

# Taxi and Private Hire Newsletter

Summer 2024

issue 14

## Taxi and Private Hire Newsletter Summer Edition 2024

**Message from Councillor Zee Russell, chair  
of the Statutory Licensing Committee and  
Regulatory Committee.**

I am proud to announce that City of  
Wolverhampton Council's Regulatory  
Committee is the first to approve the  
recommendations of the Department for  
Transport's Best Practice Guidance.

These changes are the most significant to  
policy for several years. Most visibly, all  
private hire vehicle operator door signage has  
been removed, to prevent impersonation of  
legitimate vehicles by fraudsters.

All conditions which effectively restricted  
private hire drivers from working with multiple  
private hire vehicle operators have been  
removed and hackney carriage drivers are

reminded that they can accept pre-booked  
work from any operator that chooses to do so.

Please read through this issue in detail to find  
out about the other changes approved by the  
committee.



**Councillor Zee Russell**



# Regulatory Committee - Best Practice Guidance implementation

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On 10 July 2024, the Regulatory Committee approved new licence conditions that will be in force from 1 August 2024. To see the tracked changes to the licence conditions, please see:

- [Hackney carriage vehicle licence conditions](#)
- [Private hire driver licence conditions](#)
- [Private hire vehicle licence conditions](#)  
(Please note licence condition 4.1 was also removed)
- [Private hire vehicle operator licence conditions](#)

When you renew your licence, please read the conditions carefully, as they will be different to your current conditions and will incorporate the above.

As an existing licensee, you are currently bound by the conditions attached to your licence when it was granted. However, to ensure that the trade is consistent and that conditions removed in the interests of public safety are rolled out as quickly as possible, the following should be noted, effective from 1 August 2024:

- All private hire vehicle door operator signage approval is withdrawn, meaning that there is no approved operator door signage. The proprietor of the vehicle must remove the signage and drivers must not drive a vehicle with operator door signage.
- Operators are being requested to submit new approved signage for the rear of the vehicle. This will be A4 in size and cannot be magnetic. Private hire drivers may only drive a private hire vehicle with this signage if you and all other drivers of that vehicle are in an exclusive relationship with that operator. If you are leasing a vehicle from an operator, this does not necessarily form an exclusive relationship and you cannot enter into a lease which requires you to display

signage if you are not in an exclusive relationship with the operator, as you will be in breach of your licence conditions regarding unapproved signage.

The council will not be enforcing the following licence conditions for private hire vehicle licences, so the internal licence plate may be removed from 1 August 2024:

4.1 - The proprietor must display the interior plate detailing the licence number of the vehicle and the number of passengers permitted to be carried. This must be located on the upper left-hand corner of the front windscreen and must be clearly visible to persons both inside and outside of the vehicle.

In addition, with immediate effect, the licensing authority will not be enforcing the following conditions on private hire driver licences:

1.3 - The holder of this licence must notify licensing services via the My Licence Portal not less than 12 hours prior to commencing work with a new operator.

1.4 - The holder of this licence may not change their operator more than once within a 48-hour period.

1.7 - The holder of this licence can only receive bookings from the operator notified to the council for whom he is currently working.

This means that private hire drivers may partner with multiple operators and do not need to notify licensing services. The exception to this is for any proprietors of wheelchair accessible vehicles, who must still notify licensing services of the operator the vehicle is primarily partnered with, so that this can be recorded on the public register.

From your next licence renewal, the following will apply:

- We are working to develop a training programme for renewing drivers later this year. Once this is complete, all licensed hackney carriage and private

hire drivers will be required to attend training as part of their licence renewal. This will be available as online training or in person.

- All licence applicants (including renewals) have to provide a Certificate of Good Character/Conduct if they have been outside of the UK for three or more months continuously since the age of 18. The application form is being updated to require this.
- You will be required to undertake a daily walkaround check of their vehicle before driving, which you can complete at <https://taxiwalkaround.wolverhampton.gov.uk/>
- You will be required to notify licensing services of any new licences with any other licensing authority, as well as if they are reviewed, suspended or revoked.

For answers to more frequently asked questions about the changes arising, please visit [here](#).

## Extended opening hours for vehicle inspections

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Due to the increase in demand for the service, we are recruiting more staff so we can increase the hours of inspection at Loxdale.

