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29 January 2021

To: Chair – Councillor Anna Bradnam  
Vice-Chair – Councillor Eileen Wilson  
Members of the Licensing Committee – Councillors  
Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya, Gavin Clayton, Graham Cone,  
Clare Delderfield, Peter Fane, Jose Hales, Geoff Harvey, Mark Howell,  
Steve Hunt, Alex Malyon, Peter McDonald and Deborah Roberts

Quorum: 4

Substitutes: Councillors Sue Ellington, Nick Wright, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams,  
Ruth Betson, Nigel Cathcart, Dr. Douglas de Lacey, Nick Sample and  
Bill Handley

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Licensing Committee**, which will be held on **Monday, 8 February 2021 at 10.00 a.m.** This meeting will be conducted remotely using the Microsoft Teams video conferencing system. There will be no access to the meeting at the Council offices, but a live stream will be available via Microsoft Teams. A web link to enable members of the Press and public to view or listen to proceedings, will be published on the relevant pages of the Council's website, at least 24 hours before the meeting.

Members are respectfully reminded that when substituting on committees, subcommittees, and outside or joint bodies, Democratic Services must be advised of the substitution **in advance of** the meeting. It is not possible to accept a substitute once the meeting has started. Council Standing Order 4.3 refers.

Yours faithfully  
**Liz Watts**  
Chief Executive

**The Council is committed to improving, for all members of the community, access to its agendas and minutes. We try to take all circumstances into account but, if you have any specific needs, please let us know, and we will do what we can to help you.**

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## Agenda

## Pages

- 1. Apologies for Absence**  
To receive apologies for absence from committee members.

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| <b>2.</b> | <b>Declarations of Interest</b>   |               |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b><br>To authorise the Chair to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2020. | <b>1 - 6</b>  |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards</b>  | <b>7 - 66</b> |

### **Guidance notes for members of the public for remote meetings**

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Any person who participates in the meeting in accordance with the Council's procedure rules, is deemed to have consented to being recorded and to the use of those images (where participating via video conference) and/or sound recordings for webcast purposes. When speaking, members of the public should not disclose any personal information of any individual as this might infringe on the rights of that individual and breach the Data Protection Act.

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# Agenda Item 3

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing Committee held on  
Monday, 10 February 2020 at 10.30 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Anna Bradnam – Chairman  
Councillor Eileen Wilson – Vice-Chairman

Councillors: Nigel Cathcart  
Peter Fane  
Geoff Harvey  
Peter McDonald  
Heather Williams  
Bill Handley

Graham Cone  
Jose Hales  
Steve Hunt  
Deborah Roberts  
Mark Howell

Officers: Jennifer Holah  
Jane Jackson  
Rory McKenna  
Trevor Nicoll

Interim Corporate lead for Licensing, Permitting,  
Business Operations and Business Process  
Improvement  
Senior Resource Officer  
Deputy Head of Legal Practice  
Head of Environment and Waste

### 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

Cllr Mark Howell commented that he had not discussed any of the proposals with his colleague County Councillor Kevin Cuffley who was a licensed Private Hire Driver.

### 2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2019 were agreed as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

- Minute 3: 'Vehicles'. The words 'also of concern' would replace 'more significant than vehicle age'. The agreed amended text was therefore '...emission levels were also of concern.'
- Under **3.8 Age of Vehicle**: the number 7 would be replaced with 9. The agreed amended wording was therefore '...unless the vehicle is less than 9 years old and it complies with emissions standards.'

### 3. HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING POLICY AND CONDITIONS

The Chairman set out the supplementary information which had been issued with the agenda, as well as the correspondence that committee members had received. Officers addressed all the points on which the council had been challenged in recent correspondence. The committee was informed by officers that discussions of national standards by Parliament had been delayed, however the council could not delay its Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy and Conditions for this. Officers did not anticipate that Parliament's discussion would lead to any changes that would require a re-drafting of the council's policy.

Officers informed the committee of the letters of objection that had been received, some of which had been part of the first public consultation. Others had been received after the close of the first consultation and before the start of the second public consultation. Members were assured that issues and comments raised in this correspondence had

been considered informally at workshops and had been taken into account.

The committee was informed by officers that the draft Private Hire and Taxi handbook had not been available for the first public consultation as it was being drafted at the time. It had however been available to view during the second public consultation and a link to it had been provided.

The Chairman reminded committee members that the changes being proposed to the policy were to protect public safety.

The Corporate Licensing Manager presented the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, setting out the process of developing and consulting on the draft policy, which had included a second public consultation. This had closed on 31 January 2020. She informed the committee that all comments from interested parties had been considered and the policy had been amended as appropriate in response to these.

The committee discussed the sections of the policy in turn:

### **Section 2 Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers**

- Reference at 2.9 to the European Economic Area would have to be reviewed in due course.
- The Chairman informed the committee that safeguarding training for drivers was taking place. The aim of this was to increase drivers' understanding of safeguarding issues. If a driver performed poorly in this, officers would work closely with them. It was recognised that language may be an issue.
- Officers informed the committee that drivers were notified of the requirement to submit a safeguarding certificate, three months in advance of their licence renewal date. All existing Private Hire Drivers had a year to complete the safeguarding training.

### **Section 3.6 External Signage and Livery**

- The Chairman informed the committee that council policy had already incorporated the requirement for operator door signage in 2018. Officers had considered the concerns raised during public consultation in relation to this and considered that this requirement did not stop drivers from working for more than one operator and did not infringe on the rights of privacy of the driver.
- Committee members **agreed** that the safety of the public was paramount and that the requirement for operator door signage increased this.
- Committee members commented that it was important for the public to know to who they should make a complaint about a driver or to send praise; external door signage would inform them of this.
- The committee was informed that officers were looking into the specification for the size and typeface of door signage, so that it was legible from the other side of the road.
- Committee members discussed the use of magnetic door signs, recognising that not all vehicles had magnetic doors. The committee **agreed** to delegate to officers the drafting of appropriate wording for this in the policy. The following wording was suggested:
  - f) Hackney carriage vehicles must have affixed permanently on the front and rear external passenger and driver doors in a prominent location, South Cambridgeshire issued door signage. If this is not technically possible, then a position for the signage must be in agreement with South Cambridgeshire District Council.

The Licensing Committee **AGREED** with the requirement for external door signage

and considered these requirements were reasonably necessary.

### 3.7 Age of vehicle

- Following consultation feedback, the upper vehicle age limit had increased from seven to nine years. This brought the policy in line with that of Cambridge City Council.
- The committee discussed the maximum age of vehicles at first licensing, which should be a maximum of four years old for petrol and diesel vehicles only. The committee **AGREED** that ultra-low emission (ULEV) and zero emission vehicles should be omitted from this.
- The Committee **AGREED** to the introduction of an upper vehicle age limit of nine years, from December 2021.

### 3.10 CCTV

- The Chairman explained to the committee that the requirement for CCTV extended to plate exempt vehicles. Officers considered that this did not impinge on privacy.
- The committee was informed that the council would be the data manager and the data would only be accessed if needed; only council officers could de-encrypt the data. Members suggested that this should be made clear in the policy. The committee was informed that the data was overwritten within 28 days, which was in accordance with Local Government Association guidance.
- Officers informed the committee that it was left to the driver's judgement whether to turn on the audio recording, as the driver was responsible for their passengers' and their own safety.
- The Chairman informed the committee that several drivers had said that they would value CCTV and the option for audio recording.
- Members suggested that a sign needed to be provided in vehicles, notifying passengers that CCTV recording was taking place. It was also suggested that the sign notify passengers that the recording would only be held for 28 days. The committee **AGREED** that such a sign should be provided.
- Members suggested that it should be reported on a quarterly basis to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee and to the Licensing Committee, when CCTV recordings were used and the purpose of this.
- Officers informed the committee that the CCTV system had not yet been procured. The committee was also informed that the positioning of the CCTV in the vehicle would be included in the specification. Members would be engaged in the CCTV procurement process and officers would also be liaising with relevant colleagues at Cambridge City Council.
- Officers informed the committee that another data protection impact assessment would be carried out before the procurement of the CCTV.
- Regarding i) Retention of CCTV images, reference to 'hard drive' would be changed to 'storage system'.
- The Chairman proposed adding the following line to the policy: 'The Local Authority reserves the right to amend the CCTV specification from time to time as required'. The committee **AGREED** this amendment.
- Committee members were informed that a consultation would take place if any significant changes to the CCTV specification were to be made.

The Licensing Committee **AGREED** that there was reasonable necessity for CCTV and did not consider that this infringed on privacy.

### 3.11 Dashcams

The Chairman informed the committee that following public consultation, it had been decided that outward facing dashcams would continue to be permitted.

The committee discussed whether with the introduction of CCTV, dashcams should no longer be permitted. Officers clarified that the requirement was for inward facing CCTV. Members highlighted that drivers used dashcams for various reasons and these were a requirement of some insurance policies. Members suggested that the council should not be prescriptive in its policy regarding dashcams.

Following a full and thorough discussion, the committee **AGREED** this section of the policy without amendment. Councillor Jose Hales requested that his objection to permitting dashcams be recorded in the minutes.

### **3.19 Private Hire Vehicle Notice of Exemption**

The Chairman reminded committee members that the law allowed for plate exempt vehicles.

The committee **AGREED** this section of the policy without amendments.

### **3.20 Required Information for Passengers**

The committee was informed by officers that some private hire drivers had raised concern about the requirement for a licence plate, however this had already been a requirement in existing policy. The only change proposed to the policy was that this plate should be issued by the council.

### **3.20 Advertising**

The committee was informed by officers that the policy regarding advertising, was in line with Cambridge City Council's policy.

Following discussion of advertising, the committee **AGREED**:

- a) That advertising should not be permitted on Private Hire vehicles.
- b) That the public safety factors underpinning the policy were greater than any factors affecting competition.
- a) That there were reasonable grounds for the necessity of this part of the policy.

