



TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE **LICENSING COMMITTEE**

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Licensing Committee to be held on Tuesday, 8 October 2019 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Gloucester Square, Woking, Surrey GU21 6YL.

The agenda for the meeting is set out below.

RAY MORGAN
Chief Executive

NOTE: Filming Council Meetings

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AGENDA

PART I - PRESS AND PUBLIC PRESENT

1. Minutes
To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 11 June 2019 as published.
2. Apologies for Absence
To receive any apologies for absence.
3. Declarations of Interest
To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary and other interests from Members in respect of any item to be considered at the meeting.
4. Urgent Business
To consider any business that the Chairman rules may be dealt with under Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Matters for Determination

5. Introduction of a Knowledge Test for Operators (Pages 3 - 44)
Reporting Person – Matthew Cobb

6. Introduction of a Requirement for all Operators Door Signs to be Vinyl Stickers (not magnets) (Pages 45 - 72)
Reporting Person – Matthew Cobb

AGENDA ENDS

Date Published - 30 September 2019

For further information regarding this agenda and arrangements for the meeting, please contact Doug Davern on 01483 743018 or email doug.davern@woking.gov.uk



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LICENSING COMMITTEE – 8 OCTOBER 2019

INTRODUCTION OF A KNOWLEDGE TEST FOR DRIVERS

Executive Summary

This report presents a proposed change to the Private Hire Operators licensing regime, specifically the introduction of a Knowledge Test for Operators Licence Holders.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

RESOLVE That a requirement for an Operators Knowledge Test be implemented in order to ensure Operators are fully aware of their legal requirements.

The Committee has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

Background Papers: None.

Reporting Person: Matthew Cobb, Senior Licensing Officer
Email: matthew.cobb@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3650

Contact Person: Matthew Cobb, Senior Licensing Officer
Email: matthew.cobb@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3650

Date Published: 30 September 2018

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In the words of the Institute of Licensing, “A private hire operator (“an operator”) does not have direct responsibility for the safety of passengers, other road users or direct contact with passengers who are in the private hire vehicle (except where they are also licensed as a private hire driver). However, in performing their duties they obtain and hold considerable amounts of personal and private information about their passengers which must be treated in confidence and not revealed to others, or used by the operator or their staff for criminal or unacceptable purposes. As public trust and confidence in the overall safety and integrity of the private hire system is vital, the same standards will be applied to operators as those applied to drivers”
- 1.2 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (“the Act”), which was adopted by Woking Borough Council in 1977, gives the Licensing Authority the powers to issue licences for Taxis, Private Hire Vehicles and Private Hire Operators. In order to do this, each authority is tasked with drafting with its own set of policy, practice and guidance. As such, the actual set rules of the Act are few and far between and it is the Licensing Authorities role to ensure that those licenced are ‘fit and proper’ to do so, thus ensuring the safety of the travelling public.
- 1.3 Section 55(3) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 states that a council may attach to the grant of a licence under this section such conditions as they may consider reasonably necessary. In order to assist Licensing Authorities with this task, the Government has produced suggested ‘good practice’ guidance giving a basic skeleton set of conditions to which an Authority can build from. These good practice guidance formed the basis of the vast majority of the conditions for Private Hire Operators all across the U.K.
- 1.4 The Operator’s Licence is therefore issued to the applicant by Woking Borough Council (as the Licensing Authority) and conditions are attached in order to maximise good practice and safe working standards of Operators, thus ensuring the safety of the travelling public.
- 1.5 A copy of these conditions is attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.6 Since the conditions and practices for Taxi and Private Hire legislation were introduced over forty years ago, great changes have taken place with regard to the drivers and vehicle licences. However, there has been little change to the Operators Licences and the requirements to obtain one. It is therefore our view that certain changes need to be made to ensure that the Operators continue to be safe, secure, open and trustworthy, understanding of their requirements, safely provide for their drivers, and above all – knowledgeable of the law.

2.0 The Operators Knowledge Test

- 2.1 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 is the main piece of guiding legislation for Private Hire Operators and sets the foundation for how they are required to behave.
- 2.2 Failure to comply with the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 is an offence, which can result in the licence holder becoming liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.
- 2.3 As you will see from Appendix 1, the Operator’s Licence Conditions, there are quite a few requirements that an Operator is required to comply with in order to prevent offences being committed.
- 2.4 Operators Licences have been issued to those who are able to present a recent and clean Disclosure and Barring Service Check and make the relevant payment.

Introduction of a Knowledge Test for Drivers

- 2.5 In 2017 Officers of the Licensing Department drafted a “Private Hire Operator Licence” Pack which provides the Operators with full guidance on the process and practices required to ensure safe and proper running of their businesses. On all application forms and renewal forms, a tick box was added so that the applicant had to tick it to confirm that they had read this guidance.
- 2.6 The Operators Pack and Guidance is attached as Appendix 6.
- 2.7 Unfortunately it is evident from incidents that have happened both before the guidance was produced and afterwards – that some Operators are not suitably displaying the correct understanding of their legal requirements.

For example: Condition 1 on the Operator’s Licence Conditions (Appendix 1) relates to the requirement to keep logs of every journey that their drivers carry out. This is mainly in relation to Section 56(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 which states that

“Every person to whom a licence in force under section 55 of this Act has been granted by a district council shall keep a record in such form as the council may, by condition attached to the grant of the licence, prescribe and shall enter therein, before the commencement of each journey, such particulars of every booking of a private hire vehicle invited or accepted by him, whether by accepting the same from the hirer or by undertaking it at the request of another operator, as the district council may by condition prescribe and shall produce such record on request to any authorised officer of the council or to any constable for inspection.”

As such you can see that this is not a condition attached by the Local Authority – but a nationally required piece of legislation. Despite this – we have had cases where Operators are still failing to comply with this condition. Not just the small and new ‘one man band’ Operators, but there have been some situations recently where some of Woking’s well established running Operators have been failing to comply with this condition.

- 2.8 The Licensing Authority feels that a ‘Knowledge Test’ for holders of Operators Licences would be of huge benefit as it would ensure that applicants and licence holders are fully familiar with the laws that surround their occupation.
- 2.9 The proposal is that the Knowledge test would be a multiple choice test, much in the same way that the drivers are required to complete a “Laws and Standards” test. For reference, five example questions from the Drivers “Laws and Standards” Test are attached as Appendix 2.
- 2.10 An example five questions from a possible Operators Knowledge Test are attached as Appendix 3.

3.0 Consultation

- 3.1 Following the previous discussion of this matter in a Licensing Committee meeting on the 12th of March 2019, it was agreed that before proceeding, a full consultation should take place.
- 3.2 On the 29th of May 2019, a consultation letter was sent out to a seven-hundred-and-eighty-eight drivers, operators and vehicle owners, as well as being emailed to a further fifty-six people involved with Taxi and Private Hire Licensing (such as Local Authority Officers, Councillors, etc.). A copy of the letter is attached as Appendix 4.
- 3.3 During the consultation period we received only one response on the subject of the Operators Knowledge Test (0.11%). The response is attached as Appendix 5.

4.0 Proposal

4.1 The Licensing Authority therefore proposes the following

- i) The Knowledge Test would be a multiple choice test on the laws and standards required of an Operator, similar in style to the 'Laws and Standards' Knowledge Test that is required by all drivers, but with a heavy lean towards the requirements of the Operator's Licence.
- ii) There would be around 40 questions, all multiple-choice and all based upon Conditions seen in Appendix 1 and the guidance as seen in Appendix 2.
- iii) The requirement for a pass rate would be 100%, the same as is required for the Laws and Standards for drivers. This is due to the high level of importance in knowing the laws and ensuring that no offences are committed accidentally.
- iv) The cost of the Operators Knowledge Test would be £15.00. This is the same as the cost of the Knowledge Test required for Private Hire and Hackney Carriage applicants. The price is worked out on the basis of the staffing time of monitoring the test, the staffing time for marking the test and the cost of materials.
- v) All new Operators Applicants would be required to pass this test prior to being issued a licence.
- vi) In general, all existing Operators will be required to pass this Knowledge Test prior to the next renewal of their Operator Licences. Those Operators to whom the renewal dates are very soon (e.g. next month) may be permitted to have extra time to complete the test (e.g. before their next renewal in a year and a month). This will be at the Authority's discretion.
- vii) Those Operators who do not complete the Knowledge test will not have their licences issued / renewed until such time as the Authority is able to evidence that they have a sufficient level of understanding through the completion of the Knowledge Test.

5.0 Implications

Financial

5.1 No financial implications.

Human Resource/Training and Development

5.2 Not applicable

Community Safety

5.3 An improved understanding of the laws surrounding their profession should lead to an improvement in community safety.

Risk Management

5.4 Not applicable

Sustainability

5.5 Not applicable

Equalities

5.6 Not applicable

Safeguarding

5.7 Not applicable

REPORT ENDS

APPENDIX 1 - STANDARD CONDITIONS ATTACHED TO THE ISSUE OF A PRIVATE HIRE OPERATOR LICENCE

(These notes are for guidance only and are not a complete summary of the Act)

1. The operator shall keep (in permanent and easily legible form) a record of the following particulars in respect of every booking of a private hire vehicle operated by him, whether the booking is effected directly with the hirer or undertaken at the request of another operator:
 - (a) the date and time of the booking
 - (b) the date and time of commencement of the journey
 - (c) the name of the hirer
 - (d) the place or places at which the passenger or passengers were collected
 - (e) the place or places at which the passenger or passengers were set down
 - (f) the private hire vehicle licence number of the vehicle used
 - (g) the name and licence number of the driver
 - (h) the fare charged and whether or not calculated by means of a meter.

 2. The operator shall keep in permanent and easily legible form a record of the following particulars of every private hire vehicle operated by him:
 - (a) the make
 - (b) the model
 - (c) the registration mark
 - (d) the private hire vehicle licence number
 - (e) the expiry date of the private hire vehicle
 - (f) the District Council who issued the private hire vehicle licence
 - (g) the proprietor of the vehicle
 - (h) a service history of each vehicle including details of any modifications thereto and details of all accident repairs.

 3. The operator shall notify Woking Borough Council of any material change in the circumstances on the basis of which the licence was granted. In particular the operator must inform the Council of:
 - (a) any change of place of business or any additional place of business
 - (b) if the operator is a Company, any change in the address of the registered office
 - (c) any change in the nature of the business carried on by him
 - (d) any change in the composition of the firm if a partnership
 - (e) any convictions recorded against the operator or a partner of his
 - (f) any other change in the information given by the operator to the Council at the time of granting the current licence
 - (g) details of all staff connected with running of operator's licence.
- Notification must be given in writing within fourteen days of the event.
4. No advertising material, letter headings or other stationery, or any business name used by the operator, shall include the words 'Taxi' or 'Cab' whether in the singular or plural and whether they form part of another word or not.

 5. When a booking is accepted for a private hire vehicle to be present at a particular time and place, the operator shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that such a vehicle is so present.

 6. The operator shall ensure that all vehicles used by him and all drivers employed by or contracted to him are properly licensed and the conditions attached to those licences are complied with at all times.

 7. The operator shall keep a copy of driver and vehicle licences and insurance details.

Important note

The above conditions are additional to the requirements of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. Licence holders are required to be fully conversant with the relevant requirements of this Act but the most important are summarised below:

- (i) No operator shall operate any vehicle in a controlled district as a private hire vehicle unless both vehicle and driver are correctly licensed under the Act. (Section 46)
- (ii) An operator who accepts a booking for a private hire vehicle is liable under the contract for its hire whether or not he himself provides the vehicle. (Section 56(1))
- (iii) The particulars required to be kept under conditions 1 and 2 must be produced to an authorised Officer of the Council or to a Police Officer when required (Section 56(2) and (3), as must this licence. Section 56(4))

Conditions attached to the display of door signs on private hire vehicles

It shall be the responsibility of the Operator to ensure that all **private hire vehicles** under his control display the **door signs** in accordance with the conditions below:

- (i) The sign shall be displayed on the front doors of the private hire vehicle only.
- (ii) The sign shall only give details of the name, address and telephone number of the private hire company from which the licensee obtains his clients.
- (iii) The word 'taxi' or 'cab' whether in the singular or the plural should not form part of the sign.
- (iv) The proprietor should be able to easily remove the sign should the vehicle's licence be suspended, revoked or not renewed, and he shall be responsible for its removal.
- (v) The proprietor shall submit for the approval of the Council the proposals for the sign prior to its display.
- (vi) **These signs are compulsory.**

You are further advised that:

- (a) To operate a private hire vehicle is to make provision in the course of business for the invitation or acceptance of bookings for it.
- (b) This licence is granted to a particular person and cannot be sold or transferred. Therefore, for example, a new owner of the business must apply for a new licence.
- (c) The carrying on of a business may need planning permission. Operators must comply with all relevant legislation.

APPENDIX 2 – Five example questions from the Drivers Laws and Standards Knowledge Test

Q – What is the difference between a Private Hire Vehicle and a Hackney Carriage Vehicle?

- Nothing
- Private Hire can only carry passengers who have pre-booked through an Operator

Q – As a Private Hire Driver/Vehicle, the information your Operator must provide you with in order to pick up a passenger (legally) is...

- Where they will be standing
- Where they will be travelling to
- The street they will be in
- The customer's name, pick up point, destination and fare to charge

Q – You must tell the Council within 7 days of any cautions or convictions you receive?

- True
- False

Q – If you are not working, can you remove the plates (and/or taxi light) from your vehicle?

- Yes, providing you replace them when back at work
- No, a licensed vehicle must be plated at all times

Q – Where must your rear WBC vehicle licence plate be displayed?

