 12 month ban and a possible prison sentence.
- Section 54 would also introduce aggravated offences where the vehicle's dangerous state causes death or serious injury. Again, that would carry a mandatory 12 month ban and a higher prison sentence.
- It would also be an offence to use, cause or permit the use of a vehicle without a person able to exercise control of it, unless it was operating under an authorised no-user-in-charge function with the required licensed oversight.

Separately, there would be a 'no-user-in-charge' feature. Once the relevant provisions are in force and the vehicle, feature and operator have received the required approvals, a journey may take place without anyone inside being responsible for driving. A passenger in such a vehicle will not become a user-in-charge merely by being present.

This no-user-in-charge model is the route to genuinely driverless operation. Once the relevant parts of the Act are fully implemented, an authorised vehicle will be able to complete a journey without anyone inside being expected to monitor the road or take over the driving.

The journey will instead be overseen under a licensed operator scheme, potentially involving remote supervision. The dividing line will therefore be between the vehicle's driving decisions, the conduct of the human user and the functionality engaged.

That will not mean that every person inside an automated vehicle is free from all responsibility. The immunity will apply only to offences arising from the manner of driving while the authorised feature is engaged and within the limits of its authorisation. It will not excuse a user-in-charge or even passenger from offences arising from their own conduct, and other legislation may continue to treat the user-in-charge as the driver except where the section 47 immunity applies.

Issues?

For the supervised robotaxi trials now being introduced, the position remains straightforward: the trained, licensed safety driver is present and remains legally responsible under the existing law. Under the future statutory regime, an individual may become a user-in-charge only where an authorised user-in-charge feature is engaged.

That person may then be protected from liability for the vehicle's driving decisions, but will retain responsibility for their own conduct and for responding appropriately when a valid transition demand requires control to be resumed.

For a genuinely driverless journey using an authorised no-user-in-charge feature, no passenger will be responsible merely because they are inside the vehicle. Responsibility will instead be allocated through the separate statutory and regulatory duties imposed on the authorised self-driving entity and the licensed no-user-in-charge operator.

There will inevitably be difficult cases at the boundary between those two positions. Questions will arise about whether the feature was properly engaged, whether it was being used within the conditions of its authorisation, whether a transition demand was made and whether the human user had resumed control. Those facts will be critical when deciding who, if anyone, should be prosecuted. That could well become one of the defining road traffic issues of the next decade.

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

PattersonLaw
THE DRIVER DEFENCE SERVICE

THE NATIONAL
HACKNEY
FARES TABLE

SEPTEMBER 2026

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

UPDATED DAILY
www.phtm.co.uk

NATIONAL AVERAGE
2 MILE
HACKNEY FARE
TARIFF ONE
£7.48

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

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

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

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

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

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

WORLDWIDE TAXI FOCUS

from Ireland



RECORD NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS ABOUT IRISH CABBIES LAST YEAR

Irish taxi drivers faced a record number of complaints last year, alongside a 15 per cent increase in fines issued to licence holders, according to new figures from the National Transport Authority.

The NTA recorded 1,815 complaints in 2025, which marks a 6 per cent increase from the previous year. Most of these complaints involved fare disputes at 54 per cent, followed by hiring issues at 22 per cent, driver behaviour at 20 per cent, and vehicle condition at four per cent.

Dublin accounted for 77 per cent of all complaints, while counties Cavan, Monaghan, and Leitrim did not receive any. Following initial investigations, about six out of ten complaints required no further action, whereas 165 led to fines, 28 were sent to other agencies like An Garda Síochána, and two resulted in criminal prosecutions regarding fare disputes and driver behaviour.

Compliance officers also carried out more than 16,700 face-to-face roadside audits and thousands of remote checks, resulting in 1,043 on-the-spot fines for rule breaches. These penalties included fines for failing to maintain vehicle standards, refusing cashless payments, and unlawfully denying rides to passengers with guide dogs or wheelchairs.