Wheelchair accessible vehicles were discussed. The Chairman informed the committee that there were not yet any wheelchair accessible ULEV vehicles on the market. It was proposed that on page 52 of the policy, a line should be added to the table to reflect having wheelchair accessible ULEV or electric vehicles when the market allowed. The committee **AGREED** this proposal.

### **3.26 Environmental Considerations**

Members urged caution not to set conditions that would deter drivers from having wheelchair accessible vehicles, such as by stipulating that these should be petrol and not diesel vehicles.

Regarding the table at page 52 of the policy, it was suggested that clarity was needed in the guidance to include other fuel types; reference had only been made to ULEV or zero emission vehicles. It was suggested that the council should not exclude alternatively fuelled vehicles.

Reference to 'Euro 5' rather than 'Euro 6' emissions standards was queried. Members suggested that Euro 5 standards rather than Euro 6 should be referred to as reference to Euro 6 would exclude all vehicles older than 2015.

Cllr Harvey suggested that the council should incentivise the take up of electric vehicles over ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEV), by offering free licensing for electric vehicles as the City Council had done. Cllr Harvey also suggested that the policy should specify petrol



ULEV and not diesel ULEVs. While the Licensing Committee Chairman agreed that these were very important matters, they were for a future consultation. Officers advised the committee that wording in the policy in relation to this should remain unchanged and that other types of low emission vehicles and other types of fuel be looked at as part of a future consultation. The Licensing Committee **AGREED** that it would look at these issues in future.

#### **4. Operators**

The Chairman informed the committee that licences would not be granted to operators outside the district, to allow for better enforcement. Committee members indicated their support for this.

#### **5. Enforcement**

Committee members expressed disappointment that a right of appeal to the licensing authority was not included in the policy. The committee had an in-depth discussion about this, with members setting out why they believed drivers should have the right of appeal to a council appeals panel, before going to the magistrates' court. Members felt that this provided more assurance of public safety.

In response to the concerns raised by committee members, the Chairman explained that it was still the intention that referrals would still be made to the council's licensing appeals panel by officers. Committee members were informed that Cambridge City Council did not have an appeals process, with all appeals by licence holders or applicants, being made straight to the magistrates' court.

Following an in-depth discussion, committee members **AGREED** that the right of appeal to the council should be included and made clear in the policy.

Referring to the points of concern raised in the letter received from the LPHCA on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2020, Members confirmed that they were satisfied that due consideration had been given to all public consultation responses. Members were informed by officers that the report to the Licensing Committee had been published on 31<sup>st</sup> January, which was in accordance with statutory requirements.

Following the committee's consideration of the whole policy, the Licensing Committee **AGREED**:

- a) The Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licencing Policy and Conditions, subject to the incorporation of the agreed amendments, and recommended the adoption of the policy by Full Council.
- b) That all the requirements discussed were reasonably necessary.
- c) That the incorporation of the agreed amendments to the policy be delegated to the Corporate Licensing Manager, prior to the policy's presentation to Full Council.

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**The Meeting ended at 1.35 p.m.**

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|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Report to:</b>           | Licensing Committee 8 February 2021                          |
| <b>Lead Cabinet Member:</b> | Lead Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Licensing |
| <b>Lead Officer:</b>        | Head of Environment and Waste                                |

## Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards

### Executive Summary

1. Under the powers given to South Cambridgeshire District Council under the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, (as amended), South Cambridgeshire District Council has responsibility for licensing Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers as well as vehicle proprietors and Private Hire Operators within the District.

This Licensing Authority seeks to carry out its licensing functions with a view to promoting the following objectives:

- The safety and protection of the public
- Vehicle safety, comfort and access
- The prevention of crime and disorder
- The promotion of environmental sustainability
- Protection of children and adults at risk from harm

As a Licensing Authority, South Cambridgeshire District Council will ensure all licensing activities are carried out in line with its policies.

The Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy was produced in order to inform and guide this Licensing Authority when administering its responsibilities and to provide, its officers, the trade and the public with appropriate guidelines that put the Council's licensing requirements into practice in a clear and transparent manner.

The primary focus when administering its functions are public safety, safeguarding and wellbeing. In exercising its discretion in carrying out regulatory functions, the Council will have regard to this policy

The current Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing Policy applies to all drivers, vehicles and operators and was last updated in April 2020.

2. In July 2020, the Department for Transport (DfT) published its 'Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards' guidance document. **(Appendix A)**

## **Key Decision**

3. Is this a Key decision? – No

## **Recommendations**

4. It is recommended that the Licensing Committee recommends that the Lead Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Licensing approves the new standards, as written as licence conditions, policy requirements and procedures.

The Department for Transport expects these recommendations to be implemented unless there is a compelling local reason not to.

## **Details**

5. In July 2020, the Department for Transport (DfT) published its 'Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards' guidance document. **(Appendix A)**

In the interest of transparency, the DfT has advised that all licensing authorities should publish their consideration of the measures contained in Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards.

The DfT has outlined that there is evidence to support the view that taxis and private hire vehicles are a high-risk environment. In terms of risks to passengers, this can be seen in the abuse and exploitation of children and vulnerable adults facilitated and, in some cases, perpetrated by the trade and the number of sexual crimes reported which involve taxi and private hire vehicle drivers. Links between the trade and child sexual abuse and exploitation have been established in many areas and other investigations continue. Data on reported sexual assaults by taxi and private hire vehicle drivers evidence the risk to passengers; data from Greater Manchester and Merseyside suggest that, if similar offence patterns are applied across England, 623 sexual assaults per year are reported.

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 enables the Secretary of State for Transport to issue statutory guidance on exercising taxi and private hire vehicle licensing functions to protect children and vulnerable individuals who are over 18 from harm when using these services. The 'Standards' document sets out a framework of policies that licensing authorities must have regard to when exercising their functions. Given that the standards have been set directly to address the safeguarding of the public and the potential impact of failings in this area, the importance of thoroughly considering these standards cannot be overstated.

Whilst the focus on the standards is on protecting children and adults at risk from harm, all passengers will benefit from the recommendations contained within it.

There is consensus that common core minimum standards are required to better regulate the taxi and private hire vehicle sector, and the recommendations contained in the document are the result of detailed discussion with the trade, regulators and safety campaign groups. The Department therefore expects these recommendations to be implemented unless there is a compelling local reason not to do so.

In response to the DfT standards guidance, this Licensing Authority looked to identify areas within the guidance that differed from its current policy and procedures. It was identified that many standards suggested by the DfT were already within the Hackney Carriage and Private Licensing Policy

A total of 9 standards were identified (**Appendix B**), in which this Licensing Authority would need to consider adopting to meet the DfT standards.

## Options

6. Members may agree one of the following options:

- Recommend that the Lead Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Licensing approves the Standards as recommended.
- Recommend that the Lead Cabinet Member rejects the Standards.
- Recommend that the Lead Cabinet Member approves the Standards with amendments.

## Implications

7. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:-

### Financial

8. The Taxi Licensing service is self-funding and the costs associated with the service are recovered from licence holder fees and charges.

### Legal

9. Licensing Authorities are under a legal duty, under section 177 of the Police and Crime Act 2017, to have regard to the Standards when exercising any function relating to their taxi and private hire functions.

## **Consultation responses**

10. The DfT has advised that Licensing Authorities should consult on proposed changes in licensing rules that may have significant impacts on passengers and/or the trade.

Consultation was held from 11 December 2020 to 15 January 2021.

The consultation was advertised through a variety of means including;

- Email to license holders
- Taxi Trade Forum – 8 January 2021
- Email to the trade and Key stakeholders
- Publication on the City Council website

A total of 8 responses were received via an online E-Form survey and emails sent to [TaxiConsultation@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:TaxiConsultation@scambs.gov.uk) (**Appendices B, C, D and E**)

There have been several CCTV comments received during the consultation. Members are reminded that the requirement for installation of CCTV in all licensed vehicles is already in the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

## **Background Papers**

- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976
- South Cambridgeshire Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy
- Police & Crime Act 2017 (section 177)

## **Appendices**

Appendix A: DfT Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards

Appendix B: Summary of Proposals and Responses

Appendix C: Uber response

Appendix D: Email from South Cambridgeshire Executive Operators Group

Appendix E: General consultation comments from a licensed driver

## **Report Author:**

Jane Jackson – Technical Officer

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# **Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards**

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 There is evidence to support the view that taxis and private hire vehicles are a high-risk environment. In terms of risks to passengers, this can be seen in abuse and exploitation of children and vulnerable adults facilitated and in some cases perpetrated by the trade and the number of sexual crimes reported which involve taxi and private hire vehicle drivers. Links between the trade and child sexual abuse and exploitation have been established in many areas and other investigations continue. Data on reported sexual assaults by taxi and private hire vehicle drivers evidence the risk to passengers; data from [Greater Manchester](#) and [Merseyside](#) suggest that, if similar offence patterns are applied across England, 623 sexual assaults per year are reported. These figures do not however account for the under reporting of crime which is estimated to be as high as 83 percent in the [Crime Survey for England and Wales](#).
- 1.2 The Policing and Crime Act 2017 enables the Secretary of State for Transport to issue statutory guidance on exercising taxi and private hire vehicle licensing functions to protect children and vulnerable individuals who are over 18 from harm when using these services. For the purposes of this document, a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday; and the term “vulnerable individual” has the same meaning as the definition of a ‘vulnerable adult’ for the purpose of section 42 of the [Care Act 2014](#), which applies where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that an adult in its area (whether or not ordinarily resident there):
- (a) has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs),
  - (b) is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
  - (c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.
- 1.3 Whilst the focus of the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards is on protecting children and vulnerable adults, all passengers will benefit from the recommendations contained in it. There is consensus that common core minimum standards are required to regulate better the taxi and private hire vehicle sector, and the recommendations in this document are the result of detailed discussion with the trade, regulators and safety campaign groups. **The Department therefore expects these recommendations to be implemented unless there is a compelling local reason not to.**
- 1.4 It should be noted that as policing and criminal justice is not a devolved matter, the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards issued under the Policing and Crime Act 2017 will continue to have effect in Wales although responsibility for taxi and private hire vehicle policy was devolved to the Welsh Assembly in April 2018. Should the Welsh Government introduce legislation to regulate on these issues, the standards in this document would, cease to apply.

