

Appendix 5b – Consultation with trade letter – Taxi policy – 2020

Contact: Licensing Services
Direct Tel: 03000 261016
email: licensing@durham.gov.uk

DATE

Dear Sir / Madam

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy Review - Public Consultation

I am writing to inform you about the Council's forthcoming review of the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy licensing policy.

The Council's current Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy was adopted in 2016 and amended in 2018. It is often referred to as the 'taxi policy'. It relates to the licensing by the Council of hackney carriages (taxis), private hire vehicles (must be pre-booked), licensed drivers who may drive these licensed vehicles and private hire operators who take bookings for and control private hire vehicles and their drivers.

The purpose of this policy is to explain how the Council undertakes its functions with respect to hackney carriage and private hire licensing. The primary focus being on safeguarding and public protection, with emphasis on the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

The Council reviews this policy at least every five years and makes such revisions as it considers appropriate at any other time and publishes it accordingly. This policy is now being reviewed and several possible changes to policy are being put forward for consideration.

We are proposing several changes to the existing policy however, the main proposals which concern licensed vehicles, drivers and operators include the following:

- The implementation of the requirements of the new National Standards for Taxi and Private Hire Licensing
- A new policy on vehicle emissions and the age of licensed vehicles
- A new policy in respect of previous convictions and offences
- A new policy on drug testing
- Changes to the suspension and revocation of driver licences
- Requirement of refresher training on Child Sexual Exploitation every three years
- All applicants for a vehicle licence must undergo a basic DBS check
- All drivers to be trained in Disability Awareness

Environment, Health and Consumer Protection

Licensing, PO Box 617, Durham DH1 9HZ
Main Telephone 03000 261016

- Additional conditions for Private Hire Operators

In addition, we are also consulting on the use of In-vehicle visual and audio recording (CCTV).

A briefing note has also been prepared and can be viewed online and I recommended that you read through the briefing note before taking part in our online questionnaire.

We have made several changes to the content and format of the existing policy for clarification and explanatory reasons. Changes are highlighted in red in the on-line version of the draft proposal for a revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2021 – 26. [Link]

It is recommended that the following documents are also read in conjunction with this briefing note before making any representations during the consultation period:

- The Council's webpage:
- The current Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing policy
- The Department of Transport's Taxi and Private Hire Best Practice guide 2010
- The Department of Transport's Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards 2020
- The draft proposal for a revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2021 – 26

Links to all these documents are provided on the Council's webpage. In addition, a Taxi Policy Revision Questionnaire is also available on the website and may be used to respond to this consultation. If you are unable to access these documents on-line, we can send you the briefing note, policy documents and the survey by post upon your request.

All representations should be made to: licensing@durham.gov.uk

If you require further information on any of these proposals, please contact the Licensing Team at licensing@durham.gov.uk

The consultation will begin on Monday 7th September and will run for 12 weeks up until midnight on Sunday 29th November 2020.

I look forward to receiving your response to this consultation in due course.

Yours sincerely



Craig Rudman
Licensing Manager