The service will be able to undertake more inspections throughout the day up until 7pm.

The increase in working hours/inspections available is expected to start in September.

Where time allows, we are also opening the service on a weekend in order to reduce the backlog.

Please ensure there is sufficient time for your renewal applications and submit your renewal applications and all required documents as soon as possible in order to avoid any unnecessary delays with your applications.

The vehicle expiry letters are sent out well in advance of expiry dates, but you do not need

to wait for the letters if you know your licence is due to expire within the next month. Submit your renewal application and all documents using [Apply](#).

## Driving around Wolverhampton

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Please note that when you are entering Market Street from [Castle Street](#) and [Tower Street](#), there is a cycle lane which runs from right to left. This means that although you are turning right onto a one-way street, cyclists may approach from the right. Remember to look left and **look right** for cyclists at this and every junction.

Drivers are also reminded that there is no entry to the train station via Railway Drive. Several drivers were caught by the automatic numberplate recognition over the last year accessing this road, which is 'No Entry'.

## Original DBS certificates

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As part of our continuous drive to ensure public safety and deliver a high-quality service, we will be requesting that all Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) original certificates are verified before licences can be issued.

**You do not need to present your current certificate to licensing services**, but any DBS certificates you receive in the future must be provided either in person (no appointment needed) or via post (which will be posted back to the address on the certificate) to:

City of Wolverhampton Council  
Chapel Street  
Bilston  
WV14 0PH

Please ensure that these certificates are posted in advance of your licence expiring, essentially as soon as you receive it from the DBS.

New driver licence applicants will be required to bring their original DBS certificate and right

to work in the UK documentation into reception as part of the document verification process, along with their driving licence and proof of right to work.

Reception staff will take copies of the original certificate, this will then be validated by licensing officers prior to licences being issued.

Please note, it does need to be the **original DBS certificate** and not a copy or picture on your phone. Anything other than your original DBS will not be accepted and you may be required to reattend our offices.

## New driver ID badges

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From September 2024, new hackney carriage, dual and private hire driver licence badges will be posted out.

These new badges use contactless technology to verify your licence expiry date, allowing you to keep your licence through each renewal.

As such, all existing drivers should check the address on file is correct. You can do this at <https://iapply.co.uk/wdp/login>

Previously new drivers were required to attend the taxi licensing office in Bilston to collect their new driver licence and badges.

From June 2024, new applicants will need to attend the council's offices with original documents of their evidence of right to work in the UK, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate and driving licence.

After checks on these documents have been completed, new applicants will receive their licence in the post.

## Guide Dogs guidance

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Local authorities have been contacted by Guide Dogs seeking support for its "[Open Doors](#)" campaign,

All local authorities are being asked to ensure all private hire drivers complete disability

equality training and adopt a zero-tolerance approach to reports received for drivers refusing to take assistance dog owners.

Please familiarise yourself with the "Open Doors" campaign and see what you can do to help.

Drivers are reminded that the council defines an assistance dog as,

"not a pet, but a working service dog that has been certified by an organisation, that is a full member of Assistance Dogs International (ADI) or International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF), as trained or undergoing training to help a disabled person. To evidence this, either the dog must be wearing an identifying harness/jacket or its owner must be carrying certifying documents."

Operators are also reminded that under Section 167A of the Equality Act 2010, they commit an offence by failing or refusing to accept a booking for a vehicle for a passenger if the reason for the failure or refusal is that the passenger has a disability, or to prevent the driver of the private hire vehicle being made subject to their duties in relation to carrying passengers with disabilities. If there is a lack of suitable vehicles, there is no offence.

## My Licence Portal

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All licensed drivers are kindly asked to register to use the "My Licence Portal". You can use the portal to maintain your licence details and notify us of any amendments and changes you may have.

The email address you use to register with the portal **must** be the same email address on your driver/vehicle records. Register your email address here: [Signup](#).

You must verify the email address before you can log in - check your junk/spam folder for a verification email from "IAPPLY" Once you have verified your email address you can log in [here](#) - if you are having issues on your mobile device, try a laptop/PC. If you have forgotten the password that you have used and verified previously then use the

"Forgot Password" – again, please check your junk/spam folder for password reset as this email will be from "IAPPLY"

If you are notifying us of a change of address, please ensure you include a copy of your driving licence showing your new address. A replacement paper licence cannot be issued showing your new address until we have received a copy of your driving licence showing your new address.