The NTA stated it was committed to ensuring compliance with legislation governing small public service vehicles as well as ensuring public safety and that legitimate professional taxi drivers do not have to compete with “others operating to lower standards”.

from Uganda



11 CABBIES ARRESTED IN NIGHT RAID AFTER UGANDA ROAD TRAGEDIES

Eleven commuter taxi drivers have been arrested during a night enforcement operation at Maya along the Kampala-Masaka Highway for allegedly engaging in dangerous loading. Traffic Police spokesperson Michael Kananura stated that drivers

deliberately travel at night to avoid checkpoints, warning that carrying excess passengers or loads destabilises vehicles and increases the risk of fatal crashes.

The crackdown follows a string of deadly incidents, including a crash in Lwera where a commuter taxi collided with a truck, killing all fourteen passengers on board, and another collision days later at Kakira Junction that left two people dead.

Official figures show that Uganda recorded 26,044 road crashes in 2025, resulting in more than 5,300 deaths, with over 40% of incidents linked to reckless driving.

Addressing the operation, Michael Kananura said: “We have started a crackdown against dangerous loading and anyone found violating this shall be arrested and prosecuted.

“No journey is worth risking human life.”



from Spain



UK TOURIST ARRESTED FOR ATTACKING TWO CABBIES AT PALMA AIRPORT

A British tourist was arrested outside Palma airport last month after violently attacking two taxi drivers and damaging a cab.

The violence began when a taxi driver reprimanded pedestrians for crossing on a red light, prompting the British man to open the moving cab's passenger door. When the driver pulled over to ask why, he was punched in the face and knocked to the ground. A colleague who rushed to help was struck in the chest and abdomen, while the tourist repeatedly smashed the bonnet, front door, and wing of the second vehicle, causing around 400 euros of damage.

A third driver and bystanders stepped in to subdue the agitated tourist until airport security and the Policía Nacional arrived.

Both injured drivers suffered pain from the assaults and required medical treatment at a health centre, while the suspect was detained on two counts of assault and criminal damage.

WORLDWIDE TAXI FOCUS

from South Africa



PARTNERSHIP AIMS TO TRANSFORM JOHANNESBURG'S TAXI INDUSTRY

A new partnership signed on 6 August, aims to overhaul Johannesburg's taxi sector, improve daily operations and bring safety and dignity to millions of inner city commuters.



The memorandum of understanding was agreed between taxi industry body Gibela Namela Holdings and urban renewal movement Jozi My Jozi. The initiative comes amid growing concerns over the potential collapse of a vital taxi rank, plus frequent reports of road accidents and regulatory non-compliance. Officials behind the initiative believe that improving the sector will benefit all road users and fundamentally change the city's future.

"In Johannesburg, millions of people take minibus taxis every day, and commuters, whether they ride in minibus taxis or drive their own vehicles, deserve safer roads. That is what this MOU is all about. If we fix taxis, we positively shift the trajectory of the whole city," said Jozi My Jozi CEO Innocent Mabusela.

Mabusela highlighted that the taxi sector is one of the city's most crucial economic drivers. He noted that the agreement followed months of careful consultation with industry leaders to ensure lasting solutions were built alongside the people who operate the system daily. The framework outlines long-term goals such as introducing technology for digital record-keeping, raising operational compliance and setting the groundwork for future public integration and government subsidies. Practical improvements will be driven through four core pillars: Project Dignity to upgrade and clean congested ranks; Project Protect to enhance security with smart cameras, solar lighting and trained marshals; Project Heal to support drivers' physical and mental health; and Project Learn to provide professional road safety training.

Additionally, the partners plan to launch a Smart Mobility Transit system. This digital approach will introduce modern electronic ticketing and data-driven solutions to optimise public transport across the city.

from Morocco



MOROCCAN UNIONS WARN CABBIES AGAINST BLOCKING RIDE-HAILING CARS

Moroccan taxi drivers have been warned by union officials that they could face legal action if they block, surround, or detain ride-hailing vehicles, as they have no authority to enforce transport regulations.

The Democratic Transport Union, condemned roadside interceptions and stated that disputes over unlicensed transport must be handled by police and local authorities rather than drivers taking matters into their own hands. Faraby criticised a small group of drivers for staging ambushes, using decoy passengers, and impersonating enforcement officers. He emphasised restricting someone's freedom of movement can't happen outside the legal framework. Meanwhile, the Moroccan Democratic Transport Union, defended the actions, arguing that professional drivers were exercising their constitutional right to protest against unauthorised transport.