- Parcel shelf
- Rear window
- Rear bumper

APPENDIX 3 – Five example questions from a proposed Operators Knowledge Test

- Q.** As part of every booking a Private Hire Operator must record the following information
- a) the date and time of the booking
 - b) the place or places at which the passenger or passengers were collected
 - c) the private hire vehicle licence number of the vehicle used
 - d) all of the above
- Q.** As a Private Hire Operator you must ensure that your vehicle door signs
- a) only give details of the name, address and telephone number of the private hire company from which the licensee obtains his clients
 - b) not contain the words 'taxi' or 'cab' whether in the singular or the plural
 - c) be displayed on the front doors of the private hire vehicle only
 - d) all of the above
- Q..** Before you can become a licensed Private Hire Operator you must
- a) register your company with Companies House
 - b) have premises in the borough of Woking with appropriate planning permission granted
 - c) ensure you have a full time controller to deal with the calls
- Q.** Can a passenger with a wheelchair be charged more because the wheelchair is classed as luggage?
- a) Yes, if they choose to sit in a seat
 - b) No, if they stay in the wheelchair
 - c) Never
- Q.** What must a Private Hire driver do if approached by someone who has not pre-booked?
- a) Accept the fare
 - b) Advise them to book with the Operator
 - c) Radio through the booking for them

Appendix 4 – May 2019 Consultation Letter

29 May 2019

Consultation regarding changes to Private Hire Operator licensing

The below is notification of a consultation now taking place regarding proposed changes to Private Hire Operator licensing at Woking Borough Council.

Public trust and confidence in the overall safety and integrity of the whole private hire system is vital. It is imperative that the same standards and expectations that apply to licenced drivers also apply to Private Hire Operators. It is the role of the Licensing Authority to ensure that those licenced are ‘fit and proper’, ensuring the safety of the travelling public.

It is the view of the Licensing Authority that some changes are required to current licence conditions to ensure that Operators continue to be safe, accountable and trustworthy; understanding of their requirements; safely providing for their drivers; and knowledgeable of the law, namely:

- (i) a change of procedure used in licensing multiple Private Hire Operators, including a fixed fee of £10.50 for each additional name
- (ii) the requirement to undertake and pass a Knowledge Test for Operators
- (iii) a requirement for Operators door signage to be sticker/vinyl as opposed to magnetic

The consultation will run from 1st of June 2019 until 15th of July 2019, inclusive and a brief summary of each proposal can be found overleaf.

Proposal (i): Operators ‘Trading As’ Names

In order to create a clear and transparent system the Licensing Authority proposes to issue one licence per named Operator. Any “trading as” names will be issued a separate licence with a unique reference number linking back to the “parent” licence. The Licensing Authority also proposes an administrative fee of £10.50 per “trading as” company name, in line with current charges.

It is proposed that this procedural change is implemented upon renewal of each licence or upon each request to add a new “trading as” name to a licence.

Proposal (ii): Operators Knowledge Test

When applying for a new or renewed Private Hire Operator licence, applicants are required to sign a declaration of having read and understood the guidance. Unfortunately, despite this, some Operators are not demonstrating an understanding of their legal requirements and have failed to adhere to conditions on their licences.

In order to safeguard against this, and increase public confidence in the trade, the Licensing Authority proposes the introduction of a Private Hire Operator Knowledge Test. All new applicants would be required to pass the test prior to being issued a licence. Existing Operators will be required to pass the test prior to the next renewal of their licence.

Proposal (iii): Operators Door Signage Regulations

Private Hire Operators are required to ensure that all vehicles carrying out work under their company name display the correct signage in order to be easily identifiable. It has become evident, through conversations with drivers who have failed to display door signs, that magnet based door signs are not fit for purpose. Semi-permanent vinyl stickers are highly unlikely to fall off or blow off in the wind, and are very difficult to steal.

The Licensing Authority proposes that a condition stating that all operator door signs must be of a semi-permanent vinyl sticker type, no smaller than 210mm x 297mm, be added to Private Hire Operator licences.

The above is a summary of the proposals. For more information, and details on how to submit representations, please visit www.woking.gov.uk/taxi

Appendix 5 – May 2019 Consultation Responses

Proposal (2) Operators knowledge test:

I have no issue in ensuring that all PH drivers are aware of their legal and ethical responsibilities and dependent upon how the test is administered and any potential cost implications(loss of working time, administration fee etc) then I personally would not have an objection to the principal

Private Hire Operator Licence Application Pack



PRIVATE HIRE OPERATOR LICENCE APPLICATION PACK

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Introduction

Please ensure that you read, and understand, this application pack in full before applying for a Private Hire Operator Licence. You should keep this pack for future reference on order that you are fully aware of all procedures involved in obtaining or renewing your licence, and the guidelines, criteria, conditions and regulations of the licence.

Woking Borough Council licences Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers, vehicles and Private Hire Operators. Woking Borough Council has the authority for issuing said licences under the adoption of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, Part 2, together with the Town Police Clauses Act 1847, and the Public Health Act 1875.

The objective in licensing Private Hire Operators is the safety of the public who will be using Operators premises and vehicles, and drivers arranged through them.

The application for a new or renewal of a Private Hire Operators licence can be completed online at www.woking.gov.uk/taxi

Licence

Operator licences are issued for a maximum duration of 1 year. In all cases the licence will only be granted subject to the Licensing Authority being satisfied that the applicant is “fit and proper” to be issued with the licence.

Fit and Proper Person: A person who is deemed to be of no threat to the general public, has a good character and is therefore deemed fit and able to hold a licence. Legislation states that the Council may grant a licence **ONLY** if it is satisfied that the person is fit and proper - **the onus is on the applicant to prove this, NOT the Council to demonstrate that they are not.**

Renewal of Licence

It is the responsibility of the licence holder to apply for the renewal of the licence at the appropriate time. Licence renewals will not be granted until any relevant checks have been completed. To avoid delay, applicants are advised to submit an application 2 - 3 weeks before the expiry of their current licence.

Suitability

The Council reserves the right to require any applicant or existing licence holder to provide additional information if the Licensing Department has reason to believe that circumstances have changed since the application was made.

The Licensing Authority may obtain information about you from third parties, or provide them with information so as to check the accuracy of information. This is to prevent or detect crime, or to protect public funds in other ways, permitted by legislation. These third parties include other Local Authorities and Government departments.

Issuing / Suspending / Revoking / Withdrawing or Refusing to Renew a Licence

A Private Hire Operators Licence is issued in good faith on the basis of information provided and, should any information supplied by the applicant prove to be false or misleading, the licence may be suspended. Any cautions, convictions or pending prosecutions **of any nature** must be reported to the Licensing Department, regardless of nature, penalty or outcome, **immediately**. The Council reserves the right to take into consideration any other information that is likely to be relevant concerning an applicant being deemed fit and proper person to hold a licence. These considerations apply to both new **and** renewal applications

Having previous convictions, for either criminal or motoring offences, will not necessarily prevent a person from obtaining a licence. The nature and time of said offences are of significance in the considerations of the Council. **It is an offence to not declare such matters on your application to the Council.**

Ability to Work in the UK

From 1 December 2016, the Immigration Act 2016 has introduced legislation that requires any person applying for the following to provide evidence of their right to work in the UK.

Woking Borough Council has a duty to ensure that only those persons who are entitled to work in the UK are issued a licence to drive a licensed vehicle.

Hackney Carriage or Private Hire drivers who have previously renewed their licences must provide evidence of their right to work in the UK on the first occasion when they submit a renewal application.

Applications for Hackney Carriage or Private Hire drivers' licences requiring evidence of the applicant's right to work in the UK, must be seen at a pre-booked appointment with the Licensing Department. All relevant documentation will be checked in the applicant's presence, copied and returned during the appointment.

If the Home Office grants an applicant full entitlement to work for 12 months at a time, the applicant will be required to resubmit documents every 12 months demonstrating that the entitlement has been renewed / extended. If, at any point, the entitlement is removed, the licence will be revoked.

Further information regarding what documents can be submitted with an application to show entitlement to work in the UK can be found later in this pack, or from the following websites:

www.woking.gov.uk/taxi or www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk

Nothing in this document shall be interpreted as over riding the provisions of the Part II of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 or the Town Police Clauses Act 1847, The Transport Act 1985 and the byelaws made thereunder.

A licence holder has a right of appeal to a Magistrate's Court against the imposition of the Conditions attached to a licence, by virtue of Section 300 – 302 of the Public Health Act 1936

Licensing Department Contact Details:

Woking Borough Council Licensing Department
Civic Offices, Gloucester Square, Woking, Surrey, GU21 6YL.

Tel: 01483 755855 / 01483 763823

Email: licensing@woking.gov.uk

Website: www.woking.gov.uk/taxi

Fees and Charges

Private Hire Operator Licence (for 1 year)	£280
Disclosure and Barring Service Check (if required)	£44
Amendment to Existing Licence	£10.50
Duplicate / Replacement Paper Licence	£10.50
PHO Knowledge Test (New Applicants Only)	£15
PHO Knowledge Retest (New Applicants Only)	£15

Private Hire Operator Licence Criteria

The following are Woking Borough Council's criteria when considering applications for a Private Hire Operators Licence.

- 1. The applicant shall provide evidence that they are of good character.**
- 2. The applicant shall provide evidence that they have a full understanding of the criteria, conditions and regulations relating to such licences.**
- 3. The applicant shall provide evidence that he / she / the partnership / the company has a good local knowledge.**
- 4. The applicant shall provide evidence that he / she / the partnership / the company has an awareness of the needs of disabled passengers and of safeguarding children and vulnerable persons.**

In order to meet criteria **1**, the required evidence shall be obtained through the completion of a Basic Disclosure & Barring Services (DBS) Check. If the applicant is already a Woking Borough Council licensed driver, the current DBS Check can be used.

In order to meet criteria **2 - 4** the applicant would need to pass a Private Hire Operator Knowledge Test provided by the Woking Borough Council.

Should an application for a Private Hire Operator licence propose the use of a home address, or alternative office space, applicants are advised to contact Woking Borough Council's Planning Department to ascertain as to whether or not any restrictions exist with regard to taxi-related business use.

Private Hire Operator Knowledge Test

New applicants must undertake a Knowledge Test. The test is devised so that an applicant can prove that they have sufficient knowledge of the conditions attached to the licenses of Operators, Drivers, Proprietors, and display an awareness of the issues relating to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable persons.

If you fail the test you will be invited to take the test again after a further test fee has been paid, and then allocated a retest date.

A more detailed description of the issues relating to safeguarding, and Woking Borough Council's Child Sexual Exploitation Policy, can be found at www.woking.gov.uk/taxi

How to Apply for a New Private Hire Operator Licence

This procedure relates to a person or persons who have never before held a Private Hire Operators Licence within Woking Borough, or who have held such a licence longer than 12 months ago.

1. If you **do not have** a current Disclosure and Barring Service Check (as a result of being a currently licensed driver with Woking Borough Council), you will need to book an appointment with the Licensing Department at the Council offices. To this appointment you must bring:

- **Evidence that you are entitled to work in the UK (unrestricted) - usually passport or visa**
- **Driving Licence**
- **National Insurance card (or something else with your National Insurance Number on)**

If you do have a current Disclosure and Barring Service Check, go straight to step 2.

2. Access the application and payment form at www.woking.gov.uk/taxi

3. Once the application form, payment and Disclosure and Barring Service Check form (if required) have been completed and received, you will be booked in for Private Hire Operator Knowledge Test.

Grant of a New Private Hire Operator Licence

Upon receipt of a satisfactory Application Form, Basic Disclosure & Barring Services Check, any Planning Permissions, passed the Private Hire Operator Knowledge Test and full fee, you will be issued with a licence (posted to your registered address).

If any information that you have not previously declared on your application form is discovered through the Basic Disclosure & Barring Services Check, you may be refused a licence.

What happens if I have not completed my application 3 months after starting it?

You will have to apply for another Basic Disclosure & Barring Services Report at your own expense.

What happens if I have not completed my application 6 months after starting it?

Your application will be null and void and you will need to reapply.

How to Renew a Private Hire Operator Licence

This procedure applies where the application is for the renewal of an existing Operators Licence.

1. Woking Borough endeavours to send '**Reminder Letters**' approximately 1 month before the expiry of your current Operators licence, by the Licensing Department. The letter will include instructions regarding how to renew the licence. However, it is ultimately the responsibility of the licence holder to ensure the licence is renewed in time.

2. Access the application and payment form at www.woking.gov.uk/taxi

3. Upon receipt of a satisfactory Application Form, and full payment, you will be issued with a licence (posted to your registered address).

How to Amend a Private Hire Operator Licence

This procedure applies should you need to amend any details or records relevant to an existing Private Hire Operator Licence.

1. You will need to put your request in writing it to the Licensing Department, and make the required payment of £10.50 at www.woking.gov.uk/taxi

2. Upon receipt and approval of the requested amendment(s), and the fee, your amended licence will be sent to your registered address.

Private Hire Operator Licence Conditions

1. STANDARDS OF SERVICE

1. **The Operator shall keep (in permanent and easily legible form) a record of the following particulars in respect of every booking of a Private Hire vehicle operated by him, whether the booking is effected directly with the hirer or undertaken at the request of another Operator:**

- (a) the date and time of the booking;
- (b) the date and time of commencement of the journey;
- (c) the name of the hirer;
- (d) the place or places at which the passenger or passengers were collected;
- (e) the place or places at which the passenger or passengers were set down;
- (f) the Private Hire vehicle licence number of the vehicle used;
- (g) the name and licence number of the driver;
- (h) the fare charged and whether or not calculated by means of a meter.

