

Proposed Changes to Taxi Licensing Processes

Introduction and Background

Changes in legislation and technological advances have prompted a review of the requirements and processes undertaken by both new applicants and current holders of taxi licences with Coventry City Council.

The purpose of the review was to ensure that the processes undertaken by Coventry City Council in providing licences to taxi drivers and operators working within the city are robust and current ensuring that:-

- Only “fit and proper” individuals hold a taxi licence in Coventry
- Licensing processes are up to date and accessible
- Taxi’s in the City meet the needs of their customers

Following the review a number of proposed changes have been identified and we are keen to have your view on them.

Online Applications

Coventry City Council currently process around 1,600 interactions each year from their office on London Road, Whitley.

A new online application is being developed to allow current and new taxi licence applications, bookings and payments to be made electronically reducing the requirement for applicants to visit the Taxi Licensing Office and making the application process quicker and easier.

The final changes will be accessible by this new system.

To share your views on the proposals please complete the attached survey.

Following closure any responses received will be considered prior to implementing any changes.

Should you wish to speak to somebody about this survey or require a paper version or other accessible communication method in order to complete it please contact:

taxilicensing@coventry.gov.uk

Paper versions are also available at the Taxi Licensing Office.

New Applicants (drivers and vehicles)

Road Knowledge Test

Historically applicants for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire driver Licences have been required to undertake and pass a road knowledge test to confirm their knowledge and understanding of the area. In 2009 the Department for Transport (DFT) issued revised guidance recommending that it was unnecessary for Private Hire (PH) vehicle drivers to have the same knowledge of their locality as Hackney Carriage (HC) drivers.

Following the increase in the use of satellite navigation systems and pre-payment methods it is proposed to change the way in which local knowledge is tested for new applicants of PH licences.

The Proposal

To remove the requirement for applicants of PH driver licences to undertake the current Road Knowledge Test. Local area knowledge will now be tested within the driver training session. This element would still require applicants to prove local knowledge with failure to reach the required levels preventing their application from progressing. HC drivers will still be required to undertake and pass the formal Road Knowledge Test.

Question

Do you have any concerns with the proposal to change the way that road knowledge is tested for new applicants of Private Hire driver licences?

Yes

No

If no, please tell us why. If you have any alternative suggestions please provide details.

Communication and Literacy

Current applicants of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire driver licences are required to undertake and pass a level 3 communication and literacy test equivalent to British Citizenship level. The ability for drivers to be able to communicate effectively with passengers and for service users to be confident that financial transactions will be carried out appropriately is considered vital and it is not therefore proposed to remove the requirement to demonstrate this ability. It is proposed to change the way in which this knowledge is tested for new applicants.

The Proposal

To remove the requirement for applicants of driver licences to undertake the current level 3 communication and literacy test and to incorporate numeracy and literacy testing within the driver training session. This element would still require applicants to prove a required level of communication and literacy with failure to reach the required levels preventing their application from progressing.

Question

Do you have any concerns with the proposal to change the way that communication and literacy is tested for new applicants of driver licences?

Yes

No

If no, please tell us why. If you have any alternative suggestions please provide details.

Executive Vehicles

Currently all licensed PH vehicles are required to meet the following criteria in relation to the tinting of windows in order to be licensed:-

- The windscreen must permit 75% light transmittance
- The main front and rear side windows must permit at least 70% light transmittance
- The rear window / screen, and any other window (e.g. small quarter lights) must permit at least 40% light transmittance

Licensed PH vehicles classified solely as 'executive vehicles' used for chauffeur work and similar can currently be granted exemptions to some PH licence requirements in recognition of the type of work undertaken. These include:-

- The requirement to display the rear licence plate and door stickers on the outside
- The requirement for the driver of the vehicle to wear an identity badge

The current restrictions on tinting of windows can be restrictive for executive vehicles.

The Proposal

To include the light transmittance criteria requirements for PH vehicles on the list of exemptions for vehicles classified solely as executive vehicles.

Question

Do you have any concerns with the proposal to include the light transmittance criteria requirements for PH vehicles on the list of exemptions for vehicles classified solely as executive vehicles?

Yes

No

If no, please tell us why. If you have any alternative suggestions please provide details.

Other Proposed Changes

Disability and Child Sexual Exploitation Training

Since 2002 new applicants for taxi driver licences have been required to undertake and pass a driver training course which includes awareness of:-

- Customer Service
- Licensing conditions and requirements
- Health and Safety
- Customer Service
- Disability
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) (added in 2016)

Local issues in relation to disability and National concerns around CSE have required further consideration to be given to ensure that taxi drivers are fully aware of their responsibilities in these areas.

The Proposal

To introduce a mandatory Disability and Child Sexual Exploitation refresher training and assessment for all licensed drivers (private hire and hackney carriage) prior to the renewal or re-grant of their licence. Failure to undertake and pass the refresher training would prevent the application from progressing.

It is proposed that the refresher training would be undertaken as an online process with confirmation of successful completion required as part of the application process.

Question

Do you have any concerns with the proposal to introduce mandatory Disability and Child Sexual Exploitation refresher training as part of the licence renewal process?

Yes

No

If no, please tell us why. If you have any alternative suggestions please provide details.

Customer Payment Methods

In recent years advances in technology have reduced the amount of cash payment transactions that are undertaken. Historically the majority of taxis within the City have not been able to take payment for journeys by any other method.

Increasing numbers of online and app based services have meant that customers now have more options and the need to be able to make payment electronically in hackney carriages and private hire vehicles is regularly suggested and requested.

Currently the use of non-cash payment options in Coventry taxis is encouraged but optional. To ensure that taxi services in Coventry are up to date and accessible and meet the needs of service users this has been reviewed.

The Proposal

To make it mandatory for all private hire taxis and hackney carriages to have the facility to accept card and contactless payments via an approved card payment device.

Question

Do you have any concerns with the proposal to make it mandatory for all hackney carriage and private hire vehicles to have the facilities to accept non cash payments?

Yes

No

If no, please tell us why. If you have any alternative suggestions please provide details.

Thank you for taking the time to complete our survey.