When sending emails to the licensing team, please ensure you include your badge and/or plate number. This will allow us to locate your records and respond to your enquiry quickly and efficiently.

## Good work and feedback

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We have received some positive feedback from a member of the public relating to some excellent work carried out by a council employee. This was part of the work undertaken at Download Festival with taxis and private hire vehicles. Drivers were taking passengers from East Midlands Parkway Rail Station to the festival gates and campsites, as well as those who were making their way to East Midlands Airport.

"Hi, I was at East Midlands Parkway on Friday 15th and called an Uber together with some other ladies. It arrived and the vehicle was subjected to a thoroughly, professionally carried out inspection. The vehicle had two bald tires on the front.

The driver was not happy about being told to park correctly, he got quite agitated about his car being inspected and was definitely not happy about having his license suspended until he got the tyres replaced. Your employee removed his plate straight away.

The next Uber wasn't displaying his number plate and was similarly dealt with. I just wanted to let you know how professionally both situations were dealt with and that your employees are a credit to your company. They also phoned Uber and tried to get the fare refunded for the first failed trip. Thank you

so much for your vigilance regarding customer safety."

## Reporting anti-social behaviour

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Please play your part in reporting any anti-social behaviour you may witness at Wolverhampton Train Station when collecting or dropping passengers. If you witness any anti-social behaviour, please report it to the British Transport Police by texting 61016.

## City centre Public Space Protection Order introduced

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A Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) has been introduced to help tackle anti-social behaviour in Wolverhampton city centre.

The order gives certain regulated bodies such as West Midlands Police and the City of Wolverhampton Council powers to ask groups of 3 or more people to vacate the area if there is reason to believe they are causing or likely to cause a nuisance, threat or alarm to others, and to remove face coverings if they have no reasonable grounds to wear them and are purposely using them to disguise their identity.

It has been specifically developed to target those who cause anti-social behaviour in the area and will not affect people gathering to shop or visit the city centre, nor will it discriminate against those legitimately wearing a face covering, for example for medical reasons or religious purposes.

Data shows an increase in incidents of anti-social behaviour in the city centre over recent years, and while a number of measures have been put in place to address this, more robust and long term measures are needed to ensure that Wolverhampton remains a safe place to visit, work and live.

Superintendent Martin Hurcomb from Wolverhampton Police said: "We, working with

our partners at the council and specifically the Community Safety Team, are completely committed to providing a safe space within the city centre, where members of the public can feel safe in the knowledge that crime including anti-social behaviour is prioritised and proactively tackled.

"This Public Space Protection Order is a great example of how the partnership continue to consider all appropriate options to tackle anti-social behaviour."

Councillor Obaida Ahmed, the council's Cabinet Member for Digital and Community, added: "Public Space Protection Orders are designed to ensure the law abiding majority can continue to use and enjoy public spaces, safe from the threat of anti-social behaviour or nuisance.

"Where a group of people or an individual is likely to cause, or is causing, anti-social behaviour, the PSPO enables the authorities to request that they leave the area and remove any face coverings being purposefully used to disguise their identity."

The order covers the whole of the city centre inside the ring road. It came into effect following a period of public consultation earlier this year and will initially in place for a period of 3 years, subject to regular 6 monthly reviews.



## DBS Update Service registration

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It is a requirement for all drivers with enhanced DBS certificates to remain registered with the Update Service for the period of their licence. Drivers with enhanced DBS certificates have 30 days to subscribe to the DBS Update Service at the cost of £13 a year.

The subscription will automatically be cancelled if your bank card has either expired or been replaced due to the previous card being lost or stolen.

It should be noted that manual certificates cannot be registered on the Update Service, if you have a manual certificate then a new certificate would be required by licensing services every six months.

Licensing services are notified when drivers come off the Update Service – drivers will receive an email from licensing services. To purchase a new DBS certificate, please visit: [TaxiPlus](#)

Drivers must ensure their most up-to-date card is registered with the Update Service – failure to register or remain on the DBS Update Service is a breach of the licensing conditions and can result in a licence being reviewed and can subsequently mean that a licence could be revoked or suspended or a renewal being refused.