- 1.5 All local authorities and district councils that provide children's and other types of services, including licensing authorities, have a statutory duty to make arrangements to ensure that their functions and any services that they contract out to others are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This means that licensing authorities should have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This includes clear whistleblowing procedures, safe recruitment practices and clear policies for dealing with allegations against people who work with children, as set out in the [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) statutory guidance.
- 1.6 The Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards reflect the significant changes in the industry and lessons learned from experiences in local areas since the 2010 version of the Department's Best Practice Guidance. This includes extensive advice on checking the suitability of individuals and operators to be licensed; safeguarding children and vulnerable adults; the Immigration Act 2016 and Common Law Police Disclosure (which replaced the Notifiable Occupations Scheme).
- 1.7 The standards in this document replace relevant sections of the Best Practice Guidance issued by the Department in 2010, where there is a conflict between the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards and the Best Practice Guidance the Department issue on taxi and private hire vehicle licensing, the standards in this document take precedence.

## Terminology

Taxis are referred to in legislation, regulation and common language as 'hackney carriages', 'black cabs' and 'cabs'. The term '**taxi**' is used throughout this document and refers to all such vehicles. Taxis can be hired immediately by hailing on the street or at a rank.

Private hire vehicles include a range of vehicles including minicabs, executive cars, chauffeur services, limousines and some school and day centre transport services. All private hire vehicle journeys must be pre-booked via a licensed private hire vehicle operator and are subject to a 'triple licensing lock' i.e. the operator fulfilling the booking must use vehicles and drivers licensed by the same authority as that which granted its licence. The term 'private hire vehicle' is used throughout this document to refer to all such vehicles.

## 2. Consideration of the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards

- 2.1 The past failings of licensing regimes must never be repeated. The Department has carefully considered the measures contained in the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards and recommend that these should be put in to practice and administered appropriately to mitigate the risk posed to the public. The purpose of setting standards is to protect children and vulnerable adults, and by extension the wider public, when using taxis and private hire vehicles.
- 2.2 The Government set out in the [Modern Crime Prevention Strategy](#) the evidence that where Government, law enforcement, businesses and the public work together on prevention, this can deliver significant and sustained cuts in certain crimes. That is good news for victims and communities and it makes clear economic sense too. Educating the public on the risks of using unlicensed drivers and vehicles, how to identify the licensed trade and appropriate measure to take when using these services will protect help all passengers, more information is annexed to this document (Annex - Staying safe: guidance for passengers).
- 2.3 The Strategy committed to protect children and young people from the risk of child sexual abuse and exploitation (CSAE), by working with local authorities to introduce rigorous taxi and private hire vehicle licensing regimes. Both the [Jay](#) and [Casey](#) reports on CSAE highlighted examples of taxi/private hire vehicle drivers being directly linked to children that were abused, including instances when children were picked up from schools, children's homes or from family homes and abused, or sexually exploited.
- 2.4 The Casey Report made clear that weak and ineffective arrangements for taxi and private hire vehicle licensing had left the children and public at risk. The Department for Transport has worked with the Home Office, Local Government Association (LGA), personal safety charities, trade unions and trade bodies,

holding workshops, forums, and sharing evidence and good practice with local authorities to assist in the setting of the standards.

- 2.5 This document is published by the Secretary of State for Transport under section 177(1) of the Policing and Crime Act 2017 following consultation in accordance with section 177(5).
- 2.6 The document sets out a framework of policies that, under section 177(4), licensing authorities “**must have regard**” to when exercising their functions. These functions include developing, implementing and reviewing their taxi and private hire vehicle licensing regimes. “Having regard” is more than having a cursory glance at a document before arriving at a preconceived conclusion.
- 2.7 “Having regard” to these standards requires public authorities, in formulating a policy, to give considerations the weight which is proportionate in the circumstances. **Given that the standards have been set directly to address the safeguarding of the public and the potential impact of failings in this area, the importance of thoroughly considering these standards cannot be overstated.** It is not a question of box ticking; the standards must be considered rigorously and with an open mind.
- 2.8 Although it remains the case that licensing authorities must reach their own decisions, both on overall policies and on individual licensing matters in light of the relevant law, it may be that the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards might be drawn upon in any legal challenge to an authority’s practice, and that any failure to adhere to the standards without sufficient justification could be detrimental to the authority’s defence. **In the interest of transparency, all licensing authorities should publish their consideration of the measures contained in Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards, and the policies and delivery plans that stem from these.** The Department has undertaken to monitor the effectiveness of the standards in achieving the protection of children and vulnerable adults (and by extension all passengers).
- 2.9 The Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards does not purport to give a definitive statement of the law and any decisions made by a licensing authority remain a matter for that authority.

### 3. Administering the Licensing Regime

#### Licensing policies

- 3.1 The Department recommends all licensing authorities make publicly available a cohesive policy document that brings together all their procedures on taxi and private hire vehicle licensing. This should include but not be limited to policies on convictions, a 'fit and proper' person test, licence conditions and vehicle standards.
- 3.2 When formulating a taxi and private hire vehicle policy, the primary and overriding objective must be to protect the public. The importance of ensuring that the licensing regime protects the vulnerable cannot be overestimated. This was highlighted in the [report by Dame Louise Casey CB](#) of February 2015 on safeguarding failings.

*"It will be evident from this report that in many cases the activities of perpetrators take place in spheres which are regulated by the Council – taxis have been the focus of particular concern. Persistent and rigorous enforcement of the regulatory functions available to the council, including the placing of conditions on private hire taxi operator licences where appropriate, would send a strong signal that the trade is being monitored and would curtail the activities of opportunistic perpetrators whereby taxi drivers have solicited children to provide sex in return for cigarettes, alcohol or a fare free ride."*

- 3.3 The long-term devastation caused by CSAE was summarised in the same report:

*"Victims suffer from suicidal feelings and often self-harm. Many become pregnant. Some have to manage the emotional consequences of miscarriages and abortions while others have children that they are unable to parent appropriately. The abuse and violence continues to affect victims into adulthood. Many enter violent and abusive relationships. Many suffer poor mental health and addiction."*

- 3.4 Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council ('Rotherham Council') provides an example of how the systematic review of policies and procedures and the implementation of a plan to drive improvements in practice can result in a well-functioning taxi and private hire vehicle sector that is rebuilding local confidence in the industry. The history of past failings here and elsewhere is well known, but it is the transparency and resolution that Rotherham Council has demonstrated and the high standards they now require that are rebuilding public confidence.
- 3.5 One of the key lessons learned is that it is vital to review policies and reflect changes in the industry both locally and nationally. **Licensing authorities should review their licensing policies every five years, but should also consider interim reviews should there be significant issues arising in their area, and their performance annually.**

## Duration of licences

- 3.6 A previous argument against issuing licences for more than a year was that a criminal offence might be committed, and not notified, during this period; this can of course also be the case during the duration of a shorter licence. This risk can be mitigated for drivers by authorities to undertaking regular interim checks. To help authorities monitor licensees' suitability, licensing authorities should engage with their police force to ensure that when the police believe a licensee presents a risk to the travelling public they use their Common Law Police Disclosure powers (see paragraphs 4.9 - 4.11) to advise them.
- 3.7 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (as amended) sets a standard length at three years for taxi and private hire vehicle drivers and five years for private hire vehicle operators. Any shorter duration licence should only be issued when the licensing authority thinks it is appropriate in the specific circumstances of the case, if a licensee has requested one or where required (e.g. when the licence holder's leave to remain in the UK is time-limited) or when the licence is only required to meet a short-term demand; they should not be issued on a 'probationary' basis.

## Whistleblowing

- 3.8 It is in the application of licensing authority's policies (and the training and raising of awareness among those applying them) that protection will be provided. Where there are concerns that policies are not being applied correctly, it is vital that these can be raised, investigated and remedial action taken if required. **Licensing authorities should have effective internal procedures in place for staff to raise concerns and for any concerns to be dealt with openly and fairly.**

A report into the licensing of drivers by South Ribble Borough Council highlights the implications of not applying the agreed policies. In early August 2015, concerns were raised regarding decisions to renew the licences of drivers where there were potential incidents of child sexual exploitation. An internal review concluded that there had been failings in local investigatory procedures which might have affected the ability of the General Licensing Committee to make proper decisions, and information sharing with the police and data recording was not satisfactory.

- 3.9 The external investigation in South Ribble concluded “that there had been a lack of awareness and priority given to safeguarding and the safety of taxi [and private hire vehicle] passengers in the manner in which licensing issues were addressed”. We are pleased to note that the [report](#) concludes, “The Council have been active at every stage in responding to issues and concerns identified. It has taken steps to address operational issues in the licensing function and has engaged fully with other agencies in so doing. In the light of the above, it is not necessary to make any further recommendations.”
- 3.10 It is hoped that all licensing authorities will have learnt from these mistakes but to prevent a repeat, **local authorities should ensure they have an effective ‘whistleblowing’ policy and that all staff are aware of it.** If a worker is aware of, and has access to, effective internal procedures for raising concerns then ‘whistleblowing’ is unlikely to be needed.
- 3.11 The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA), commonly referred to as whistleblowing legislation, provides protection for those that have a reasonable belief of serious wrongdoing, including failure to comply with professional standards, council policies or codes of practice/conduct. The PIDA is part of employment law. In the normal course of events, if a worker reveals information that his employer does not want revealed it may be a disciplinary offence. If someone leaked their employer’s confidential information to the press, they might expect to be dismissed for that. The PIDA enables workers who ‘blow the whistle’ about wrongdoing to complain to an employment tribunal if they are dismissed or suffer any other form of detriment for doing so. It is a qualified protection and certain conditions would have to be met for the worker to be protected. More information is available online for [employees](#) and [employers](#).