2. **The Operator shall keep (in permanent and easily legible form) a record of the following particulars of every Private Hire vehicle operated by him:**

- (a) the make;
- (b) the model;
- (c) the registration mark;
- (d) the Private Hire vehicle licence number;
- (e) the expiry date of the Private Hire vehicle;
- (f) the District Council who issued the Private Hire vehicle licence;
- (g) the proprietor of the vehicle;
- (h) a service history of each vehicle including details of any modifications thereto and details of all accident repairs.

3. **The Operator shall notify Woking Borough Council of any material change in the circumstances on the basis of which the licence was granted. In particular the Operator must inform the Council of:**
- (a) any change of place of business or any additional place of business;
 - (b) if the Operator is a Company, any change in the address of the registered office;
 - (c) any change in the nature of the business carried on by him;
 - (d) any change in the composition of the firm if a partnership;
 - (e) any convictions recorded against the Operator or a partner of his;
 - (f) any other change in the information given by the Operator to the Council at the time of granting the current licence;
 - (g) details of all staff connected with running of Operator's licence.

Notification must be given in writing within fourteen days of the event.

- 4. No advertising material, letter headings or other stationery, or any business name used by the Operator, shall include the words 'Taxi' or 'Cab' whether in the singular or plural and whether they form part of another word or not.
- 5. When a booking is accepted for a Private Hire vehicle to be present at a particular time and place, the Operator shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that such a vehicle is so present.
- 6. The Operator shall ensure that all vehicles used by him and all drivers employed by or contracted to him are properly licensed, and the conditions attached to those licences are complied with at all times.
- 7. The Operator shall keep a copy of driver and vehicle licences and insurance details.

Important note

The above conditions are additional to the requirements of the LGMPA Act 1976. Licence holders are required to be fully conversant with the relevant requirements of this Act, but the most important are summarised below:

- (i) no Operator shall operate any vehicle in a controlled district as a Private Hire vehicle unless both vehicle and driver are correctly licensed under the Act. (Section 46)
- (ii) an Operator who accepts a booking for a Private Hire vehicle is liable under the contract for its hire whether or not he himself provides the vehicle. (Section 56(1))
- (iii) the particulars required to be kept under conditions 1 and 2 must be produced to an Authorised Officer of the Council or to a Police Officer when required (Section 56(2) and (3), as must this licence. Section 56(4))

2. Conditions attached to the display of door signs on Private Hire vehicles

It shall be the responsibility of the Operator to ensure that all Private Hire vehicles under his control display the door signs in accordance with the conditions below:

- (i) the sign shall be displayed on the front doors of the Private Hire vehicle only.
- (ii) the sign shall only give details of the name, address and telephone number of the Private Hire company from which the licensee obtains his clients.
- (iii) the word 'Taxi' or 'cab' whether in the singular or the plural should not form part of the sign.
- (iv) the proprietor should be able to easily remove the sign should the vehicle's licence be suspended, revoked or not renewed, and he shall be responsible for its removal.
- (v) the proprietor shall submit for the approval of the Council the proposals for the sign prior to its display.
- (vi) these signs are compulsory.

You are further advised that:

- (a) to operate a Private Hire vehicle is to make provision in the course of business for the invitation or acceptance of bookings for it.
- (b) this licence is granted to a particular person and cannot be sold or transferred. Therefore, for example, a new owner of the business must apply for a new licence.
- (c) the carrying on of a business may need planning permission. Operators must comply with all relevant legislation.

Audio and Visual Recording Equipment in Licensed Vehicles

Should you wish to fit Audio and Visual Recording Equipment in your licensed vehicle, such a decision will be of your own choice.

Woking Borough Council has no mandatory scheme in relation to such equipment.

If you do fit such a system to your vehicle, please notify the Licensing Authority (either in writing or by email) to enable the Licensing Department to update licence records. The information provided below is intended to assist you should you consider fitting any system to your vehicle.

1. **Should you wish to fit such equipment you should ensure that any system fitted to your vehicle complies with the Information Commissioners Office "CCTV Code of Practice", which states:**
 - a. CCTV must not be used to record conversations between members of the public as this is highly intrusive and unlikely to be justified. You should choose a system without this facility if possible. If your system comes equipped with a sound recording facility then you should turn this off or disable it in some other way. There are limited circumstances in which audio recording may be justified, subject to sufficient safeguards. These could include:
 - i. Audio based alert systems (such as those triggered by changes in noise patterns such as sudden shouting). Conversations must not be recorded, and operators should not listen in.
 - ii. Two-way audio feeds from 'help points' covered by CCTV cameras, where these are activated by the person requiring assistance.
 - iii. Conversations between staff and particular individuals where a reliable record is needed of what was said, such as in the charging area of a police custody suite.
 - iv. Where recording is triggered due to a specific threat, e.g. a 'panic button' in a taxi cab.
2. **In the limited circumstances where audio recording is justified, signs must make it very clear that audio recording is being or may be carried out.**
3. **Transport for London has adopted the ICO's advice in relation to audio recording in its Guidelines for CCTV Systems in Licensed London Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles, and we recommend that, should you wish to fit such a system with audio recording enabled, you follow the Transport for London model which states:**
 - a. Where recording is triggered due to a specific threat, e.g. a 'panic button' is utilised. Where this audio recording facility is utilised a reset function must be installed which automatically disables audio recording and returns the system to normal default operation after a specified time period has elapsed.
 - b. The time period that audio recording may be active should be the minimum possible and should be declared at the time of submission for approval of the equipment.

Notification to the Information Commissioner's Office

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is the official regulator for all matters relating to the use of personal data.

The ICO defines a "data controller" as the body which has legal responsibility under the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998 for all matters concerning the use of personal data. For the purpose of the installation and operation of in-vehicle CCTV, the "data controller" is the specified company, organisation or individual which has decided to have CCTV installed. The data controller has the final decision on how the images are stored and used and determines in what circumstances the images should be disclosed.

Notification is the process by which a data controller informs the ICO of certain details about their processing of personal information. These details are used to make an entry in the public register of data controllers.

This means that any specified company, organisation or individual vehicle owner who has a CCTV system installed in a TPH licensed vehicle must register with the ICO (Notification) and obtain documented evidence of that registration. This documentary evidence may be required to be presented to an official of the TPH at any time during the term of the TPH vehicle licence.

The Notification requires renewal on an annual basis, and payment of the appropriate fee.

Using a Third Party Service Provider (Data Processor)

Where a service provider is used for the remote storage of CCTV data they will act as a 'data processor'. A data processor, in relation to personal data, means any person (other than an employee of the data controller) who processes data on behalf of the data controller, in response to specific instructions. The data controller retains full responsibility for the actions of the data processor.

Signage for Internal Audio and Visual Recording Equipment

All Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles fitted with Audio and Visual Recording Equipment must display signage informing passengers that the vehicle is equipped with such a system. The driver may also wish to verbally bring to the attention of the passengers that such equipment is in operation within the vehicle, if it is felt appropriate.

The signage must be displayed in such positions so as to minimise obstruction of vision and to make it as visible as possible to passengers, before and after entering the vehicle. In the limited circumstance where audio recording is justified, signs must make it very clear that audio recording is being or may be carried out. The name and the contact telephone number of the Data Controller must be included on the sign.

Signage for External Facing Audio and Visual Recording Systems

Where a system is installed in order to record incidents outside the vehicle, it will not be practical to display a sign. Instead, when the system is activated in response to an incident, the driver of the vehicle must inform the person(s) recorded that their personal data was captured - as soon as practicable after the incident. They should also be informed the purpose for which the device has been installed, for example to facilitate their insurance company's investigation of insurance claims.

Dispensation Discs - Criteria, Procedure and Conditions

Some customers prefer to be driven in executive vehicles that are low profile and represent their organisation especially when meeting a client. Many chauffeur companies, and some Private Hire Operators, employ section 75(3) of the Act. Using this section of the law, allows for **specific vehicles** to be granted dispensation from displaying their Private Hire plate and door stickers. The work undertaken **must not be conventional Private Hire work** but regarded as **specific ‘chauffeur-driven’ work**, and that the vehicle to be used for such work is an **“executive and prestigious” type vehicle** of a higher standard than that of a ‘normal’ vehicle used for private hire work.

1. Dispensation from displaying vehicle licence plates can only be applied for by the holder of a Private Hire Operators Licence, for a vehicle that currently carries out work on behalf of that Operator.
2. Exemptions from displaying external identification plates (vehicle licence plates) may be in respect of individual vehicles only. Applications for exemptions relating to a fleet of vehicles will not be allowed.
3. Each application will be assessed on its own merit, and each vehicle may be inspected by an authorised Council Officer to ensure that it is fit for purpose.
4. Applications for exemption from the requirement to display an external identification plate will only be considered where **at least 90%** of the work undertaken are hiring’s, where the driver and vehicle are specifically hired to provide transport to a company or person by corporate or account holders only and where the safety of the public is not compromised. The operator will be required to satisfy the Licensing Department, prior to licensing, that the use of the vehicle is by corporate and account holders and must be able to provide evidence to enable the Licensing Department to determine the genuine requirement for plate exemption. This will typically be through reference to the three most recent months of operator records, showing the account and corporate work carried out. **At least 90% of this work must be Account work**, i.e. it must be contracted work, not cash jobs or school runs. Details of what the Operator records should contain are included as a Condition on the Operators Licence.
5. The vehicle will benefit executive status (i.e. a high range or top end of the market vehicles). Vehicles must be in pristine condition with no visible defects, dents or blemishes to the external bodywork, wheels or internal trim and seating. They must comply with the current Woking Borough Council conditions relating to Private Hire vehicles.
6. The Council will require, as evidence, a recent letter from a company, or companies, who wish to use that particular vehicle. Necessary information within the letter includes:
 - a. **Why exemption from display is necessary**
 - b. **The frequency of intended use**
 - c. **Details of the vehicle(s) that relate to the application**

The company, or companies, may be contacted to confirm these details as reasonably necessary to allow the Council to make an informed decision. A decision will then be made as to whether the dispensation is granted. Where such documentation is not provided to the satisfaction of the Council the application will be refused. The Council will maintain commercial confidentiality.

7. Only Operators who have a good compliance record, including a good complaints record of their drivers, will be considered.
8. It is both the Operator and the holder of the Dispensation Discs duty to notify the Licensing Authority if the holder of the Dispensation Disc ceases to work for the Operator, or carries out work for other operators.
9. The proprietor shall not use the vehicle for more than 10% of their work where the work is for Private Hire purposes other than for contract use (i.e. for routine airport journeys, school runs or daily Private Hire use).
10. The exemption will cease to have effect on selling or transferring the vehicle to another party. The person to whom the exemption is granted must inform the Council of the sale / transfer of ownership immediately, and in

writing, and provide details of the new owner. The Dispensation Discs must be removed and returned to the Council within 48 hours of sale or transfer.

Enforcement

It is Woking Borough Council's policy to deal with enforcement matters relating to an applicant or existing licence holders by means of Licensing Officers, Legal Services Manager, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, the Licensing Committee and the Courts.

The expectation of the Licensing Authority is that any person who seeks the grant of a licence, or who holds a licence, meets with our definition of a "fit and proper" person.

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers maintain close contact with the public and are therefore not expected to behave or act in a manner that may:

- **cause any person to take offence at their actions**
- **cause any person to believe their actions are inappropriate**
- **cause any person to fear of their physical safety**
- **cause any person to doubt their integrity**
- **bring the integrity of the Council in to disrepute for having granted such a person a licence**
- **fail to adhere to the conditions and regulations pertaining to the licence**

Enforcement Statement

1. It is the practice of Woking Borough Council to ensure that Taxi drivers and Operators are licensed correctly, and carry out their trade in accordance with both the relevant Law and the conditions attached to the licences.
2. All enforcement action, be it the issue of verbal warnings, written warnings, statutory notices, appearance before the Sub-Committee or prosecution, will primarily be based upon the seriousness of the breach and the possible consequences arising from it. Enforcement action will not be used as a punitive response to minor technical contraventions of legislation, but will be used as a means of ensuring the safety and protection of the travelling public and others affected by the licensee's actions.
3. Specific advice on the issue of licences and enforcement action where the applicant or licensee has convictions or cautions for specific offences is contained elsewhere in this guidance.
4. Authorised Officers, when making enforcement decisions, will abide by this policy. Any departure from the policy must be exceptional, capable of justification, fully considered and agreed by the Senior Licensing Officer or above before the decision is taken (unless it is considered that there is significant risk to the public in delaying the decision).
5. Authorised Officers must be fully acquainted with the requirements of the policy and appropriate training will be provided where required.
6. Officers will be authorised by the Legal Services Manager to take enforcement action relevant and appropriate to their level of competence. Competency will be assessed individually by reference to qualifications and experience.

Enforcement Options

Achieving and maintaining a consistency of approach in the making of all decisions that concern Taxi Licensing and enforcement action, including prosecution, is of paramount importance. To achieve and maintain consistency, it is vital that the policy guidelines are always considered and followed where appropriate.

1. Licence application and enforcement decisions must always be consistent, balanced, fair and relate to common standards, which ensure that the public are adequately protected. In reaching any decision many criteria must be considered including the:

- seriousness of any offences;
- driver or Operator's past history;
- consequence(s) of non-compliance;
- likely effectiveness of the various enforcement options;
- danger to the public.

2. Having considered all relevant information and evidence, the choices for action are:-

2.1 Taxi and Private Hire Licence Applications:

- grant a licence subject to the Council's Standard Conditions;
- grant a licence subject to additional conditions;
- refuse to grant a licence.