MOROCCAN COURT JAILS 7 CABBIES OVER CEUTA MIGRATION CRISIS

Seven taxi drivers in northern Morocco have been handed six-month prison sentences and fined £800 each for aiding irregular migration by driving people to the Spanish border in Ceuta. Judges found the cabbies guilty of "facilitating the illegal exit of Moroccans and foreigners through unauthorised border points" and "transporting passengers without a licence," after they drove clients to the Moroccan border town of Fnideq.

The drivers were sentenced last month after appearing before prosecutors without defence representation due to a nationwide lawyers' strike. The National Taxi Union condemned the sentences as "shocking and harsh," noting: "no official decision was issued imposing restrictions on passenger transport." It stated that the drivers were punished for simply carrying out a public service by transporting citizens during a time of widespread travel.

Angry cabbies stressed that they have no legal power to check passenger IDs or question their destinations, which is down to the authorities. The union has urged the Court of Appeal to overturn the verdicts.

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RAMS TO CLAIM SUPER BOWL - HAGGAS TO FINALLY LAND ARC WITH RAIDER!

It was supposed to be February 2026... they were unstoppable and destined for a home Super Bowl... they were the best team across the NFL... but they lost in a monumental NFC Championship game to eventual winners, Seattle... They were, and probably still are, seething!

So, what have they done? Licked their wounds and cried foul? No, they have gone all in and now the league's best offence have just sold their soul to the devil, like Faustus, to acquire the league's most fearsome sack machine, the league's defensive player of the year, the league's perpetual pro-bowler, Miles Garrett to lead their defence, with the aim of claiming next year's Super Bowl.

Value is not always in finding some trendy odds and the favourites, at 6/1, **THE LA RAMS**, simply cannot go unbacked and GO LARGE as this price will be a distant memory come Thanksgiving.



Of course, there are two sides to the NFL, the NFC (where the Rams play) plus the AFC, and rather than back the Rams each way, I prefer to pick a team from the opposing conference in the hope they meet in the final. On that theme, I quite fancy the chances of perennial contenders, the **KANSAS CITY CHIEFS**, now that Patrick Mahomes is back from injury and with the acquisition in the close season of Kenneth Walker, last year's MVP RB from reigning Super Bowl champions, Seattle. At 16/1, that price can be made to look ridiculous by the turkey carving time.

THE PRIX DE L'ARC DE TRIOMPHE

Paris in early October can only mean one thing to us horse followers, Europe's premier all age horse race, and this year I quite fancy the chances of rapidly improving **MALTESE CROSS** to wrest home the crown for shrewdie William Haggas. 7/1 third favourite, the Malteser has recently been aimed at the race in preference to being favourite for the St Lager after impressing in both Paris (Grand Prix) and the Voltigeur, and this rapidly improving entire can dance down the Champs-Élysées come October.

THE ST LAGER

Speaking of which, with Maltese not running, this opens the door to Joseph O'Brien beating his dad to the oldest classic with Gordon Stakes winner, **ENCELADUS** at 7/2. Trainer of the year Joseph is well capable of adding to his CV. Alternative, and definitely left field, is **ZIA ZABEL** at a juicy double carpet (at time of writing), that's 33/1 for those not au fait with bookies' speak.

FOOTY'S BACK!

As promised last month, my tips for the lower league's are...

DIVISION 1

Last year **LUTON** were fancied to return straight away to the Championship but expectations and managerial changes took their toll. Now under Jack Wilshere, they have turned the corner and are a confident selection for promotion. Back each way at 7/1 if you must, especially as that giant behemoth, Leicester, are in the Division, but I feel their off the pitch problems, notably that the club is up for sale, will distract them sufficiently to halt their charge...yes it's the Hatters for me at Nevis.



DIVISION 2

Big spending and moneybags Salford can be opposed in the basement by shrewd **BARNET**, who have started the season well. At 8/1, they are a fantastic price. Back now before the price shrinks.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

And so finally to the Champions League, now the participants have been decided and I can't help feeling that Spanish super giants **BARCELONA** are due a win, especially if they manage to acquire Alvarez from Atletico before the end of the month. 6/1 is a fair price



Until next month

Good punting

Bernie the Book



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