### Consultation at the local level

- 3.12 Licensing authorities should consult on proposed changes in licensing rules that may have significant impacts on passengers and/or the trade. Such consultation should include not only the taxi and private hire vehicle trades but also groups likely to be the trades’ customers. Examples are groups representing disabled people, Chambers of Commerce, organisations with a wider transport interest (e.g. the Campaign for Better Transport and other transport providers), women’s groups, local traders, and the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. It may also be helpful to consult with night-time economy groups (such as Pubwatch) if the trade is an important element of dispersal from the local night-time economy’s activities.
- 3.13 Any decision taken to alter the licensing regime is likely to have an impact on the operation of the taxi and private hire vehicle sector in neighbouring areas; and **licensing authorities should engage with these areas to identify any concerns and issues that might arise from a proposed change.** Many areas convene regional officer consultation groups or, more formally, councillor liaison meetings; this should be adopted by all authorities.

### Changing licensing policy and requirements



- 3.14 **Any changes in licensing requirements should be followed by a review of the licences already issued.** If the need to change licensing requirements has been identified, this same need is applicable to those already in possession of a licence. That is not however to suggest that licences should be automatically revoked overnight, for example if a vehicle specification is changed it is proportionate to allow those that would not meet the criteria to have the opportunity to adapt or change their vehicle. The same pragmatic approach should be taken to driver licence changes - if requirements are changed to include a training course or qualification, a reasonable time should be allowed for this to be undertaken or gained. The implementation schedule of any changes that affect current licence holders must be transparent and communicated promptly and clearly.
- 3.15 Where a more subjective change has been introduced, for example an amended policy on previous convictions, a licensing authority must consider each case on its own merits. Where there are exceptional, clear and compelling reasons to deviate from a policy, licensing authorities should consider doing so. Licensing authorities should record the reasons for any deviation from the policies in place.

## 4. Gathering and Sharing Information

- 4.1 Licensing authorities must consider as full a range of information available to them when making a decision whether to grant a licence and to meet their ongoing obligation to ensure a licensee remains suitable to hold a licence.

### The Disclosure and Barring Service

- 4.2 The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) provides access to criminal record information through its disclosure service for England and Wales. The DBS also maintains the lists of individuals barred from working in regulated activity with children or adults. The DBS makes independent barring decisions about people who have harmed, or where they are considered to pose a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable person within the workplace. The DBS enables organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors to make safer employment decisions by identifying candidates who may be unsuitable for certain work, especially that which involves vulnerable groups including children.
- 4.3 Enhanced certificates with a check of the barred lists include details of spent and unspent convictions recorded on the Police National Computer (PNC), any additional information which a chief officer of police believes to be relevant and ought to be disclosed, as well as indicating whether the individual is barred from working in regulated activity with children or adults. Spent convictions and cautions are disclosed on standard and enhanced certificates according to rules set out in legislation. Convictions which resulted in a custodial sentence, and convictions or cautions for a specified serious offence such as those involving child sexual abuse will always be disclosed on a standard or enhanced certificate. Full details of the disclosure rules, and those offences which will always be disclosed, are available from the [DBS](#). As well as convictions and cautions, an enhanced certificate may include additional information which a chief police officer reasonably believes is relevant and ought to be disclosed. Chief police officers must have regard to the [statutory guidance](#) issued by the Home Office when considering disclosure. A summary of the information provided at each level of DBS checks is annexed to this document (Annex – Disclosure and Barring Service information).
- 4.4 It should be noted that licensing authorities must not circumvent the DBS process and seek to obtain details of previous criminal convictions and other information that may not otherwise be disclosed on a DBS certificate. Whilst data protection legislation (not just the Data Protection Act 2018 or General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)) gives individuals (or data subjects) a 'right of access' to the personal data that an organisation holds about them, it is a criminal offence to require an individual to exercise their subject access rights so as to gain information about any convictions and cautions. This could potentially lead to the authority receiving information to which it is not entitled. The appropriate way of accessing an individual's criminal records is through an enhanced DBS and barred lists check.

## The Disclosure and Barring Service Update Service

- 4.5 Subscription to the DBS Update Service allows those with standard and enhanced certificates to keep these up to date online and, with the individual's consent, allows nominees to check the status of a certificate online at any time. Subscription to the service removes the need for new certificates to be requested, reduces the administrative burden and mitigates potential delays in relicensing.
- 4.6 The DBS will search regularly to see if any relevant new information has been received since the certificate was issued. The frequency varies depending on the type of information; for criminal conviction and barring information, the DBS will search for updates on a weekly basis. For non-conviction information, the DBS will search for updates every nine months.
- 4.7 Licensing authorities are able to request large numbers of status checks on a daily basis. The DBS has developed a Multiple Status Check Facility (MSCF) that can be accessed via a web service. The MSCF enables organisations to make an almost unlimited number of Status Checks simultaneously. Further information on the MSCF is available from the [DBS](#).
- 4.8 Should the MSCF advise that new information is available the DBS certificate should no longer be relied upon and a new DBS certificate requested.

### Common Law Police Disclosure

- 4.9 The DBS is not the only source of information that should be considered as part of a fit and proper assessment for the licensing of taxi and private hire vehicle drivers. Common Law Police Disclosure ensures that where there is a public protection risk, the police will pass information to the employer or regulatory body to allow them to act swiftly to mitigate any danger.
- 4.10 Common Law Police Disclosure replaced the Notifiable Occupations Scheme (NOS) in March 2015 and focuses on providing timely and relevant information which might indicate a public protection risk. Information is passed on at arrest or charge, rather than on conviction which may be some time after, allowing any measures to mitigate risk to be put in place immediately.
- 4.11 This procedure provides robust safeguarding arrangements while ensuring only relevant information is passed on to employers or regulatory bodies. **Licensing authorities should maintain close links with the police to ensure effective and efficient information sharing procedures and protocols are in place and are being used.**

### Licensee self-reporting

- 4.12 Licence holders should be required to notify the issuing authority within 48 hours of an arrest and release, charge or conviction of any sexual offence, any offence involving dishonesty or violence and any motoring offence. An arrest for any of the offences within this scope should result in a review by the issuing authority as to whether the licence holder is fit to continue to do so. This must not

however be seen as a direction that a licence should be withdrawn; it is for the licensing authority to consider what, if any, action in terms of the licence should be taken based on the balance of probabilities. Should an authority place an obligation on licensees to notify under these circumstances, authorities should also ensure appropriate procedures are in place to enable them to act in a suitable timeframe if and when needed.

- 4.13 Importantly, a failure by a licence holder to disclose an arrest that the issuing authority is subsequently advised of might be seen as behaviour that questions honesty and therefore the suitability of the licence holder regardless of the outcome of the initial allegation.

### Referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service and the Police

- 4.14 In some circumstances it may be appropriate under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 for licensing authorities to make referrals to the DBS. **A decision to refuse or revoke a licence as the individual is thought to present a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult, should be referred to the DBS.** The power for the licensing authority to make a referral in this context arises from the undertaking of a safeguarding role. Further guidance has been provided by the [DBS](#).

- 4.15 The Department recommends that licensing authorities should make a referral to the DBS when it is thought that:

- an individual has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult;
- an individual has satisfied the '[harm test](#)'; or
- received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence and;
- the person they are referring is, has or might in future be working in regulated activity;

if the above conditions are satisfied, the DBS may consider it appropriate for the person to be added to a barred list.

- 4.16 These referrals may result in the person being added to a barred list and enable other licensing authorities to consider this should further applications to other authorities be made. Further information on referrals to DBS is [available](#).

## Working with the Police

- 4.17 The police are an invaluable source of intelligence when assessing whether a licensing applicant is a 'fit and proper' person. It is vital that licensing authorities have a partnership with the police service to ensure that appropriate information is shared as quickly as possible. As part of building an effective working relationship between the licensing authority and the police, **action taken by the licensing authority as a result of information received should be fed-back to the police.** Increasing the awareness among police forces of the value licensing authorities place on the information received, particularly on non-conviction intelligence, will assist furthering these relationships and reinforce the benefits of greater sharing of information.
- 4.18 This relationship can be mutually beneficial, assisting the police to prevent crime. The police can gain valuable intelligence from drivers and operators, for example, the identification of establishments that are selling alcohol to minors or drunks, or the frequent transportation of substance abusers to premises.
- 4.19 To aid further the quality of the information available to all parties that have a safeguarding duty, a revocation or refusal on public safety grounds should also be advised to the police.