2.2 Enforcement Action:

- take no action;
- take informal action;
- use statutory notices, (stop notices etc.);
- suspend a licence;
- revoke a licence;
- prosecution

Any complaints or enforcement measures are dealt with, in the first instance, by the Licensing Department by way of a "Warning" system. Any failures on the part of an applicant or existing licence holder to uphold the Licensing Objectives or to adhere to their Licence Conditions may result in any of the following actions:

- **the issue of a warning appropriate to the incident reported**
- **the issue of a higher level of warning appropriate to the incident reported and taking the history of the licence holder into consideration**
- **the request for an Interview Under Caution to be held in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984**
- **the issue of a Formal Caution**
- **the referral of the matter to the Legal Services Manager and / or Head of Legal and Democratic Services**
- **the referral of the matter to the Licensing Committee**
- **the referral of the matter to the Legal Services Department for consideration of prosecution**

More details of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Enforcement Policy are contained within Woking Borough Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Handbook, accessible at www.woking.gov.uk/taxi

Offences

Offences Under Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act

1. Owning unlicensed vehicle used as Private Hire vehicle.
2. Driving a Private Hire vehicle without a Private Hire driver's licence.
3. Owning licensed Private Hire vehicle driven by unlicensed driver.
4. Operating Private Hire vehicles without operator licence.
5. Operating unlicensed Private Hire vehicles.
6. Operating unlicensed Private Hire vehicles driven by unlicensed drivers.
7. Failure to exhibit vehicle licence plate.
8. Failure to notify (in writing within 14 days) transfer of Hackney Carriage or Private Hire vehicle.
9. Failure to produce Hackney Carriage or Private Hire vehicle for testing when required.
10. Failure to report (within 72 hours) accident involving Hackney Carriage or Private Hire vehicle.
11. Failure to produce Hackney Carriage or Private Hire vehicle licence and insurance when requested.
12. Failure to produce Hackney Carriage or Private Hire driver's licence when requested.
13. Failure to wear Private Hire driver's badge.
14. Failure of Private Hire operator to keep record of bookings.
15. Failure to produce such record when requested.
16. Failure of Private Hire operator to keep records required by local authority.
17. Failure to produce such records when requested.
18. Failure to produce Private Hire operator's licence when requested.
19. Making of false statement or omission of material information in application for any licence.
20. Failure to return, after due notice, licence plate issued in respect of revoked, expired or suspended Hackney Carriage or Private Hire vehicle licence.
21. Failure to return, after due notice, driver's badge issued in respect of suspended or revoked Hackney Carriage or Private Hire drivers licence.
22. Unauthorised parking on Hackney Carriage stand.
23. Unreasonable prolongation of journeys.
24. Misuse of taximeters.
25. Obstruction of authorised officers.

Safeguarding - Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking

Everyone is becoming more aware of issues relating to Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking that have occurred throughout the country. These are abhorrent crimes, and the Licensing Authority has a duty to assist the Taxi and Private Hire Trade and the public in tackling this issue, and to protect those who are vulnerable and / or being exploited.

We need the help of Taxi and Private Hire Trade, including Private Hire Operators to identify those who commit these crimes, and protect those who most need our help.

However, there is always more that can be done by everyone to help promote a better understanding of this subject. This page and our website will assist you in being able to identify those at risk, how to protect those who may be vulnerable or being exploited, how to ensure that your actions do not negatively contribute to such persons becoming victims, and to whom to report your concerns.

It is of vital importance that a Private Hire Operator:

- is aware of what good safeguarding practice looks like
- is able to recognise and report a vulnerable child/person at risk
- understands how Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Human Trafficking relates to the business
- knows how to protect their employees and demonstrate due diligence

Who can be vulnerable passengers?

- Under the influence of alcohol and or drugs
- Age (very old or young)
- Disability (physical or learning)
- Illness (mental/physical)
- Unfamiliar with the area
- If they become separated from carer, friend or travel companion
- Communication issues (deaf, blind, speak a different language, stroke)
- Vulnerable adults can be any age from 18 years upwards and also need safeguarding. This may include someone with a learning or physical disability, mental health, substance dependence or an older person who might be frail or have dementia.

It is important to be aware that some people make unwise choices but they may have **'capacity'** to do this. In these cases social care might not be able to assist, but it is important that you still report your concerns to professionals who can help; it is not safe for you or your passenger if you attempt to make an assessment yourself – always report your concerns to the authorities.

What are your responsibilities to a vulnerable child/person?

- A Private Hire Operator, and their drivers, have a duty of care to passengers using their service
- A Private Hire Operator, and their drivers, have a moral/social responsibility to report a concern about a vulnerable child
- You are the eyes and ears of the local community
- Reporting a concern could save a life; you are a public service, ambassadors of the Borough.
- You need to know who to contact if you have a concern.
- Police 101 or 999 in an emergency.

What does Safeguarding mean?

- Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.
- Safeguarding means:
 - i. protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
 - ii. preventing harm to children's health or development
 - iii. ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
 - iv. taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.
- Safeguarding children means to safeguard anybody under the age of 18 years.

What is Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)?

- CSE is a form of child abuse
- It occurs if somebody manipulates or deceives a child under the age of 18 into sexual activity
 - In exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or
 - For the financial advantage or increases status of the perpetrator or facilitator
- CSE can appear consensual, but it never is
- CSE does not always involve physical contact - it can occur through the use of technology (internet, mobiles)
- Manipulation / deception is described as **grooming** (this can take place over a short or longer time period)

How are children targeted?

- Befriended by the offender
- By being vulnerable and less able to protect themselves
- Grooming process
- Blackmail
- Threats
- Isolation from support
- Lonely and without a support network
- Has a learning or physical disability
- Have low self esteem
- Have problems at home

Signs of CSE for a Private Hire Operator and their Drivers to look out for

- Passenger
 - Child/young person being afraid
 - Child/young person being under the influence
 - Child/young person being controlled by an adult
 - Child/young person making a long journey that is pre-paid
- Location
 - Any concerns about the location you pick/up drop off a child/young person
 - Child/young person regularly using taxi to go to same location
- Time of day
 - Child/young person entering taxi late at night
 - Child/young person entering taxi during school hours

What is Human Trafficking?

Human Trafficking is the crime of moving a person (adult or child) from one place to another into conditions of exploitation, using deception, coercion, the abuse of power or the abuse of someone's vulnerability. Unfortunately vulnerable persons can be "moved" by criminals who chose to have the journeys carried out in licensed vehicles, without the drivers having any reason to believe that such a person is a victim of such a crime.

There are three main elements involved with Human Trafficking:

- **Movement:** recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of people (adults or children).
- **Control:** threat, use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability, or the giving of payments or benefits to a person in control of the victim.
- **Purpose:** exploitation of a person (adult or child), which includes prostitution and other sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery or similar practices, street crime, forced marriage and the removal of organs forced to work, beaten, abused and too scared to escape.

How can you spot if someone may be vulnerable and being exploited and trafficked?

There are various tell-tale signals to look for. One sign on its own does not mean someone has been trafficked, but several signs together should give you cause for concern. Perhaps the person shows signs of the following:

- Does not know their home or work address
- Allows others to speak for them when addressed directly
- Live or travel in a group, sometimes with other persons who do not speak the same language
- They are collected very early and/or returned late at night on a regular basis
- May have inappropriate clothing for the work they are performing, and/or a lack of safety equipment
- Their physical appearance may show signs of injury, malnourishment, unkempt
- They may be isolated from the local community and/or appear to be under the control or influence of others
- Have no cash of their own
- Be known to work at a brothel and be frequently moved from one site to another

Reporting a Concern

- Pass on any information / concerns you have by:
 - Contacting **Police 101** and explaining your concerns. Quote '**Makesafe**' as this will help identify the concerns and protect children from exploitation.
 - In an emergency call **Police 999**.
 - Contacting **Woking Borough Council** or **Surrey County Council Licensing Departments**
 - Contacting the **Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** on **0300 470 9100**, or the out of hours service on **01483 517898**.
- If you feel very strongly about not giving your name you need not do so. Your concerns about a child will still be investigated.
- You are a public service and the eyes and ears of the local community.
- Reporting a concern could save a life, protect a child from abuse or stop abuse.
- Be aware of risk indicators.
- **Always keep a record**, either in your vehicle or at your control, of **ANY** incidents or situations you were not happy with - the record should include a description of what happened and what you did to keep yourself and your passenger safe.
- Ensure that your drivers **always keep a record**, either in their vehicle or at control, of **ANY** incidents or situations they were not happy with.

Allegations

- Any allegation of abuse made against you is likely to cause a great deal of anxiety and concern.
- Information regarding allegations against adults who work with children can be obtained at www.surreyscb.org.uk/professionals/dealing-with-allegations-against-people-who-work-with-children/
- If you are concerned that another driver or escort may be acting in an inappropriate way towards a child they transport you must immediately make a referral to the appropriate person.

For more detailed information on Woking Borough Council's Safeguarding and Child and Sexual Exploitation Policy visit www.woking.gov.uk/taxi

Right to Work Documentation

The Immigration Act 2016 requires any person who is applying for a Taxi or Private Hire Drivers' Licence (either for the first time or for a renewal) to provide evidence of his/her right to work in the UK. As such, any applicants who do not hold a current valid UK or EU passport will be required to provide evidence of their leave to remain and/or right to work in the UK.

LIST A - ON-GOING RIGHT TO WORK IN THE UK

Any documents provided from List A demonstrate that an individual has the right to work in the UK with no restrictions. If documents from List A are presented, no further checks relating to that person's eligibility to work in the UK need to be carried out.

- i) A passport showing the holder, or a person named in the passport as the child of the holder, is a British citizen or a citizen of the UK and Colonies having the right of abode in the UK.
- ii) A passport or national identity card showing the holder, or a person named in the passport as the child of the holder, is a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland.
- iii) A Registration Certificate or Document Certifying Permanent Residence issued by the Home Office, to a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland.
- iv) A Permanent Residence Card issued by the Home Office, to the family member of a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland.
- v) A current Biometric Immigration Document (Biometric Residence Permit) issued by the Home Office to the holder indicating that the person named is allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK, or has no time limit on their stay in the UK.
- vi) A current passport endorsed to show that the holder is exempt from immigration control, is allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK, has the right of abode in the UK, or has no time limit on their stay in the UK.
- vii) A current Immigration Status Document issued by the Home Office to the holder with an endorsement indicating that the named person is allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK or has no time limit on their stay in the UK, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer.
- viii) A full birth or adoption certificate issued in the UK which includes the name(s) of at least one of the holder's parents or adoptive parents, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer.
- ix) A birth or adoption certificate issued in the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or Ireland, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer.
- x) A certificate of registration or naturalisation as a British citizen, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer.
- xi) A certificate of registration or naturalisation as a British citizen, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer.

LIST B - TIME LIMITED RIGHT TO WORK IN THE UK

Documents from List B indicate that the person has limitations on their eligibility to work in the UK (normally time limits).

If documents from List B are presented, then further Evidence and Enquiry Checks will be carried out in line with Home Office Guidance.

(Complete **either Group 1 OR Group 2**. If the individual cannot provide any of the documents listed in Group 1 then one of the combinations of documents listed in Group 2 can be provided as alternatives)

Group 1 – Documents where a time-limited statutory excuse lasts until the expiry date of leave

- i) A current passport endorsed to show that the holder is allowed to stay in the UK and is currently allowed to do the type of work in question.
- ii) A current Biometric Immigration Document (Biometric Residence Permit) issued by the Home Office to the holder which indicates that the named person can currently stay in the UK and is allowed to do the work in question.
- iii) A current Residence Card (including an Accession Residence Card or a Derivative Residence Card) issued by the Home Office to a non-European Economic Area national who is a family member of a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland or who has a derivative right of residence.
- iv) A current Immigration Status Document containing a photograph issued by the Home Office to the holder with a valid endorsement indicating that the named person may stay in the UK, and is allowed to do the type of work in question, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer.

Group 2 – Documents where a time-limited statutory excuse lasts for 6 months

- i) A Certificate of Application issued by the Home Office under regulation 17(3) or 18A (2) of the Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2006, to a family member of a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland stating that the holder is permitted to take employment which is less than 6 months old together with a Positive Verification Notice from the Home Office Employer Checking Service. The licence may be granted for six months from the date of the Certificate of Application.
- ii) A Verification issued by the Home Office Evidence and Enquiry Unit to the Licensing Authority, which indicates that the named person may stay in the UK because they have an in time application, appeal or administrative review and which is outstanding. The licence may be issued for six months from the date of the licence decision.

Woking Borough Council Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Criminal Conviction Policy 2016

Adopted by Council 14th of July 2016

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on the criteria taken into account by the Council when determining whether or not an applicant or an existing licence holder is a fit and proper person to hold a Hackney Carriage and/or Private Hire driver or Operator licence.
- 1.2 The overriding aim of the Licensing Authority is to protect the safety of the public. The Licensing Authority is concerned to ensure:
 - that a person is a fit and proper person
 - that the person does not pose a threat to the public
 - that the public are safeguarded from dishonest persons
 - the safeguarding of children and young persons
- 1.3 This policy provides guidance to any person with an interest in Taxi and Private Hire licensing. In particular, but not exclusively:
 - Applicants for drivers' licences
 - Existing licensed drivers whose licences are being reviewed
 - Licensing Officers
 - Members of the Licensing Committee/panel (or other relevant decision making body)
 - Magistrates hearing appeals against local authority decisions
- 1.4 Officers exercising delegated powers, and the Taxi Licensing Sub-Committee, will have regard to the guidelines contained in this Policy when
 - (i) determining applications for licences, and
 - (ii) deciding whether to suspend or revoke a licence.

However, each case will be considered on its individual merits and, where the circumstances justify, the Officer/Sub-Committee may depart from the guidelines.