To subscribe to the Update Service please click here. [DBS CRSC \(crbonline.gov.uk\)](#)

Any queries regarding the Update Service can be sent to [Driver.Lic@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:Driver.Lic@wolverhampton.gov.uk)

## No age limits for ULEVs and ZEVs

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Prospective vehicle proprietors are reminded that there zero emission vehicles (ZEVs), such as full battery electric vehicles with no engine, are exempted from the council's vehicle age policy. In addition, the Regulatory Committee

also approved the inclusion of Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) in this exemption. ULEVs emit **less than** 75g CO<sub>2</sub>/km. ZEVs emit 0g CO<sub>2</sub>/km.

This is intended to spread the cost of purchasing this type of vehicle over a longer period, to incentivise their purchase.

Zero and Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles help to reduce air pollution, reduce carbon emissions and preserve fossil fuel reserves.

These vehicles will still require annual MOT testing up to 10 years of age and six-monthly MOT testing from 10 years.

You can check the vehicle's registration at <https://vehicleenquiry.service.gov.uk/>. If the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are listed as less than 75g/km (i.e. 0g – 74g), it is a zero or ultra-low emission vehicle.

Please note, imported vehicles which show the value of 0g but show a fuel type other than 'ELECTRICITY' or 'FUEL CELL ELECTRIC' are not ZEVs, but the emissions are recorded incorrectly. If there is an exhaust pipe, the vehicle is likely not a ZEV.

New vehicle licence applications are now accepted for any age ZEV or ULEV.

## Hackney carriage information

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Hackney carriage drivers are advised that they may ply for hire anywhere within the city boundary, which can be viewed here: [City Boundary](#).

## Private hire waiting

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Private hire vehicles cannot wait without a booking in an area where you would reasonably expect to find a hackney carriage, for example, within 50m of a hackney carriage rank.

This means that private hire drivers must not wait outside train stations, nightclubs, pubs, theatres etc. without a booking.

If you are waiting in these areas, you may be required to evidence a booking to an authorised officer of any licensing authority or the police.

It is also an offence for a private hire vehicle to enter a hackney carriage rank at any time, even to drop off or pick up pre-booked passengers.

The council's guidelines indicate that where a private hire driver is believed to have been standing or plying for hire, their licence would normally be revoked.

## DfT - VAT treatment of private hire consultation

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This is to advise that a consultation on the VAT treatment of private hire vehicles has been launched by the Department for Transport. Further information is available at: [www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-the-vat-treatment-of-private-hire-vehicles](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-the-vat-treatment-of-private-hire-vehicles). We would be grateful if you can help raise awareness of this consultation.

Responses should be sent by 8 August 2024 via email to: [phvovatconsultation@hmrc.gov.uk](mailto:phvovatconsultation@hmrc.gov.uk), or by post to: HM Treasury, VAT & Excise Team, 1 Horse Guard's Rd, London, SW1A 2HQ.

If you require this information in an alternative format contact:

Correspondence Team

HM Treasury

1 Horse Guards Road

London

SW1A 2HQ

Tel: 020 7270 5000

Email: [public.enquiries@hmtreasury.gov.uk](mailto:public.enquiries@hmtreasury.gov.uk)

## Question time

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If you have any questions relating to taxi licensing, please [email us](#) with the subject

'Taxi Newsletter FAQ' and we will publish answers to the most interesting and frequent questions in the next issue.

You can also refer to [Taxi Licence FAQs](#).

## How to contact us

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For driver enquiries –

[driver.lic@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:driver.lic@wolverhampton.gov.uk)

For vehicle enquiries –

[vehicle.lic@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:vehicle.lic@wolverhampton.gov.uk)

Please make sure to include your name and badge/plate number in all correspondence. If you are a new applicant, please include your WTP reference number in all enquiries.

Please note, we no longer operate from out of Hickman Avenue, Wolverhampton, WV1 2HS. All operations are now at Chapel Street, Bilston WV14 0PH.

**Please note that if you are reading a physical copy of this newsletter, a digital version with working hyperlinks can be found at:**

<https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/licences/taxi-licences/taxi-licensing/newsletter>