## Sharing licensing information with other licensing authorities

- 4.20 As has been stated elsewhere in this document, obtaining the fullest information minimises the doubt as to whether an applicant or licensee is 'fit and proper'. An obvious source of relevant information is any previous licensing history. **Applicants and licensees should be required to disclose if they hold or have previously held a licence with another authority. An applicant should also be required to disclose if they have had an application for a licence refused, or a licence revoked or suspended by any other licensing authority.** Licensing authorities should explicitly advise on their application forms that making a false statement or omitting to provide the information requested may be a criminal offence.
- 4.21 The LGA's Councillors' [Handbook on taxi and private hire vehicle licensing](#) advises that those responsible for licensing should "*communicate regularly with licensing committees and officers in neighbouring councils to ensure critical information is shared and that there is a consistency and robustness in decision-making. By working together, local government can make sure that this vital service is safe, respected, and delivering for local communities.*". While this approach may aid consistency and robustness in decision-making within regions, it has obvious inherent limitations as it is unlikely such protocols could be established between all licensing authorities. The LGA commissioned the National Anti-Fraud Network to develop a national register of taxi and private hire vehicle driver licence refusals and revocations (the register is known as 'NR3'). **Tools such as NR3 should be used by licensing authorities to share information on a more consistent basis to mitigate the risk of non-disclosure of relevant information by applicants.**

- 4.22 For these processes to be beneficial, all licensing authorities must keep a complete and accurate record as to the reasons for refusal, suspension or revocation of a licence in order that this might be shared if requested and appropriate to do so.
- 4.23 Data protection legislation provides exemption from the rights of data subjects for the processing of personal data in connection with regulatory activities. This includes taxi and private hire vehicle licensing. The exemption applies only to information processed for the core regulatory activities of appropriate organisations; it may not be used in a blanket manner. The exemption applies only to the extent that the application of the rights of data subjects to the information in question would be likely to prejudice the proper discharge of the regulatory functions. The Information Commissioner's Office has published [guidance](#) to assist organisations to fully understand their obligations and suggest good practice.
- 4.24 If notification under paragraph 4.20 or 4.21 of a refused or revoked licence is disclosed, the relevant licensing authority should be contacted to establish when the licence was refused, suspended or revoked and the reasons why. In those circumstances, the relevant licensing authority must consider whether it should disclose any information in relation to the previous decision, consistent with its obligations under data protection legislation. If information is disclosed, it can then be taken into account in determining the applicant's fitness to be licensed. The relevance of the reason for refusing/revoking a licence must be considered. For example, if any individual was refused a licence for failing a local knowledge test, it does not have any safeguarding implications. Conversely, a revocation or refusal connected to indecency would. Licensing authorities should not simply replicate a previous decision, authorities must consider each application on its own merits and with regard to its own policies.
- 4.25 Should a licensing authority receive information that a licence holder did not disclose the information referred to in paragraph 4.20, for example by checking the NR3 register, the authority should consider whether the non-disclosure represents dishonesty and should review whether the licence holder remains 'fit and proper'.

### Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

- 4.26 Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs are a way to improve the safeguarding response for children and vulnerable adults through better information sharing and high quality and timely safeguarding responses. MASHs (or similar models) should operate on three common principles: information sharing, joint decision making and coordinated intervention.
- 4.27 The Home Office report on [Multi Agency Working and Information Sharing](#) recommended that effective multi-agency working still needs to become more widespread. The Children's Commissioner's 2013 [Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups](#) found that both police and local authorities still identified the inability to share information as a key barrier to safeguarding children from sexual abuse and exploitation.

- 4.28 All licensing authorities should operate or establish a means to facilitate the objectives of a MASH (i.e. the sharing of necessary and relevant information between stakeholders). As has been emphasised throughout this document, one of the most effective ways to minimise the risk to children and vulnerable adults when using taxis and private hire vehicles is to ensure that decisions on licensing individuals are made with the fullest knowledge possible.

### Complaints against licensees

- 4.29 Complaints about drivers and operators provide a source of intelligence when considering the renewal of a licence or to identify problems during the period of the licence. Patterns of behaviour such as complaints against drivers, even when they do not result in further action in response to an individual complaint, may be indicative of characteristics that raise doubts over the suitability to hold a licence. **All licensing authorities should have a robust system for recording complaints, including analysing trends across all licensees as well as complaints against individual licensees.** Such a system will help authorities to build a fuller picture of the potential risks an individual may pose and may tip the 'balance of probabilities' assessment that licensing authorities must take.
- 4.30 Licensees with a high number of complaints made against them should be contacted by the licensing authority and concerns raised with the driver and operator (if appropriate). Further action in terms of the licence holder must be determined by the licensing authority, which could include no further action, the offer of training, a formal review of the licence, or formal enforcement action.
- 4.31 To ensure that passengers know who to complain to, licensing authorities should produce guidance for passengers on making complaints directly to the licensing authority that should be available on their website. Ways to make complaint to the authority should be displayed in all licensed vehicles. This is likely to result in additional work for the licensing authority but has the advantage of ensuring consistency in the handling of complaints. Currently, it is more likely that a complaint against a taxi driver would be made directly to the licensing authority whereas a complaint against a private hire vehicle driver is more likely to be made to the operator. An effective partnership in which operators can share concerns regarding drivers is also encouraged.
- 4.32 Importantly, this approach will assist in the directing of complaints and information regarding the behaviour of drivers who may be carrying a passenger outside of the area in which the driver is licensed to the authority that issued the licence. In order for this to be effective licensing authorities must ensure that drivers are aware of a requirement to display information on how to complain and take appropriate sanctions against those that do not comply with this requirement.
- 4.33 In terms of investigating complaints CCTV footage of an incident can provide an invaluable insight, providing an 'independent witness' to an event. This can assist in the decision whether to suspend or revoke a licence. The potential benefits of mandating CCTV in vehicles is discussed in paragraphs 7.7 - 7.12.

### Overseas convictions



- 4.34 The DBS cannot access criminal records held overseas, only foreign convictions that are held on the Police National Computer may, subject to the disclosure rules, be disclosed. Therefore, a DBS check may not provide a complete picture of an individual's criminal record where there have been periods living or working overseas; the same applies when an applicant has previously spent an extended period (three or more continuous months) outside the UK. It should however be noted that some countries will not provide an 'Certificate of Good Character' unless the individual has been resident for six months or more
- 4.35 Licensing authorities should seek or require applicants to provide where possible criminal records information or a 'Certificate of Good Character' from overseas in this circumstance to properly assess risk and support the decision-making process (. It is the character of the applicant as an adult that is of particular interest, therefore an extended period outside the UK before the age of 18 may be less relevant. As with all licensing decisions, each case must be considered on its own merits. For information on applying for overseas criminal record information or 'Certificates of Good Character' please see the Home Office [guidance](#).
- 4.36 Where an individual is aware that they have committed an offence overseas which may be equivalent to those listed in the annex to this document (Annex – Assessment of previous convictions), licensing authorities should advise the applicant to seek independent expert or legal advice to ensure that they provide information that is truthful and accurate.



## 5. Decision Making

### Administration of the licensing framework

- 5.1 A policy is only effective if it is administered properly. The taxi and private hire vehicle licensing functions of local councils are non-executive functions i.e. they are functions of the council rather than the executive (such as the Cabinet). The functions include the determination of licence applications, reviews and renewals, along with the attachment of conditions when considered appropriate. The function may be delegated to a committee, a sub-committee or an officer – which should be set out within a clear scheme of delegation. In London the taxi and private hire vehicle licensing function is undertaken by Transport for London.
- 5.2 Licensing authorities should ensure that all individuals that determine whether a licence is issued or refused are adequately resourced to allow them to discharge the function effectively and correctly.

### Training decision makers

- 5.3 **All individuals that determine whether a licence is issued should be required to undertake sufficient training.** As a minimum, training for a member of a licensing committee should include: licensing procedures, natural justice, understanding the risks of CSAE, disability and equality awareness and the making of difficult and potentially controversial decisions. Training should not simply relate to procedures, but should include the use of case study material to provide context and real scenarios. All training should be formally recorded by the licensing authority and require a signature from the person that has received the training. Training is available from a number of organisations including the Institute of Licensing and Lawyers in Local Government; the LGA may also be able to assist in the development of training packages.
- 5.4 Public safety is the paramount consideration but the discharge of licensing functions must be undertaken in accordance with the following general principles:
- policies should be used as internal guidance, and should be supported by a member/officer code of conduct.
  - any implications of the Human Rights Act should be considered.
  - the rules of natural justice should be observed.
  - decisions must be reasonable and proportionate.
  - where a hearing is required it should be fairly conducted and allow for appropriate consideration of all relevant factors.
  - decision makers must avoid bias (or even the appearance of bias) and predetermination.
  - data protection legislation.

- 5.5 When a decision maker has a prejudicial interest in a case, whether it be financial or a personal relationship with those involved they should declare their interest at the earliest opportunity; this must be prior to any discussions or votes and, once declared, they must leave the room for the duration of the discussion or vote.

### The regulatory structure

- 5.6 It is recommended that councils operate with a Regulatory Committee or Board that is convened at periodic intervals to determine licensing matters, with individual cases being considered by a panel of elected and suitably trained councillors drawn from a larger Regulatory Committee or Board. This model is similar to that frequently adopted in relation to other licensing matters. To facilitate the effective discharge of the functions, less contentious matters can be delegated to appropriately authorised council officers via a transparent scheme of delegation.
- 5.7 It is considered that this approach also ensures the appropriate level of separation between decision makers and those that investigate complaints against licensees, and is the most effective method in allowing the discharge of the functions in accordance with the general principles referred to in 5.4. In particular, the Committee/Board model allows for:
- Each case to be considered on its own merits. It is rare for the same councillors to be involved in frequent hearings – therefore the councillors involved in the decision making process will have less knowledge of previous decisions and therefore are less likely to be influenced by them. Oversight and scrutiny can be provided in relation to the licensing service generally, which can provide independent and impartial oversight of the way that the functions are being discharged within the authority.
  - Clear separation between investigator and the decision maker – this demonstrates independence, and ensures that senior officers can attempt to resolve disputes in relation to service actions without the perception that this involvement will affect their judgement in relation to decisions made at a later date.
- 5.8 Avoidance of bias or even the appearance of bias is vital to ensuring good decisions are made and instilling and/or maintaining confidence in the licensing regime by passengers and licensees.
- 5.9 Unlike officers, elected members are not usually involved in the day to day operation of the service and as such do not have relationships with licence holders that may give the impression that the discharge of a function is affected by the relationship between the decision maker and the licence holder.
- 5.10 Some licensing authorities may decide to operate a system whereby all matters are delegated to a panel of officers; however, this approach is not recommended and caution should be exercised. Decisions must be, and be seen to be, made objectively, avoiding any bias. In addition, it may be more difficult to demonstrate compliance with the principles referred to above due to the close

connection between the officers on the panel, and those involved in the operational discharge of the licensing functions.