2. General policy

- 2.1 There may be occasions where it is appropriate to depart from the guidelines. For example, where the offence is a one-off occasion or there are mitigating circumstances, or alternatively where there are many or continuous offences which may show a pattern of offending and unfitness.
- 2.2 A person with a conviction for a serious offence need not be automatically barred from obtaining a licence, but would normally be expected to:
 - a. Remain free of conviction for an appropriate period; and
 - b. Show adequate evidence that he or she is a fit and proper person to hold a licence (the onus is on the applicant to produce such evidence). Simply remaining free of conviction may not generally be regarded as adequate evidence that a person is a fit and proper person to hold a licence.
- 2.3 **Where an applicant has been convicted of a criminal offence, the Licensing Authority cannot review the merits of the conviction** [Nottingham City Council v. Mohammed Farooq (1998)]
- 2.4 The Council is also prohibited from issuing a licence to an applicant who has not held a full UK or EU driving licence for at least one year, and at the date of the application being made.
- 2.5 The Council will not normally grant a licence to an applicant who has previously been disqualified from holding a driving licence (whether for a single offence or under the "totting up" provisions) unless he has subsequently held a full driving licence for a period of three years without incurring any further convictions.

3. Appeals

- 3.1 Any applicant refused a driver's licence on the grounds that the Licensing Authority is not satisfied he is a fit and proper person to hold such a licence has a right to appeal to the Magistrates' Court within 21 days of the notice of refusal [Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976, s 77 (1)].

4. Powers

- 4.1 Section 61 and Section 62 of the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976 allow the Licensing Authority to suspend, revoke or refuse to renew a licence if the application/licence holder has been convicted of an offence involving dishonesty, indecency, violence; failure to comply with the provisions of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847; failure to comply with the provisions of Part II of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976; or any other reasonable cause.
- 4.2 The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions)(Amendment) Order 2002, allows the Licensing Authority to take into account all convictions recorded against an applicant or the holder of a Private Hire vehicle or Hackney Carriage driver's licence, whether spent or not. Therefore the Licensing Authority will have regard to all relevant convictions, particularly where there is a long history of offending or a recent pattern of repeat offending.
- 4.3 In this policy the term "disqualification" refers to the period served, in order to take account of the fact that a court may reduce the period of disqualification from driving. An applicant must provide evidence in advance to prove that the court agreed a reduction in the period of disqualification.

5. Consideration of Disclosed Criminal History

- 5.1 Under the provisions of Sections 51, 55, and 59, Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the Licensing Authority is required to ensure that an applicant for the grant or renewal of a Hackney Carriage and/or a Private Hire vehicle drivers' licence and/or Private Hire vehicle Operators licence is a 'fit and proper' person to hold such a licence. However, if an applicant has any convictions, warnings, cautions or charges awaiting trial, the Licensing Authority will look into:
- How relevant the offence(s) are to the licence being applied for
 - How serious the offence(s) were
 - When the offence(s) were committed
 - The date of conviction
 - Circumstances of the individual concerned
 - Sentence imposed by the court
 - The applicant's age at the time of conviction
 - Whether they form part of a pattern of offending
 - Any other character check considered reasonable (e.g. personal references)
 - Any other factors that might be relevant
- 5.2 Existing holders of drivers' licences are required to notify the Licensing Authority in writing within twenty-eight days of receiving a driving licence endorsement, fixed penalty notice or criminal conviction (including cautions).
- 5.3 Applicants can discuss further what effect a caution/conviction may have on any application by contacting the Licensing Department, in confidence, for advice.
- 5.4 The Licensing Authority conducts enhanced disclosures from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) of any applicant for a driver licence. The Licensing Authority follows the DBS's Code of Practice on the fair use of disclosure information. A copy is available on request.
- 5.5 Applicants applying for the grant or a renewal of a drivers' licence will be required to obtain an enhanced disclosure at their own expense. The Licensing Authority abides by the DBS's Policy on the secure storage, handling, use, retention and disposal of disclosure information, which is available on request.

- 5.6 More information about the DBS can be found on their website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>
- 5.7 The Licensing Authority is also entitled to use other records and information that may be available to it in determining applications, or an entitlement to continue holding a licence. This may include information held by the Licensing Authority or other licensing authorities, and information disclosed by the police under the Home Office scheme for reporting offences committed by notifiable occupations.
- 5.8 It is an offence for any person, knowingly or recklessly, to make a false declaration or to omit any material particular in giving information required by the application for a licence. Where an applicant has made a false statement or a false declaration on their application for the grant or renewal of a licence, the licence will normally be refused.

For more detailed information on, and to view a full copy of, the Woking Borough Council Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Criminal Conviction Policy 2016 visit www.woking.gov.uk/taxi

New / Renewal Application for Private Hire Operator's Licence
S.45 Town Police Clauses Act 1847/Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Proprietors Details

Surname.....First Name.....

Address.....
.....

Telephone number and/or Mobile.....

Business Details

Trading name(s).....

Address.....
.....

Telephone number(s)

Land Line.....Others.....

Are there any additional proprietors involved in this application?	Yes / No
Have you previously applied for an Operator's licence?	Yes / No
Have you ever previously held an Operator's Licence?	Yes / No
Have you ever had your Operator's Licence suspended or revoked?	Yes / No
Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence?	Yes / No

If **yes** to any of the above, give full details on a separate sheet. A DBS check will be performed. Some offences may result in an application being rejected. Providing false information and/or documents, not informing WBC of changes in operation, convictions or ownership in writing, may lead to a licence being immediately revoked.

Non payment of yearly renewal fee immediately revokes a licence and you will be operating illegally

I confirm that the information attached is complete and correct. I am aware of, and will comply with, the WBC Byelaws, Regulations, Terms and Conditions as laid down by the above Act.

I understand that I am unable to operate without a current licence. Acceptance of this form, other documents or fees is not a guarantee that a licence will be issued.

I understand that **any** licensed vehicle used or provided, whether on duty or not, whether occupied or not, is classed as a public place and therefore becomes **smoke free** i.e. No one (including driver) can smoke in said vehicle **at any time**. If I operate an office open to the public or workers, this must also be smoke free and the necessary signage displayed.

An officer is unable to give advice or recommendations on vehicles or premises that fall outside current WBC policy.

Applications are dealt with as promptly as possible. WBC are not responsible for delays caused by DVLA, Royal Mail, Testing Centres, DBS or any body separate to WBC.

I am aware that those entering the U.K on Student visas or those whose visa restricts their type of work to that authorised by the Secretary of State, can not legally be self employed.

Applicant's Signature..... **Date**.....

(This authority is under a duty to protect the public funds it administers, and to this end may use the information you have provided on this form for the prevention and detection of fraud. It may also share this information with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds for these purposes. For further information please refer to the National Fraud Initiative page on the Council's website (www.woking.gov.uk) or phone the Council on 01483 755855)

The points below are a **minimum** statement of understanding of the rules governing an operator and are not intended to replace all the relevant laws in place at the time.

- As a Woking licensed Operator I understand I can only use / employ Woking licensed drivers using Woking licensed vehicles and any sub-contracts can only be passed to other Operators, NOT to vehicles licenced by other boroughs.
- I will ensure vehicles under my control/employ will display their Vehicle Licence identification plates in clear view externally and internally at all times.
- The drivers I use/employ will display their drivers badge at all times.
- I will ensure vehicles are clean, inside and out, and drivers are dressed in a manner fitting a licensed company.
- I understand touting/plying for hire is illegal. I will not allow drivers to park in busy areas without a pre-booked fare. I will provide drivers with a named passenger, destination and fare to charge for each booking.
- I understand drivers can not book for a passenger by phone, radio or by handing their phone to a prospective passenger nor can drivers arrange return journeys as the continuation of a previous booking.
- Any office or workspace I operate will remain smoke free at all times.
- Where applicable I will provide all vehicles I use/employ with a minimum of two door stickers as prescribed to be used at all times.
- I understand these rules apply to me as the applicant and all those I give responsibility to in my absence as if I had made any decision (made in my absence) myself.
- I understand any breach of rules and regulations may result in revocation of this Operators Licence and subsequent refusal of future applications, with no further warnings if the Council sees fit.

I have marked the 10 boxes above to indicate my understanding and compliance by my company and those I use/employ.

Applicant's Signature.....**Date**.....

Please Note:

Vehicles that require a 6 month check must not exceed the anniversary of that test date as this invalidates the licence and automatically suspends the vehicles' use for taxi/private hire work regardless of expiry date, until the vehicle attends and passes an inspection. A vehicle test certificate **is not** a vehicle licence.

Currently vehicles presented to WBC for licensing must have an engine that complies with Euro Emission Standard V (five) and it must have achieved a minimum Euro NCAP crash rating of 5 stars. Changes to these standards will apply as per the dates below.

Euro Emission Standard VI (six) was applied to manufactures of new vehicles from September 2014 and they were given 12 months to comply. This means from September 2015 no new vehicle (passenger car) will be produced that is not Euro VI. As previously agreed with the trade, a further 3 years (minimum) is then to be added to this date (09/15) to allow sufficient compliant second hand vehicles to enter the market, though drivers will be able to source Euro VI vehicles from September 2014 if they wish. **Therefore the date for applying Euro standard VI to all new and renewal vehicles has been set at 20th January 2022 (to allow for seasonal office closures).**

Similarly and using the same rationale and ruling, When Euro Emission Standard VII (seven) is to be applied to manufacturers from September it will be applied to new and renewal vehicles in a similar timeframe.

(This authority is under a duty to protect the public funds it administers, and to this end may use the information you have provided on this form for the prevention and detection of fraud. It may also share this information with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds for these purposes. For further information please refer to the National Fraud Initiative page on the Council's website (www.woking.gov.uk) or phone the Council on 01483 755855)

LICENSING COMMITTEE – 8 OCTOBER 2019

INTRODUCTION OF A REQUIREMENT FOR ALL OPERATORS DOOR SIGNS TO BE VINYL STICKERS (NOT MAGNETS)

Executive Summary

This report presents a proposed change to the Private Hire Operators licensing regime, specifically the introduction of the regulation of materials used for Operators Door Signage.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

RESOLVE That a requirement for Operators door signage to be a sticker/vinyl as opposed to magnetic is introduced in order to prevent accidental or intentional breaches of the Vehicle and Operators Licences.

The Committee has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

Background Papers: None.

Reporting Person: Matthew Cobb, Senior Licensing Officer
Email: matthew.cobb@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3650

Contact Person: Matthew Cobb, Senior Licensing Officer
Email: matthew.cobb@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3650

Date Published: 30 September 2018

Introduction of a Requirement for all Operator Door Signs to be Vinyl Stickers (not magnets)

Introduction of a Requirement for all Operator Door Signs to be Vinyl Stickers (not magnets)

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In the words of the Institute of Licensing, “A private hire operator (“an operator”) does not have direct responsibility for the safety of passengers, other road users or direct contact with passengers who are in the private hire vehicle (except where they are also licensed as a private hire driver). However, in performing their duties they obtain and hold considerable amounts of personal and private information about their passengers which must be treated in confidence and not revealed to others, or used by the operator or their staff for criminal or unacceptable purposes. As public trust and confidence in the overall safety and integrity of the private hire system is vital, the same standards will be applied to operators as those applied to drivers”
- 1.2 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (“the Act”), which was adopted by Woking Borough Council in 1977, gives the Licensing Authority the powers to issue licences for Taxis, Private Hire Vehicles and Private Hire Operators. In order to do this, each authority is tasked with drafting with its own set of policy, practice and guidance. As such, the actual set rules of the Act are few and far between and it is the Licensing Authorities role to ensure that those licenced are ‘fit and proper’ to do so, thus ensuring the safety of the travelling public.
- 1.3 Section 55(3) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 states that a council may attach to the grant of a licence under this section such conditions as they may consider reasonably necessary. In order to assist Licensing Authorities with this task, the Government has produced suggested ‘good practice’ guidance giving a basic skeleton set of conditions to which an Authority can build from. These good practice guidance formed the basis of the vast majority of the conditions for Private Hire Operators all across the U.K.
- 1.4 The Operator’s Licence is therefore issued to the applicant by Woking Borough Council (as the Licensing Authority) and conditions are attached in order to maximise good practice and safe working standards of Operators, thus ensuring the safety of the travelling public.
- 1.5 A copy of these conditions is attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.6 Since the conditions and practices for Taxi and Private Hire legislation were introduced over forty years ago, great changes have taken place with regard to the drivers and vehicle licences. However, there has been little change to the Operators Licences and the requirements to obtain one. It is therefore our view that certain changes need to be made to ensure that the Operators continue to be safe, secure, open and trustworthy, understanding of their requirements, safely provide for their drivers, and above all – knowledgeable of the law.

2.0 The Current Licence requirements

- 2.1 As you will see from the Operator’s Licence Conditions in Appendix 1, it is a requirement of the Operator to ensure that all his vehicles given jobs are properly liveried up with the Operators Door Signs.

It shall be the responsibility of the Operator to ensure that all private hire vehicles under his control display the door signs in accordance with the conditions below:

- (i) The sign shall be displayed on the front doors of the private hire vehicle only.***
- (ii) The sign shall only give details of the name, address and telephone number of the private hire company from which the licensee obtains his clients.***

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- (iii) The word 'taxi' or 'cab' whether in the singular or the plural should not form part of the sign.*
- (iv) The proprietor should be able to easily remove the sign should the vehicle's licence be suspended, revoked or not renewed, and he shall be responsible for its removal.*
- (v) The proprietor shall submit for the approval of the Council the proposals for the sign prior to its display.*
- (vi) These signs are compulsory.*

2.2 The importance of these conditions are echoed by the fact that they are also a condition on every Private Hire Vehicle Licence. These conditions are attached as Appendix 2.