- 5.11 Whether the structure proposed is introduced or an alternative model is more appropriate in local circumstances, the objective should remain the same - to separate the investigation of licensing concerns and the management of the licence process. Regardless of which approach is adopted, **all licensing authorities should consider arrangements for dealing with serious matters that may require the immediate revocation of a licence.** It is recommended that this role is delegated to a senior officer/manager with responsibility for the licensing service.

### Fit and proper test

- 5.12 Licensing authorities have a duty to ensure that any person to whom they grant a taxi or private hire vehicle driver's licence is a 'fit and proper' person to be a licensee. It may be helpful when considering whether an applicant or licensee is fit and proper to pose oneself the following question:

**Without any prejudice, and based on the information before you, would you allow a person for whom you care, regardless of their condition, to travel alone in a vehicle driven by this person at any time of day or night?**

- 5.13 If, on the balance of probabilities, the answer to the question is 'no', the individual should not hold a licence.
- 5.14 Licensing authorities have to make difficult decisions but (subject to the points made in paragraph 5.4) the safeguarding of the public is paramount. All decisions on the suitability of an applicant or licensee should be made on the balance of probability. This means that an applicant or licensee should not be 'given the benefit of doubt'. If the committee or delegated officer is only "50/50" as to whether the applicant or licensee is 'fit and proper', they should not hold a licence. The threshold used here is lower than for a criminal conviction (that being beyond reasonable doubt) and can take into consideration conduct that has not resulted in a criminal conviction.

### Criminal convictions and rehabilitation

- 5.15 In considering an individual's criminal record, licensing authorities must consider each case on its merits, but they should take a particularly cautious view of any offences against individuals with special needs, children and other vulnerable groups, particularly those involving violence, those of a sexual nature and those linked to organised crime. In order to achieve consistency, and to mitigate the risk of successful legal challenge, licensing authorities should have a clear policy for the consideration of criminal records. This should include, for example, which offences would prevent an applicant from being licenced regardless of the period elapsed in all but truly exceptional circumstances. In the case of lesser offences, a policy should consider the number of years the authority will require to have elapsed since the commission of particular kinds of offences before they will grant a licence.

- 5.16 Annexed to this document are the Department's recommendations on the assessment of previous convictions (Annex – Assessment of previous convictions). This draws on the work of the Institute of Licensing, in partnership with the LGA, the National Association of Licensing Enforcement Officers (NALEO) and Lawyers in Local Government, in publishing its guidance on determining the suitability of taxi and private hire vehicle licensees.
- 5.17 These periods should be taken as a starting point in considering whether a licence should be granted or renewed in all cases. The Department's view is that this places passenger safety as the priority while enabling past offenders to sufficiently evidence that they have been successfully rehabilitated so that they might obtain a licence. Authorities are however reminded that applicants are entitled to a fair and impartial consideration of their application.

## 6. Driver Licensing

### Criminality checks for drivers

- 6.1 Licensing authorities are entitled to request an enhanced criminal record certificate with check of the barred lists from the DBS for all driver licence holders or applicants. The DfT's 2019 [survey of taxi and private hire vehicle licensing authorities](#) shows that all licensing authorities in England and Wales have a requirement that an enhanced DBS check is undertaken at first application or renewal.
- 6.2 All individuals applying for or renewing a taxi or private hire vehicle drivers licence licensing authorities should carry out a check of the children and adult Barred Lists in addition to being subject to an enhanced DBS check (in section x61 of the DBS application 'Other Workforce' should be entered in line 1 and 'Taxi Licensing' should be entered at line 2). All licensed drivers should also be required to evidence continuous registration with the DBS update service to enable the licensing authority to routinely check for new information every six months. Drivers that do not subscribe up to the Update Service should still be subject to a check every six months.
- 6.3 Driving a taxi or private hire vehicle is not, in itself, a regulated activity for the purposes of the barred list. This means that an individual subject to barring would not be legally prevented from being a taxi or private hire vehicle driver but the licensing authority should take an individual's barred status into account alongside other information available. **In the interests of public safety, licensing authorities should not, as part of their policies, issue a licence to any individual that appears on either barred list.** Should a licensing authority consider there to be exceptional circumstances which means that, based on the balance of probabilities they consider an individual named on a barred list to be 'fit and proper', the reasons for reaching this conclusion should be recorded.
- 6.4 Drivers working under an arrangement to transport children may be working in 'regulated activity' as defined by the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#). It is an offence to knowingly allow a barred individual to work in regulated activity. The [guidance on home-to-school travel and transport](#) issued by the Department for Education should be considered alongside this document. Please see [guidance](#) on driver DBS eligibility and how to apply.

### Safeguarding awareness

- 6.5 Licensing authorities should consider the role that those in the taxi and private hire vehicle industry can play in spotting and reporting the abuse, exploitation or neglect of children and vulnerable adults. As with any group of people, it is overwhelmingly the case that those within the industry can be an asset in the detection and prevention of abuse or neglect of children and vulnerable adults. However, this is only the case if they are aware of and alert to the signs of potential abuse and know where to turn to if they suspect that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger.

6.6 All licensing authorities should provide safeguarding advice and guidance to the trade and should require taxi and private hire vehicle drivers to undertake safeguarding training. This is often produced in conjunction with the police and other agencies. These programmes have been developed to help drivers and operators:

- provide a safe and suitable service to vulnerable passengers of all ages;
- recognise what makes a person vulnerable; and
- understand how to respond, including how to report safeguarding concerns and where to get advice.

6.7 Since 2015, the Department for Education (DfE) has run a nationwide campaign – *‘Together, we can tackle child abuse’* which aims to increase public understanding of how to recognise the signs to spot and encourage them to report child abuse and neglect. The DfE continues to promote and raise awareness of the campaign materials through its [online toolkit](#), for local authorities, charities and organisations for use on their social media channels.

### ‘County lines’ exploitation

6.8 County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”.

6.9 Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to transport (and store) drugs and money between locations. Children aged between 15-17 make up the majority of the vulnerable people involved in county lines, but they may also be much younger. We know that both girls and boys are groomed and exploited and offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children exploited by county lines gangs may have vulnerabilities besides their age, such as broader mental health issues, disrupted or chaotic homes, substance misuse issues, being excluded from school or frequently going missing.

6.10 The National Crime Agency’s 2018 county lines threat assessment set out that the national road network is key to the transportation of county lines victims, drugs and cash; with hire vehicles being one of the methods used for transportation between locations.

6.11 Safeguarding awareness training should include the ways in which drivers can help to identify county lines exploitation. Firstly, they should be aware of the following warning signs:

- Children and young people travelling in taxis or private hire vehicles alone;

- travelling at unusual hours (during school time, early in the morning or late at night);
- travelling long distances;
- unfamiliar with the local area or do not have a local accent;
- paying for journeys in cash or prepaid.

6.12 The Home Office is working with partners to raise awareness of county lines and has provided [material](#) to help taxi and private vehicle hire staff to identify victims and report concerns to protect those exploited through this criminal activity.

6.13 Drivers (or any person) should be aware of what to do if they believe a child or vulnerable person is at risk of harm. If the risk is immediate they should contact the police otherwise they should:

- use the local safeguarding process, the first step of which is usually to contact the safeguarding lead within the local authority;
- call Crime Stoppers on 0800 555 111.

### Language proficiency

6.14 A lack of language proficiency could impact on a driver's ability to understand written documents, such as policies and guidance, relating to the protection of children and vulnerable adults and applying this to identify and act on signs of exploitation. Oral proficiency will be of relevance in the identification of potential exploitation through communicating with passengers and their interaction with others.

6.15 A licensing authority's test of a driver's proficiency should cover both oral and written English language skills to achieve the objectives stated above.



## 7. Vehicle Licensing

- 7.1 As with driver licensing, the objective of vehicle licensing is to protect the public, who trust that the vehicles dispatched are above all else safe. It is important therefore that licensing authorities are assured that those granted a vehicle licence also pose no threat to the public and have no links to serious criminal activity. Although vehicle proprietors may not have direct contact with passengers, they are still entrusted to ensure that the vehicles and drivers used to carry passengers are appropriately licensed and so maintain the safety benefits of the licensing regime.

### Criminality checks for vehicle proprietors

- 7.2 Enhanced DBS and barred list checks are not available for vehicle licensing. **Licensing authorities should require a basic disclosure from the DBS and that a check is undertaken annually.** Any individual may apply for a basic check and the certificate will disclose any unspent convictions recorded on the Police National Computer (PNC). Licensing authorities should consider whether an applicant or licence holder with a conviction for offences provided in the annex to this document (Annex – Assessment of previous convictions), other than those relating to driving, meet the ‘fit and proper’ threshold.
- 7.3 However, it is important that authorities acknowledge that in many cases individuals that license a vehicle may already be licensed as a driver. An authority which undertakes the biannual DBS checks recommended for its drivers should not require those seeking to licence a vehicle to provide a basic DBS check as part of the application process; a basic DBS would not provide any information in addition to that disclosed under the enhanced DBS and barred lists check used for the driver assessment. In these circumstances, the authority should instead rely on the fact that the applicant is considered as fit and proper to hold a driver licence when considering their suitability to hold a vehicle licence. Should the individual cease to hold a driver licence a basic certificate should be required immediately.
- 7.4 A refusal to license an individual as a driver or to suspend or revoke a driver licence does not automatically mean that that individual cannot be issued or continue to hold a vehicle or private hire vehicle operator licence; these decisions must be independent of a driver licence refusal and based on the appropriate information i.e. it should not consider information that would only be available via an enhanced DBS check but instead that which would be disclosed on a basic check. DBS certificate information can only be used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant’s full consent has been given.
- 7.5 Private hire vehicle operator and vehicle licences may be applied for by a company or partnership; licensing authorities should apply the ‘fit and proper’ test to each of the directors or partners in that company or partnership. For this to be effective private hire vehicle operators and those to whom a vehicle licence should be required to advise the licensing authority of any change in directors or partners.



7.6 As explained earlier in the context of driver licensing, the DBS cannot access criminal records held overseas so other checks must be considered where and applicant has lived or worked overseas (see paragraph 4.34 - 4.36).

### **In-vehicle visual and audio recording – CCTV**

7.7 Government has acknowledged the potential risk to public safety when passengers travel in taxis and private hire vehicles. It is unfortunately the case that no matter how complete the information available to licensing authorities is when assessing whether to issue any taxi or private hire vehicle licence, nor how robust the policies in place are and the rigor with which they are applied, it will never completely remove the possibility of harm to passengers by drivers.

7.8 The Department's view is that CCTV can provide additional deterrence to prevent this and investigative value when it does. The use of CCTV can provide a safer environment for the benefit of taxi/private hire vehicle passengers and drivers by:

- deterring and preventing the occurrence of crime;
- reducing the fear of crime;
- assisting the police in investigating incidents of crime;
- assisting insurance companies in investigating motor vehicle accidents.

7.9 All licensing authorities should consult to identify if there are local circumstances which indicate that the installation of CCTV in vehicles would have either a positive or an adverse net effect on the safety of taxi and private hire vehicle users, including children or vulnerable adults, and taking into account potential privacy issues.

7.10 While only a small minority of licensing authorities have so far mandated all vehicles to be fitted with CCTV systems, the experience of those authorities that have has been positive for both passengers and drivers. In addition, the evidential benefits of CCTV may increase the level of reporting of sexual offences. According to the [Crime Survey for England and Wales](#) only 17 percent of victims report their experiences to the police, 28 percent of rape or sexual assault victims indicated that a fear they would not be believed as a factor in them not reporting the crime. The evidential benefits CCTV could provide are therefore an important factor when considering CCTV in vehicles.

7.11 The mandating of CCTV in vehicles may deter people from seeking a taxi or private hire vehicle licence with the intent of causing harm. Those that gain a licence and consider perpetrating an opportunistic attack against a vulnerable unaccompanied passenger may be deterred from doing so. It is however unfortunately the case that offences may still occur even with CCTV operating.

7.12 CCTV systems that are able to record audio as well as visual data may also help the early identification of drivers that exhibit inappropriate behaviour toward passengers. Audio recording should be both overt (i.e. all parties should be aware when recordings are being made) and targeted (i.e. only when passengers (or

drivers) consider it necessary). The recording of audio should be used to provide an objective record of events such as disputes or inappropriate behaviour and must not be continuously active by default and should recognise the need for privacy of passengers' private conversations between themselves. Activation of the audio recording capability of a system might be instigated when either the passenger or driver operates a switch or button.

- 7.13 Imposition of a blanket requirement to attach CCTV as a condition to a licence is likely to give rise to concerns about the proportionality of such an approach and will therefore require an appropriately strong justification and must be kept under regular review. More information and guidance on assessing the impacts of CCTV and on an authority mandating CCTV is annexed to this document (Annex – CCTV guidance).

### Stretched Limousines

- 7.14 Licensing authorities are sometimes asked to license small (those constructed or adapted to carry fewer than nine passengers) limousines as private hire vehicles, these vehicles may be used for transport to 'school proms' as well as for adult bookings. It is suggested that licensing authorities should approach such requests on the basis that these vehicles – where they have fewer than nine passenger seats - have a legitimate role to play in the private hire trade, meeting a public demand. It is the Department's view that it is not a legitimate course of action for licensing authorities to adopt policies that exclude limousines as a matter of principle thereby excluding these services from the scope of the private hire vehicle regime and the safety benefits this provides. A blanket policy of excluding limousines may create an unacceptable risk to the travelling public, as it may lead to higher levels of unsupervised operation. Public safety considerations are best supported by policies that allow respectable, safe operators to obtain licences on the same basis as other private hire vehicle operators.
- 7.15 Stretched large limousines which clearly seat more than eight passengers should not be licensed as private hire vehicles because they are outside the licensing regime for private hire vehicles. However, in some circumstances a vehicle with space for more than eight passengers can be licensed as a private hire vehicle where the precise number of passenger seats is hard to determine. In these circumstances, the authority should consider the case on its merits in deciding whether to license the vehicle under the strict condition that the vehicle will not be used to carry more than eight passengers, bearing in mind that refusal may encourage illegal private hire operation.

## 8. Private Hire Vehicle Operator Licensing

- 8.1 As with driver licensing, the objective in licensing private hire vehicle operators is to protect the public, who may be using operators' premises and trusting that the drivers and vehicles dispatched are above all else safe. It is important therefore that licensing authorities are assured that those that are granted a private hire vehicle operator also pose no threat to the public and have no links to serious criminal activity. Although private hire vehicle operators may not have direct contact with passengers, they are still entrusted to ensure that the vehicles and drivers used to carry passengers are appropriately licensed and so maintain the safety benefits of the driver licensing regime.

### Criminality checks for private hire vehicle operators

- 8.2 Enhanced DBS and barred list checks are not available for private hire vehicle operator licensing. **Licensing authorities should request a basic disclosure from the DBS and that a check is undertaken annually.** Any individual may apply for a basic check and the certificate will disclose any unspent convictions recorded on the Police National Computer (PNC). Licensing authorities should consider whether an applicant or licence holder with a conviction for offences provided in the annex to this document (Annex – Assessment of previous convictions), other than those relating to driving, meet the 'fit and proper' threshold.
- 8.3 However, it is important that authorities acknowledge that in many cases individuals that license as a private hire vehicle operator may already be licensed as a driver. An authority which undertakes the biannual DBS checks recommended for its drivers should not require those seeking a private hire vehicle operator licence to provide a basic DBS check as part of the application process; a basic DBS would not provide any information in addition to that disclosed under the enhanced DBS and barred lists check used for the driver assessment. In these circumstances, the authority should instead rely on the fact that the applicant is considered as fit and proper to hold a driver licence when considering their suitability to hold a vehicle licence. Should the individual cease to hold a driver licence a basic certificate should be required immediately
- 8.4 Refusal to license an individual as a driver or to suspend or revoke a driver licence does not automatically mean that that individual cannot be issued or continue to hold a private hire vehicle operator licence; this decision must be independent of a driver licence refusal and based on the appropriate information i.e. it should not consider information that would only be available via an enhanced DBS check but instead that which would be disclosed on a basic check. DBS certificate information can only be used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.
- 8.5 A private hire vehicle operator licence may be applied for by a company or partnership; licensing authorities should apply the 'fit and proper' test to each of the directors or partners in that company or partnership. For this to be effective

private hire vehicle operators should be required to advise the licensing authority of any change in directors or partners.

- 8.6 As explained earlier in the context of driver licensing, the DBS cannot access criminal records held overseas. Further information on assessing the suitability of those that have spent extended periods in overseas is provided in paragraphs 4.34 - 4.36.

### Booking and dispatch staff

- 8.7 Private hire vehicle drivers are not the only direct contact that private hire vehicle users have with private hire vehicle operators' staff, for example a person taking bookings (be it by phone or in person). A vehicle dispatcher decides which driver to send to a user, a position that could be exploited by those seeking to exploit children and vulnerable adults. It is therefore appropriate that all staff that have contact with private hire vehicle users and the dispatching of vehicles should not present an undue risk to the public or the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.
- 8.8 Licensing authorities should be satisfied that private hire vehicle operators can demonstrate that all staff that have contact with the public and/or oversee the dispatching of vehicles do not pose a risk to the public. **Licensing authorities should, as a condition of granting an operator licence, require a register of all staff that will take bookings or dispatch vehicles is kept.**
- 8.9 Operators should be required to evidence that they have had sight of a Basic DBS check on all individuals listed on their register of booking and dispatch staff and to ensure that Basic DBS checks are conducted on any individuals added to the register and that this is compatible with their policy on employing ex-offenders. DBS certificates provided by the individual should be recently issued when viewed, alternatively the operator could use a '[responsible organisation](#)' to request the check on their behalf. When individuals start taking bookings and dispatching vehicles for an operator they should be required, as part of their employment contract, to advise the operator of any convictions while they are employed in this role.
- 8.10 The register should be a 'living document' that maintains records of all those in these roles for the same duration as booking records are required to be kept, this will enable cross-referencing between the two records. A record that the operator has had sight of a basic DBS check certificate (although the certificate itself should not be retained) should be retained for the duration that the individual remains on the register. Should an employee cease to be on the register and later re-entered, a new basic DBS certificate should be requested and sight of this recorded.
- 8.11 Operators may outsource booking and dispatch functions but they cannot pass on the obligation to protect children and vulnerable adults. Operators should be required to evidence that comparable protections are applied by the company to which they outsource these functions.

- 8.12 Licensing authorities should also require operators or applicants for a licence to provide their policy on employing ex-offenders in roles that would be on the register as above. As with the threshold to obtaining a private hire vehicle operators' licence, those with a conviction for offences provided in the annex to this document (Annex – Assessment of previous convictions), other than those relating to driving, may not be suitable to decide who is sent to carry a child or vulnerable adult unaccompanied in a car.

## Record keeping

- 8.13 Section 56 of the [Local Government \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Act 1976](#) requires private hire vehicle operators to keep records of the particulars of every booking invited or accepted, whether it is from the passenger or at the request of another operator. **Licensing authorities should as a minimum require private hire vehicle operators to record the following information for each booking:**

- the name of the passenger;
- the time of the request;
- the pick-up point;
- the destination;
- the name of the driver;
- the driver's licence number;
- the vehicle registration number of the vehicle;
- the name of any individual that responded to the booking request;
- the name of any individual that dispatched the vehicle.