The proprietor will ensure that:

- (a) the sign shall be displayed on the front doors of the Private Hire Vehicle only*
- (b) the sign shall only give details of the name, address and telephone number of the Private Hire company from which the licensee obtains his clients*
- (c) the word 'taxi' or 'cab' whether in the singular or the plural should not form part of the sign*
- (d) the proprietor should be easily able to remove the sign should the vehicle's licence be suspended, revoked or not renewed, and he shall be responsible for its removal*
- (e) the proprietor shall submit for the approval of the Council the proposals for the sign prior to its display*
- (f) the signs will remain on the vehicle at all times that the vehicle is licenced and should not be removed, even when the proprietor is not working.*
- (g) these signs will be compulsory from 1 January 1994*

2.3 Further to the above, the current Taxi and Private Hire Guidance states the following:

51. Door signs (Private Hire only)

PHV that are not exempt from displaying the licence plates ... must display door signs for the Operator they are currently working for in line with the conditions of their licence. The information contained on the front door signs must be confined to the name, address, telephone number and logo of the business Operator. Phrases such as 'Pre-booked' or 'Advanced Bookings only' will be acceptable. Door signs shall be of a uniform size and design not exceeding 800mm wide and 500mm high.

2.4 The requirement that a Private Hire Vehicle be easily identifiable is evident from an example of an incident that took place in Guildford in 2018.

Example: A Private Hire Vehicle had gone to Guildford to collect a fare paying passenger that had booked through the drivers Operator. Unfortunately the driver of

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the vehicle did not have any of his 'Operators door signs' on his vehicle whilst he was carrying out this job, and was therefore in breach of his Operators Licence.

When he got to the pick up location, he spotted a person waiting there. Thinking this was probably his fare, he called out to the member of public something along the lines of "Are you looking for a taxi?"

It is unfortunate luck that the person who was stood there was a Local Authority Licensing Officer who happened to be carrying out some night-time enforcement on the subject of illegal plying for hire (i.e. Private Hire Vehicles calling out to members of the public and taking jobs NOT booked through their operator.) The actual person that the driver was supposed to be collecting had been unable to see any identification on the sides of the drivers vehicle and so did not know it was a Private Hire vehicle. Had the driver been compliant with his licence, the member of public would have been able to identify the vehicle (displaying signs for the company they booked with) and approach it accordingly.

In this situation – we were able to contact the drivers Operator and their logs confirmed that the driver in question was indeed supposed to be collecting a passenger on or around that time and that location, and so no enforcement action was required. However it was a waste of both Woking Officers time and Guildford Officers time getting to the bottom of it.

- 2.5 As you will see from the Conditions listed in 2.1 and 2.2, they specify that the door signs are a requirement but they do not specify what material the signs should be.
- 2.6 Some Operators in the Woking Borough can be seen using vinyl type stickers (similar to the Vinyl Door signage favoured by Guildford Borough Council). These stickers are adhesive vinyl plastic and are a semi-permanent fixture. They cannot be easily removed, but they are not damaging to the vehicle – and can be removed with application of heat (for example a hair drier or heat gun), which should leave no marks or damage the vehicle in any way. Many authorities (Surrey Heath, Runnymede etc) also use these vinyl stickers for the rear bumper plate display.
- 2.7 Some Operators choose to use magnet based door signs. It is these door signs that we have the most issue with and we are seeking to make the amendments to the policy to ensure that they are no longer used.
- 2.8 Chasing up Private Hire Vehicles who are failing to display door signs takes up a disproportionate amount of officer time.
- 2.9 When licensing officers are out and about in town (i.e. going to and from work, on lunch breaks etc) they often keep an eye out for non-compliant vehicles. Appendix 3 shows an amended (i.e. with personal details removed) list of vehicles that have been spotted over the last year failing to comply with the regulations. Bearing in mind that this is usually just from ten minutes of enforcement action per day – taken in the morning, midday and the early evening – it gives some idea the number of drivers who are failing to comply with the requirements. Should the department carry out compliance checks on a Friday/Saturday night, one can only speculate as to how many infringements would be discovered. Once seen, drivers are and written to about their failure to comply and this often results in telephone conversations and vehicle inspections.
- 2.10 During these conversations with drivers, we always hear the same explanations for their failure to comply with the door sign requirements.
 - i. **“The magnets aren’t very strong and the door signs fell off / blew off in the wind / in the carwash.”**

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- ii. **“They’ve been stolen”**
- iii. **“I take the magnets off my car because they get stolen / because I was washing my car / because they came loose and I forgot to put them back on”**

- 2.11 It is clearly evident that whilst it is an offence to fail to comply with the conditions of a licence, it would be unrealistic, unfair to take severe enforcement, and susceptible to a successful appeal should the Authority revoke a licence for a single incident of failing to have door signs on display.
- 2.12 Whether the above responses seen in 2.10 are genuine explanations or merely excuses is difficult for the Authority to decipher. What we can establish, however, is that they could all be solved by adding a requirement that door signage must be semi-permanent vinyl stickers as opposed to magnets. Semi-permanent vinyl stickers are highly unlikely to fall off or blow off in the wind, unlikely to come off in a carwash, very difficult to steal, and their use eliminates the issue of drivers ‘forgetting’ to replace them for whatever reason.
- 2.13 Another issue that is raising its head on a regular basis is the unsuitability of some cars for magnets. The use of aluminium (being lighter) is becoming more prevalent with German car manufacturers. Unfortunately aluminium is not magnetic and therefore the use of magnets is not possible.
- 2.14 With these advancements and changes in material we must adapt our requirements to ensure it’s actually possible for the drivers to comply with their licences. If we allow some drivers to be excused from displaying the door signs simply because their cars are aluminium, then we risk creating a divide and further complications for the department.
- 2.15 The use of semi-permanent vinyl signage is not uncommon in Authorities around the UK, and a selection of other Authorities requirements pertaining to material type is included as Appendix 4.

3.0 Consultation

- 3.1 On the 29th November 2018, the Licensing Authority wrote to all then-licenced Operators (totalling seventy-one), enquiring about the possibility for a change in materials for Operators Door Signs. A Copy of the letter is attached as Appendix 5.
- 3.2 During the consultation period, we received only three responses (4.2%). Two of these responses were from single-driver operators who did primarily Chauffeur Work and so were writing to us just to tell us that these new regulations would not apply to them. As such there was only one response (1.4%) relevant to the consultation itself. This comment is attached in Appendix 6
- 3.3 Following the previous discussion of this matter in a Licensing Committee meeting on the 12th of March 2019, it was agreed that before proceeding, a further consultation should take place.
- 3.4 On the 29th of May 2019, a consultation letter was sent out to a seven-hundred-and-eighty-eight drivers, operators and vehicle owners, as well as being emailed to a further fifty-six people involved with Taxi and Private Hire Licensing (such as Local Authority Officers, Councillors, etc.). A copy of the letter is attached as Appendix 7.
- 3.5 During the consultation period we received only three responses (0.35%). The results are attached as Appendix 8.

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4.0 Production of signage

- 4.1 Production of vinyl stickers is not an arduous task and the Operators can get them printed in bulk at any number of companies that provide these stickers. Prices of vinyl stickers are almost identical – if not cheaper – than the magnets.
- 4.2 As an example – Vistaprint – a popular and quick printing company – produce both the Magnet style signage as well as Vinyl Car Stickers, which enables us to compare prices.
- 4.3 For £14.18 a Vistaprint customer can get a 30cm x 30cm vinyl sticker door sign of their own design, that adheres to curved or flat surfaces, provides a safe, long-lasting hold, is safe for car or van paint and is weather resistant and waterproof. A magnet based door sign of a comparable size (29cm x 40cm) can be purchased for the same price of £14.18. Whilst a slightly different size, it's anticipated that a change from magnets to vinyl should not cause any excessive financial burdens on the Operators.
- 4.4 Many of these vinyl car decal websites ensure to state (as Vistaprint does) that the signs are made of a transparent polyacrylate – a removable, pressure-sensitive adhesive that won't do anything to your car paint, and that they do not need to be removed for the carwash as the adhesive keeps a strong hold, and the laminate will protect them from damage.
- 4.5 Aside from the requirement for door signs, Woking Council Guidance states that signs must be no more than 800mm x 500mm to prevent the door signage becoming more like a whole vehicle wrap than a door sign, however it does not specify minimum size requirements. Companies have been seen recently using door signs that are smaller than an A5 sheet in size (i.e. 148 x 210 mm). We therefore propose that the door signage should be no larger than 800mm x 500mm (as per before) but no smaller than 210mm x 297 mm (an A4 sheet) to ensure that the signage is easily visible to the public and to Licensing Officers.
- 4.6 It is proposed that Operators and drivers be given a period of time in which to comply with this condition, and take the time to replace all their relevant door signage. The Licensing Department suggests that somewhere just over one year would be suitable, meaning compliance would be required by the 1st of December 2020

5.0 Proposal

- 5.1 It is therefore proposed that the following be added to the Conditions on Operators and Vehicle Licences:

- i) **All Operators Door Signs must be of a semi-permanent vinyl sticker type. Magnet or magnet based door signs are not permissible.**
- ii) **Examples of Operator Door Signs will be provided to the Licensing Authority during the licence application or renewal process.**
- iii) **Operators Door Signs must be no larger than 800mm x 500mm.**
- iv) **Operator Door Signs must be no smaller than 210mm x 297mm.**
- v) **Companies that provide temporary or short-term cars (i.e. private hire vehicles to be rented out to drivers on a short term basis as a replacement for their vehicles) will not necessarily be required to have the vinyl door stickers on their vehicles. It will be at the discretion of the Licensing Authority to permit the use of magnet based door signs as a special exception on short-term licenced vehicles. Drivers should request this in writing prior to any request being considered.**

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- vi) Drivers found to be failing to comply with any of the conditions (for example, the Operators door signage) will be expected to present the vehicle for inspection by the Licensing Authority (at a time and place of the Authorities choosing, but no later than 72 hours from the time of request, unless there are exceptional circumstances). Vehicles failing to comply with the conditions of their licence will be deemed to be not fit for purpose under S.68¹ of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. Drivers who refuse to attend or fail to attend an inspection as requested will be deemed to have committed an offence under S.73² of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

6.0 Implications

Financial

- 6.1 A more permanent style or type of sign will reduce time taken by officers chasing up drivers for minor or petty infractions.

Human Resource/Training and Development

- 6.2 Not Applicable

Community Safety

- 6.3 Ensuring Private Hire Drivers comply with their conditions will improve community safety and prevent illegal and unlicensed private hire vehicles.

Risk Management

- 6.4 See Community Safety

Sustainability

- 6.5 Not Applicable

¹ S.68 **Fitness of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles.**

Any authorised officer of the council in question or any constable shall have power at all reasonable times to inspect and test, for the purpose of ascertaining its fitness, any hackney carriage or private hire vehicle licensed by a district council, or any taximeter affixed to such a vehicle, and if he is not satisfied as to the fitness of the hackney carriage or private hire vehicle or as to the accuracy of its taximeter he may by notice in writing require the proprietor of the hackney carriage or private hire vehicle to make it or its taximeter available for further inspection and testing at such reasonable time and place as may be specified in the notice and suspend the vehicle licence until such time as such authorised officer or constable is so satisfied: Provided that, if the authorised officer or constable is not so satisfied before the expiration of a period of two months, the said licence shall, by virtue of this section, be deemed to have been revoked and subsections (2) and (3) of section 60 of this Act shall apply with any necessary modifications.

² S.73 **Obstruction of authorised officers.**

(1) Any person who—(a) wilfully obstructs an authorised officer or constable acting in pursuance of this Part of this Act or the Act of 1847; or (b) without reasonable excuse fails to comply with any requirement properly made to him by such officer or constable under this Part of this Act; or (c) without reasonable cause fails to give such an officer or constable so acting any other assistance or information which he may reasonably require of such person for the purpose of the performance of his functions under this Part of this Act or the Act of 1847; shall be guilty of an offence.

(2) If any person, in giving any such information as is mentioned in the preceding subsection, makes any statement which he knows to be false, he shall be guilty of an offence.

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Equalities

6.6 Not Applicable

Safeguarding

6.7 More identifiable vehicles will ensure easier tracking and tracing, thus reducing unacceptable or illegal activities.

REPORT ENDS

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APPENDIX 1 - STANDARD CONDITIONS ATTACHED TO THE ISSUE OF A PRIVATE HIRE OPERATOR LICENCE

(These notes are for guidance only and are not a complete summary of the Act)

1. The operator shall keep (in permanent and easily legible form) a record of the following particulars in respect of every booking of a private hire vehicle operated by him, whether the booking is effected directly with the hirer or undertaken at the request of another operator:
 - (a) the date and time of the booking
 - (b) the date and time of commencement of the journey
 - (c) the name of the hirer
 - (d) the place or places at which the passenger or passengers were collected
 - (e) the place or places at which the passenger or passengers were set down
 - (f) the private hire vehicle licence number of the vehicle used
 - (g) the name and licence number of the driver
 - (h) the fare charged and whether or not calculated by means of a meter.

 2. The operator shall keep in permanent and easily legible form a record of the following particulars of every private hire vehicle operated by him:
 - (a) the make
 - (b) the model
 - (c) the registration mark
 - (d) the private hire vehicle licence number
 - (e) the expiry date of the private hire vehicle
 - (f) the District Council who issued the private hire vehicle licence
 - (g) the proprietor of the vehicle
 - (h) a service history of each vehicle including details of any modifications thereto and details of all accident repairs.

 3. The operator shall notify Woking Borough Council of any material change in the circumstances on the basis of which the licence was granted. In particular the operator must inform the Council of:
 - (a) any change of place of business or any additional place of business
 - (b) if the operator is a Company, any change in the address of the registered office
 - (c) any change in the nature of the business carried on by him
 - (d) any change in the composition of the firm if a partnership
 - (e) any convictions recorded against the operator or a partner of his
 - (f) any other change in the information given by the operator to the Council at the time of granting the current licence
 - (g) details of all staff connected with running of operator's licence.
- Notification must be given in writing within fourteen days of the event.
4. No advertising material, letter headings or other stationery, or any business name used by the operator, shall include the words 'Taxi' or 'Cab' whether in the singular or plural and whether they form part of another word or not.

 5. When a booking is accepted for a private hire vehicle to be present at a particular time and place, the operator shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that such a vehicle is so present.

 6. The operator shall ensure that all vehicles used by him and all drivers employed by or contracted to him are properly licensed and the conditions attached to those licences are complied with at all times.

 7. The operator shall keep a copy of driver and vehicle licences and insurance details.

Introduction of a Requirement for all Operator Door Signs to be Vinyl Stickers (not magnets)

Important note

The above conditions are additional to the requirements of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. Licence holders are required to be fully conversant with the relevant requirements of this Act but the most important are summarised below:

- (i) No operator shall operate any vehicle in a controlled district as a private hire vehicle unless both vehicle and driver are correctly licensed under the Act. (Section 46)
- (ii) An operator who accepts a booking for a private hire vehicle is liable under the contract for its hire whether or not he himself provides the vehicle. (Section 56(1))
- (iii) The particulars required to be kept under conditions 1 and 2 must be produced to an authorised Officer of the Council or to a Police Officer when required (Section 56(2) and (3), as must this licence. Section 56(4))

Conditions attached to the display of door signs on private hire vehicles

It shall be the responsibility of the Operator to ensure that all **private hire vehicles** under his control display the **door signs** in accordance with the conditions below:

- (i) The sign shall be displayed on the front doors of the private hire vehicle only.
- (ii) The sign shall only give details of the name, address and telephone number of the private hire company from which the licensee obtains his clients.
- (iii) The word 'taxi' or 'cab' whether in the singular or the plural should not form part of the sign.
- (iv) The proprietor should be able to easily remove the sign should the vehicle's licence be suspended, revoked or not renewed, and he shall be responsible for its removal.
- (v) The proprietor shall submit for the approval of the Council the proposals for the sign prior to its display.
- (vi) **These signs are compulsory.**

You are further advised that:

- (a) To operate a private hire vehicle is to make provision in the course of business for the invitation or acceptance of bookings for it.
- (b) This licence is granted to a particular person and cannot be sold or transferred. Therefore, for example, a new owner of the business must apply for a new licence.
- (c) The carrying on of a business may need planning permission. Operators must comply with all relevant legislation.

APPENDIX 2 - STANDARD CONDITIONS ATTACHED TO THE ISSUE OF A PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE LICENCE

(These notes are for guidance only and are not a complete summary of the Act)

Identification plates

1. The external identification plate shall remain the property of Woking Borough Council and shall be affixed to the Private Hire Vehicle, at all times, by the proprietor at his own expense, in the following manner:

- (a) at the rear of the vehicle, and
- (b) to the exterior of the vehicle, and
- (c) with the number facing to the rear, and
- (d) in a vertical plane, and
- (e) affixed by bolts or screws in such a manner as to be easily removed by an Authorised Officer of the Council or Police Constable.

2. The proprietor of the Private Hire Vehicle shall ensure the internal identification plate, where issued by the Council, shall at all times be kept and maintained inside the vehicle in accordance with the reasonable instructions of an Authorised Officer of the Council, in such condition that the information contained on the plate is clearly visible to public view at all times.

3. The proprietor of the Private Hire Vehicle shall ensure the identification plates are maintained and kept in such condition that the information contained on the plate is clearly visible to public view at all times.

Type of vehicle

4. The proprietor shall ensure that a Private Hire Vehicle is one approved by the Council. No Austin FX4s, TX1s or vehicles of similar appearance shall be licensed as Private Hire Vehicles.

Condition of vehicle

5. The proprietor shall ensure that the Private Hire Vehicle shall be maintained in a sound mechanical and structural condition at all times and be capable of satisfying the Council's mechanical and structural inspection at any time during the continuance of the vehicle licence in respect of the vehicle.

6. The interior and exterior of the Private Hire Vehicle shall be kept in a clean condition and maintained in a safe condition by the proprietor to the satisfaction of the Council.

7. The proprietor shall not allow the mechanical and structural specification of the Private Hire Vehicle to be varied without the written consent of the Council.

8. The proprietor shall ensure there is a spare wheel and tools for changing.

9. The proprietor of the vehicle shall:

- (a) provide sufficient means by which any person in the Private Hire Vehicle may communicate with the driver during the course of hiring
- (b) cause the interior of the vehicle to be kept wind and water tight
- (c) provide any necessary windows and means of opening and closing same with not less than one window on each side of the passenger compartment
- (d) cause the seats in the passenger compartment to be properly cushioned and covered
- (e) cause the floor in the passenger compartment to be provided with a proper carpet, mat or other suitable covering
- (f) cause fittings and furniture of the Private Hire Vehicle to be kept in a clean condition and well maintained and in every way fit and safe for public use
- (g) provide facilities for the conveyance of luggage safely and protected from inclement weather

Introduction of a Requirement for all Operator Door Signs to be Vinyl Stickers (not magnets)

(h) provide at least two doors for use of persons conveyed in such Private Hire Vehicle and a separate means of ingress and egress for the driver.

10. The proprietor shall ensure that, if the vehicle is older than three years from the date of its first registration, they will ensure that the vehicle has two tests per year (i.e. one at time of plate renewal and a 'six month test' (i.e. one roughly half way between the issue and expiry dates).

11. The proprietor shall ensure that any radio equipment fitted to his Private Hire Vehicle is at all times kept in a safe and sound condition and maintained in proper working order.

Fire extinguisher/first aid kit

12. The proprietor of the Private Hire Vehicle shall provide and maintain to the satisfaction of the Authorised Officer of the Council an efficient fire extinguisher, or any other form of fire extinguisher required in writing from time to time by an Authorised Officer of the Council. which shall be securely fixed to the vehicle and within easy reach of the driver at all times. The extinguisher shall be manufactured to British Standards and shall show the B.S number. A first aid kit of a type approved by the Council shall be carried in the vehicle at all times.

Advertisements

13. The proprietor shall not display or suffer or permit to be displayed on or from a Private Hire Vehicle, any sign or notice which consists of or includes the word "Taxi" or "Cab," whether in the singular or plural or "For Hire," or any word or words of similar meaning or appearances to any of those words, whether alone or as part of another word.

Council Notices

14. The proprietor shall cause to be affixed and maintained, in a conspicuous position in accordance with the directions of the Council, any sign or notices required from time to time by the Council.

Passengers

15. The proprietor shall not permit the Private Hire Vehicle to be used to carry a greater number of passengers than the number prescribed in the licence. For this purpose two children under the age of ten shall be counted as one person insofar as the rear seating only is concerned.

16. The licensee shall, at all times when a vehicle is hired, take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of passengers conveyed therein and persons entering and alighting from the vehicle.

17. The licensee shall not allow any child under the age of 10 years to be conveyed in the front of the vehicle without the prior written consent of an Authorised Officer of the Council.

Notifications

18. The licensee shall notify Woking Borough Council, in writing, of any conviction or caution recorded against him/her by any Court within seven days of such conviction or caution being imposed.

19. The licensee shall within 42 days of the date of an offence, notify the Council in writing of any Fixed Penalty or Points imposed upon him/her which results in an endorsement on his/her UK Driver Licence.

20. The licensee shall report, in writing, any accident involving a licenced vehicle to the Council within 72 hours (or when reasonably practicable).

21. The proprietor shall notify the Council, in writing, of any change in his/her address within seven days of such change taking place.

Introduction of a Requirement for all Operator Door Signs to be Vinyl Stickers (not magnets)

Cheques

22. A licence in respect of which the licence fee has been paid by cheque shall not be effective until the cheque has been cleared.

Receipts

23. The licensee shall, if requested by the hirer, provide him/her with a written receipt for the fare paid.

Fares

24. The licensee shall not demand a fare in excess of that quoted to the hirer by the Operating Company, nor shall any extras be added on without the consent of the hirer.

Touting, etc.

25. The proprietor shall not:

- (a) tout or solicit on a road or other public place any person to hire or be carried for hire in any Private Hire Vehicle, or
- (b) cause or procure any other person to tout or solicit on a road or other public place any person to hire or be carried for hire in any Private Hire Vehicle.

In this condition: "road" means "any highway and any other road to which the public has access including bridges over which a road passes".

26. The proprietor of a Private Hire Vehicle shall ensure that they only accept jobs given to them by their Licenced Operator – and not accept hiring in any other way.

Drivers

27. The proprietor shall not cause, or procure or permit, any person who is not the holder of a current Private Hire driver licence issued by the Council to drive the Private Hire Vehicle.

Guide/assistance dogs

28. The proprietor must carry any passenger accompanied by a guide/assistance dog.

Door signs on Private Hire Vehicles

29. The proprietor will ensure that:

- (a) the sign shall be displayed on the front doors of the Private Hire Vehicle only
- (b) the sign shall only give details of the name, address and telephone number of the Private Hire company from which the licensee obtains his clients
- (c) the word 'taxi' or 'cab' whether in the singular or the plural should not form part of the sign
- (d) the proprietor should be easily able to remove the sign should the vehicle's licence be suspended, revoked or not renewed, and he shall be responsible for its removal
- (e) the proprietor shall submit for the approval of the Council the proposals for the sign prior to its display
- (f) the signs will remain on the vehicle at all times that the vehicle is licenced and should not be removed, even when the proprietor is not working.
- (g) these signs will be compulsory from 1 January 1994

Licences

30. The proprietor shall deposit the vehicle licence issued by the Council with the Private Hire operator for whom the vehicle is being used during the time it is so used for that operator.

Smoking

31. It is against the law for anyone (driver or passenger) to smoke in a Hackney or Private Hire Vehicle. It is the drivers responsibility to make sure that this law is complied with at all times (whether working or not).

32. The proprietor must ensure that any vehicle they use display "No Smoking" signs.

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Transfers

33. Where a vehicle or licence is transferred to another owner, it is the licence holders responsibility to notify the Licensing Authority as soon as practicable.

Additional Notes

The Council endeavours to send postal reminders for renewals but the responsibility to book appointments (especially the six month test) and attend **before** a licence expires or a test is due is ultimately that of the owner and/or driver. A vehicle requiring a test every 6 months will have its plate suspended immediately if the due date is exceeded.

From 20th of January 2022 all new and renewal vehicles must be Euro Emissions Standard VI (six).

At the time of printing, NCAP ratings had a maximum of 5 (five). Should a rating of 6 (six) be introduced before the above date, this too will be adopted at the same time as Euro Emissions Standard VI (six).

Euro Emission Standard V (five) / NCAP Rated 5 Vehicles will only be renewed up to and including the 20th of January 2022.

Appendix 3 – List of Non-Compliant Vehicles spotted in Woking Town Centre

Date	Reg	Type	Offence
13/12/2017	**59 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
21/12/2017	**10 ***	Private hire	No door signs in use and plate not correctly displayed or missing
06/02/2018	**07 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
08/02/2018	**65 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
10/02/2018	**59 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
14/03/2018	**59 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
27/03/2018	**12 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
27/03/2018	**58 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
27/03/2018	**57 ***	Private hire	No Private Hire or Hackney Plates in use or not in place properly
03/04/2018	**58 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
04/04/2018	**61 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
05/04/2018	**64 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
05/04/2018	**56 ***	Private hire	No Private Hire or Hackney Plates in use or not in place properly
12/09/2018	**15 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
13/09/2018	**61 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
13/09/2018	**57 ***	Private hire	No Private Hire or Hackney Plates in use or not in place properly
15/09/2018	**13 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
15/09/2018	**17 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
15/09/2018	**65 ***	Private hire	No Private Hire or Hackney Plates in use or not in place properly
17/09/2018	**61 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle

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17/09/2018	**17 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
17/09/2018	**08 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
03/10/2018	**59 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
03/10/2018	**60 ***	Hackney Carriage	No Private Hire or Hackney Plates in use or not in place properly
04/10/2018	**10 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
09/10/2018	**59 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
09/10/2018	**13 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
09/10/2018	**13 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
29/10/2018	**61 ***	Private hire	Rear VRN / DVLA plate not properly displayed
31/10/2018	**10 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
31/10/2018	**11 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
12/11/2018	**58 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
13/11/2018	**62 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
13/11/2018	**16 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
13/11/2018	**14 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
22/11/2018	**11 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
22/11/2018	**61 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
25/11/2018	**63 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
28/11/2018	**11 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
29/11/2018	**12 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
04/12/2018	**66 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
10/12/2018	**57 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
11/12/2018	**63 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
14/12/2018	**61 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
17/12/2018	**60 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
19/12/2018	**61 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
20/12/2018	**61 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle

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02/01/2019	**12 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
08/01/2019	**10 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
12/01/2019	**16 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
13/01/2019	**16 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
13/01/2019	*19 ***	Hackney Carriage	No Taxi Top Box in use
16/01/2019	**59 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
19/01/2019	**58 ***	Hackney Carriage	No Private Hire or Hackney Plates in use or not in place properly
23/01/2019	**10 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
12/02/2019	**17 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
13/02/2019	**17 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
14/02/2019	**57 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
20/02/2019	**60 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
21/02/2019	*** 111*	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
11/03/2019	**61 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
12/03/2019	**10 ***	Private hire	No Private Hire or Hackney Plates in use or not in place properly
13/03/2019	**64 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
16/03/2019	**60 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
19/03/2019	**14 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
19/03/2019	**15 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
19/03/2019	**15 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
19/03/2019	**10 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
22/03/2019	**17 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
27/03/2019	**12 ***	Hackney Carriage	No Taxi Top Box in use
31/03/2019	**10 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
31/03/2019	**10 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle

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01/04/2019	**10 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
02/04/2019	**10 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
10/04/2019	**13 ***	Hackney Carriage	No Taxi Top Box in use
15/04/2019	**61 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
20/04/2019	**18 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
24/04/2019	**64 ***	Private hire	No door signs in use and plate not correctly displayed or missing
07/05/2019	**12 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
08/05/2019	**64 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
13/05/2019	**60 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
15/05/2019	**11 ***	Private hire	No door signs in use and plate not correctly displayed or missing
15/05/2019	**65 ***	Hackney Carriage	No Taxi Top Box in use
22/05/2019	**60 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
17/06/2019	**63 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
19/06/2019	**65 ***	Private hire	No door signs in use and plate not correctly displayed or missing
16/07/2019	**11 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
18/07/2019	**13 ***	Private hire	No Private Hire or Hackney Plates in use or not in place properly
08/08/2019	**68 ***	Private hire	No Private Hire or Hackney Plates in use or not in place properly
28/08/2019	**61 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
28/08/2019	**62 ***	Private hire	No Private Hire or Hackney Plates in use or not in place properly
29/08/2019	**52 ***	Private hire	No Private Hire or Hackney Plates in use or not in place properly
30/08/2019	**11 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
30/08/2019	**11 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
11/09/2019	**17 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle

Introduction of a Requirement for all Operator Door Signs to be Vinyl Stickers (not magnets)

11/09/2019	2 ***	Private Hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
19/09/2019	**62 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle
23/09/2019	**14 ***	Private hire	No Operators Door signs on the vehicle

Appendix 4 – Examples of Authorities Materials

Authority	Relevant Wording from Authority Policy
Basingstoke	“All private hire vehicles (except those issued with an exemption notice) must display the corporate identity. This includes permanently affixed ‘no booking no ride’ door vinyl’s (not magnetic) , front and rear vehicle licence plates and an internal sticker.”
Birmingham	“Highly visibility ‘semi-permanent’ vinyl signs on the rear doors ... to assist passengers in identifying a vehicle from the side. They are also intended to make it more difficult to anonymise a vehicle, or to hide its status as a licensed private hire vehicle. Drivers must not remove these signs except to replace them when their licence is renewed.”
Calderdale	“The self-adhesive door signs provided by the Council shall be directly affixed and maintained on both front doors of the vehicle.”
Crawley	“The sign shall be constructed of vinyl , and shall be applied directly to the door. Licence holders should note that magnetic door signs are not acceptable in fulfilment of this condition.”
Dover	Company (Operator) signs (not magnetised) shall be displayed on the two front doors (upper half panel in line with Authority signs).
Guildford	“These are A3 sized vinyl signs which should not be taken off.”
Kirklees	“Kirklees licensed private hire vehicle must display an adhesive sign on the top panel on each of the two front doors of the vehicle <u>ONLY</u> , and on no other part of the vehicle, glass or panels. Such door signs to be permanently stuck on to the door panel at all times the vehicle is licensed as a private hire vehicle. Magnetic signs are not permitted. ”
Middlesborough	“The proprietor shall unless exempted in writing cause to be affixed and maintained in or on the vehicle in a conspicuous position and so positioned that the details are not concealed in any way the following: (a) A door sign of such design and appearance as may be approved and supplied by the Council to be located beneath the window on the nearside and offside front doors of the vehicle. Note: The use of magnetised signs are not permitted ”

Introduction of a Requirement for all Operator Door Signs to be Vinyl Stickers (not magnets)

Newcastle	“The holder of a Private Hire Vehicle Licence shall ensure that door signs are displayed on their Private Hire Vehicles and that the signs comply with the following:- The sign shall measure at least 590mm x 220mm and shall be adhesive in type. ”
Oldham	“The company door signs shall be permanently affixed to the top half of the rear door panels by way of adhesive rather than magnetic means. ”
South Ribble	“Nearside and offside front doors with South Ribble Borough Council Licensed Private Hire Operator company door stickers (permanently affixed and not magnetic)”
Southampton	“The licence conditions require the front doors of licensed private hire vehicles to to be clearly marked with an adhesive sign indicating that the vehicle is licensed and bearing the name and telephone number of the operator. Magnetic signs are not acceptable. ”
Torbay	“All Private Hire vehicles shall be fitted with Licensing Authority door signs, which must be affixed to the front doors of the vehicle and must be by way of vinyl stickers and not be magnetic. ”
Wolverhampton	“Private Hire Vehicles shall at all times display a unique Private Hire Vehicle Operators door sign bearing the name, telephone number and/or ‘App’ on each side of the vehicle, which has been approved by Licensing Services. The use of magnetic door stickers is prohibited. ”

** Please note that this is not an exhaustive list – merely a selection of Authorities around the nation who have opted to enforce the requirement of semi-permanent vinyl signage instead of magnetic.*

Appendix 5 – November 2018 Consultation Letter

Dear (Name)

We are writing to all Operators to consult on possible minor changes regarding requirements relating to Operators Door Signs on Private Hire Vehicles.

As you are aware, Private Hire Vehicles are required to display signage on the front doors of the vehicle, providing information to the public about the Operator the vehicle is working for. These door signs are compulsory and are required to be on the vehicle at all times while it is licenced.

In recent years, the enforcement of these requirements has absorbed a substantial amount of the Licensing Department's time. Officers are often told that door signs have been stolen, the magnets have fallen off or, due to a vehicle having aluminium doors, the magnets don't stick to them very well. The regular loss of door signs results in drivers receiving warning letters, which remain on their record. Private Hire Operators then incur financial costs to provide replacement door signs.

It has become evident that magnet based door signs are not suitable for use on private hire vehicles.

The Licensing Department is aware that some Private Hire Operators already use vinyl sticker style door signs. These signs are a semi-permanent fixture, meaning that they are highly unlikely to fall off or be stolen, and can be affixed to the doors of the vehicle regardless of the type of surface. As a result we are considering introducing a requirement that **all** Private Hire Operators door signs are to be semi-permanently affixed stickers, with magnet based door signs no longer being permitted.

However, before we do this we would like gauge your views on this as a Private Hire Operator. Should you have any comments or ideas in relation to this issue, we would like to hear them.

If you have any comments, please write to the Licensing Department at the address above, or email them to us at licensing@woking.gov.uk prior to the 4 January 2019.

Kind regards

The Licensing Department

Woking Borough Council

t: 01483 755855 e: licensing@woking.gov.uk

Appendix 6 – Response to November 2018 Consultation

“I write further to your letter of 29th November in which you state that you want to consult all Operators on a minor change regarding Door signs.

What you perceive as a minor change will if implemented have a detrimental effect on the type of vehicle that drivers will want to licence as a private hire vehicle.

Woking Borough Council already has one of the most stringent rules on the type and age of vehicle to be used. By implementing this change we foresee drivers opting to buy the most basic models required to meet the current licencing conditions. We as a company have recently purchased a vehicle that has cost us in excess of £30,000 and the reason for purchasing such an expensive vehicle was the need to provide quality transportation to the public. If we were to have permanent stickers stuck to the side of this vehicle the body work over time will most definitely be damaged therefore if permanent stickers are introduced we will have no choice but to sell the vehicle and get a basic vehicle at a fraction of the cost to meet the requirements. Our point being that by implementing permanent stickers the Council will in a way be forcing drivers to buy the most basic models thus the customer in the long run will be the ones affected.

Currently as a company we have a number of drivers who have invested a vast amount of money (often financed) on executive vehicles which they use for private hire and executive work. Some of these drivers do not warrant a dispensation disc as they do day to day work, however they have purchased what one can describe as executive vehicles in order to be considered for the adhoc executive work. These drivers are often used for last minute bookings that the likes of McLaren require for pick-ups from “H block” which as you may be aware is an area within McLaren where they request that the door signs be taken off before entering. Permanent stickers will off course have an effect on their earnings.

We have a number of drivers that work part time, these drivers are aware that their inner front, external rear plates and side stickers must always be displayed whilst the vehicle is licensed however when they are not working as private hire drivers they tend to remove their side magnetic plates as they do not want the vehicle to attract undue attention. If stickers are to be permanently stuck to the side of the vehicle this will mean they will have to purchase a separate vehicle to carry out part time work, which they currently do to make ends meet. This will lead to more outlay and we foresee that as a result of permanent stickers the trade may end up losing these drivers. Would you consider that part time drivers (subject to them off course providing proof they have a permanent job elsewhere, and one that does not involve driving) be exempt from having permanent stickers and thus allow them to have magnetic's?

We appreciate and fully understand that a private hire vehicle is always a private hire vehicle even when it is not being used for work and that Woking Borough Council bylaws state that the vehicle is required at all times to be displaying door signs, however as well as the above points, in order to change from magnetic's to what you call “semi-permanent”, but for arguments sake we refer to as permanent vinyl stickers more discussion need to take place with the companies and drivers that have a genuine vested interest in the trade.

Having raised our concerns we write to confirm that whatever your decision we will be supportive and look forward to continuing to provide safe and reliable transport to the people of Woking.”

Appendix 7 – May 2019 Consultation letter

29 May 2019

Consultation regarding changes to Private Hire Operator licensing

The below is notification of a consultation now taking place regarding proposed changes to Private Hire Operator licensing at Woking Borough Council.

Public trust and confidence in the overall safety and integrity of the whole private hire system is vital. It is imperative that the same standards and expectations that apply to licenced drivers also apply to Private Hire Operators. It is the role of the Licensing Authority to ensure that those licenced are ‘fit and proper’, ensuring the safety of the travelling public.

It is the view of the Licensing Authority that some changes are required to current licence conditions to ensure that Operators continue to be safe, accountable and trustworthy; understanding of their requirements; safely providing for their drivers; and knowledgeable of the law, namely:

- (i)** a change of procedure used in licensing multiple Private Hire Operators, including a fixed fee of £10.50 for each additional name
- (ii)** the requirement to undertake and pass a Knowledge Test for Operators
- (iii)** a requirement for Operators door signage to be sticker/vinyl as opposed to magnetic

The consultation will run from 1st of June 2019 until 15th of July 2019, inclusive and a brief summary of each proposal can be found overleaf.

Introduction of a Requirement for all Operator Door Signs to be Vinyl Stickers (not magnets)

Proposal (i): Operators ‘Trading As’ Names

In order to create a clear and transparent system the Licensing Authority proposes to issue one licence per named Operator. Any “trading as” names will be issued a separate licence with a unique reference number linking back to the “parent” licence. The Licensing Authority also proposes an administrative fee of £10.50 per “trading as” company name, in line with current charges.

It is proposed that this procedural change is implemented upon renewal of each licence or upon each request to add a new “trading as” name to a licence.

Proposal (ii): Operators Knowledge Test

When applying for a new or renewed Private Hire Operator licence, applicants are required to sign a declaration of having read and understood the guidance. Unfortunately, despite this, some Operators are not demonstrating an understanding of their legal requirements and have failed to adhere to conditions on their licences.

In order to safeguard against this, and increase public confidence in the trade, the Licensing Authority proposes the introduction of a Private Hire Operator Knowledge Test. All new applicants would be required to pass the test prior to being issued a licence. Existing Operators will be required to pass the test prior to the next renewal of their licence.

Proposal (iii): Operators Door Signage Regulations

Private Hire Operators are required to ensure that all vehicles carrying out work under their company name display the correct signage in order to be easily identifiable. It has become evident, through conversations with drivers who have failed to display door signs, that magnet based door signs are not fit for purpose. Semi-permanent vinyl stickers are highly unlikely to fall off or blow off in the wind, and are very difficult to steal.

The Licensing Authority proposes that a condition stating that all operator door signs must be of a semi-permanent vinyl sticker type, no smaller than 210mm x 297mm, be added to Private Hire Operator licences.

The above is a summary of the proposals. For more information, and details on how to submit representations, please visit www.woking.gov.uk/taxi

Appendix 8 – May 2019 Consultation Responses

Morning.i am not agree with council new proposal for vinyl stickers on my car.because it's difficult for fix and remove.its mean drivers need to spend extra money for installation and removal stickers.we drivers already struggling in Woking because of Uber.I request to council don't consider vinyl stickers.Thanx

Sound like good suggestions to me

I strongly disagree with this proposal for the following reasons:

1: Security is a real issue, I visit the countryside to both walk and fish and whilst the car license plates remain displayed I certainly would not want to leave door plates on display when the car is not being used for work in those circumstances. We face far greater odds than the average motorist of being broken into with just our licensee plates on display let alone permanent door signs

2; Part of the taxi mot which all vehicles are subjected to either once or twice a year dependent upon age, is to have door signage. If not available the MOT certificate is not issued. Therefore signage should have been available at those times and displayed during the working day, and I struggle to accept the drivers reasons for not displaying the signage:

In my experience during the 4 years I have been a PH driver I have lost **one** of my door panels on 2 occasions and that was because of ice on a door and a door panel that was not stored properly overnight and not able to adhere to the door flat. On both occasions I was able to access an additional sign during that working day from the office . I now carry an additional set of plates at all times. Never have I heard of someone losing both panels

3: I struggle to accept that we should all face an additional cost for these semi permanent vinyl stickers as a result of the few who choose to either ignore the regulations or manage the loss of a sign quickly during the working day.