- 8.14 This information will enable the passenger to be traced if this becomes necessary and should improve driver security and facilitate enforcement. It is suggested that booking records should be retained for a minimum of six months.

- 8.15 Private hire vehicle operators have a duty under data protection legislation to protect the information they record. The Information Commissioner's Office provides comprehensive on-line guidance on registering as a data controller and how to meet their obligations.

## Use of passenger carrying vehicles (PCV) licensed drivers

- 8.16 PCV licensed drivers are subject to different checks from taxi and private hire vehicle licensed drivers as the work normally undertaken, i.e. driving a bus, does not present the same risk to passengers. Members of the public are entitled to expect when making a booking with a private hire vehicle operator that they will receive a private hire vehicle licensed vehicle and driver. **The use of a driver who holds a PCV licence and the use of a public service vehicle (PSV) such**

**as a minibus to undertake a private hire vehicle booking should not be permitted as a condition of the private hire vehicle operator's licence without the informed consent of the booker.**

- 8.17 Where a private hire vehicle is unsuitable, for example where a larger vehicle is needed because more than eight passenger seats required or to accommodate luggage, the booker should be informed that a PSV is necessary, and that a PCV licenced driver will be used who is subject to different checks and not required to have an enhanced DBS check.

## 9. Enforcing the Licensing Regime

- 9.1 Implementing an effective framework for licensing authorities to ensure that as full a range of information made available to suitably trained decision makers that are supported by well-resourced officials is essential to a well-functioning taxi and private hire vehicle sector. These steps will help prevent the licensing of those that are not deemed 'fit and proper' but does not ensure that those already licensed continue to display the behaviours and standards expected.

### Joint authorisation of enforcement officers

- 9.2 Licensing authorities should, where the need arises, jointly authorise officers from other authorities so that compliance and enforcement action can be taken against licensees from outside their area. An agreement between licensing authorities to jointly authorise officers enables the use of enforcement powers regardless of which authority within the agreement the officer is employed by and which issued the licence. This will mitigate the opportunities for drivers to evade regulation. Such an agreement will enable those authorities to take action against vehicles and drivers that are licensed by the other authority when they cross over boundaries. A model for agreeing joint authorisation is contained in the [LGA Councillors' handbook](#).

### Setting expectations and monitoring

- 9.3 Licensing authorities should ensure that drivers are aware of the policies that they must adhere to and are properly informed of what is expected of them and the repercussions for failing to do so. Some licensing authorities operate a points-based system, which allows minor breaches to be recorded and considered in context while referring those with persistent or serious breaches to the licensing committee. This has the benefit of consistency in enforcement and makes better use of the licensing committee's time.
- 9.4 The provision of a clear, simple and well-publicised process for the public to make complaints about drivers and operators will enable authorities to target compliance and enforcement activity (see paragraphs 4.29 - 4.33). This will provide a further source of intelligence when considering the renewal of licences and of any additional training that may be required. It is then for the licensing authority to consider if any intelligence indicates a need to suspend or revoke a licence in the interests of public safety.

### Suspension and revocation of driver licences

- 9.5 Section 61 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 provides a licensing authority with the ability to suspend or revoke a driver's licence on the following grounds: -

(a) that he has since the grant of the licence—



- (i) been convicted of an offence involving dishonesty, indecency or violence; or
- (ii) been convicted of an offence under or has failed to comply with the provisions of the Act of 1847 or of this Part of this Act;
- (aa) that he has since the grant of the licence been convicted of an immigration offence or required to pay an immigration penalty; or
- (b) any other reasonable cause

- 9.6 Licensing authorities have the option to suspend or revoke a licence should information be received that causes concern over whether a driver is a fit and proper person. Where the licence holder has been served an immigration penalty or convicted of an immigration offence the licence should be revoked immediately. [Guidance for licensing authorities](#) to prevent illegal working in the taxi and private hire vehicle sector has been issued by the Home Office. As with the initial decision to license a driver, this determination must be reached based on the balance of probabilities, not on the burden of beyond reasonable doubt.
- 9.7 Before any decision is made, the licensing authority must give full consideration to the available evidence and the driver should be given the opportunity to state his or her case. If a period of suspension is imposed, it cannot be extended or changed to revocation at a later date.
- 9.8 A decision to revoke a licence does not however prevent the reissuing of a licence should further information be received that alters the balance of probability of a decision previously made. The decision to suspend or revoke was based on the evidence available at the time the determination was made. New evidence may, of course, become available later.
- 9.9 New evidence may be produced at an appeal hearing that may result in the court reaching a different decision to that reached by the council or an appeal may be settled by agreement between the licensing authority and the driver on terms which, in the light of new evidence, becomes the appropriate course. If, for example, the allegations against a driver were now, on the balance of probability, considered to be unfounded, a suspension could be lifted or, if the licence was revoked, an expedited re-licensing process used.
- 9.10 A suspension may still be appropriate if it is believed that a minor issue can be addressed through additional training. In this instance the licence would be returned to the driver once the training has been completed without further consideration. This approach is clearly not appropriate where the licensing authority believes that, based on the information available at that time, on the balance of probability it is considered that the driver presents a risk to public safety.



## Annex – Assessment of Previous Convictions

Legislation specifically identifies offences involving dishonesty, indecency or violence as a concern when assessing whether an individual is 'fit and proper' to hold a taxi or private hire vehicle licence. The following recommendations to licensing authorities on previous convictions reflect this.

**Authorities must consider each case on its own merits, and applicants/licensees are entitled to a fair and impartial consideration of their application.** Where a period is given below, it should be taken to be a minimum in considering whether a licence should be granted or renewed in most cases. The Department's view is that this places passenger safety as the priority while enabling past offenders to sufficiently evidence that they have been successfully rehabilitated so that they might obtain or retain a licence.

### Crimes resulting in death

Where an applicant or licensee has been convicted of a crime which resulted in the death of another person or was intended to cause the death or serious injury of another person they will not be licensed.

### Exploitation

Where an applicant or licensee has been convicted of a crime involving, related to, or has any connection with abuse, exploitation, use or treatment of another individual irrespective of whether the victim or victims were adults or children, they will not be licensed. This includes slavery, child sexual abuse, exploitation, grooming, psychological, emotional or financial abuse, but this is not an exhaustive list.

### Offences involving violence against the person

Where an applicant has a conviction for an offence of violence against the person, or connected with any offence of violence, a licence will not be granted until at least 10 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

### Possession of a weapon

Where an applicant has a conviction for possession of a weapon or any other weapon related offence, a licence will not be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

### Sexual offences

Where an applicant has a conviction for any offence involving or connected with illegal sexual activity, a licence will not be granted.

In addition to the above, the licensing authority will not grant a licence to any applicant who is currently on the Sex Offenders Register or on any barred list.

### Dishonesty

Where an applicant has a conviction for any offence where dishonesty is an element of the offence, a licence will not be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

## Drugs

Where an applicant has any conviction for, or related to, the supply of drugs, or possession with intent to supply or connected with possession with intent to supply, a licence will not be granted until at least 10 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Where an applicant has a conviction for possession of drugs, or related to the possession of drugs, a licence will not be granted until at least five years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed. In these circumstances, any applicant may also have to undergo drugs testing for a period at their own expense to demonstrate that they are not using controlled drugs.

## Discrimination

Where an applicant has a conviction involving or connected with discrimination in any form, a licence will not be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

## Motoring convictions

Hackney carriage and private hire drivers are professional drivers charged with the responsibility of carrying the public. It is accepted that offences can be committed unintentionally, and a single occurrence of a minor traffic offence would not prohibit the granting of a licence. However, applicants with multiple motoring convictions may indicate that an applicant does not exhibit the behaviours of a safe road user and one that is suitable to drive professionally.

Any motoring conviction while a licensed driver demonstrates that the licensee may not take their professional responsibilities seriously. However, it is accepted that offences can be committed unintentionally, and a single occurrence of a minor traffic offence may not necessitate the revocation of a taxi or private hire vehicle driver licence providing the authority considers that the licensee remains a fit and proper person to retain a licence.

## Drink driving/driving under the influence of drugs

Where an applicant has a conviction for drink driving or driving under the influence of drugs, a licence will not be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence or driving ban imposed. In the case of driving under the influence of drugs, any applicant may also have to undergo drugs testing at their own expense to demonstrate that they are not using controlled drugs.

## Using a hand-held device whilst driving

Where an applicant has a conviction for using a held-hand mobile telephone or a hand-held device whilst driving, a licence will not be granted until at least five years have elapsed since the conviction or completion of any sentence or driving ban imposed, whichever is the later.

## Annex – Disclosure and Barring Service information

Table 1: Information included in criminal record checks

| Information included                              | Type of check |                    |                    |  |
|---|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|--|
|   | Basic check   | Standard DBS check | Enhanced DBS check | Enhanced DBS (including barred list) check |
| <b>Unspent convictions</b>                        | Yes           | Yes                | Yes                | Yes  |
| <b>Unspent cautions</b> <sup>1</sup>              | Yes           | Yes                | Yes                | Yes  |
| <b>Spent convictions</b> <sup>2</sup>             | No            | Yes                | Yes                | Yes  |
| <b>Spent cautions</b> <sup>1 &amp; 2</sup>        | No            | Yes                | Yes                | Yes  |
| <b>Additional police Information</b> <sup>3</sup> | No            | No                 | Yes                | Yes  |
| <b>Barred list(s) Information</b> <sup>4</sup>    | No            | No                 | No                 | Yes  |

1. Does not include fixed penalty notices, penalty notices for disorder or any other police or other out-of-court disposals.
2. Spent convictions and cautions that have become protected under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions Order) 1975, as amended, are not automatically disclosed on any level of certificate. Further guidance is available [the DBS filtering guide](#).
3. This is any additional information held by the police which a chief police officer reasonably believes to be relevant and considers ought to be disclosed.
4. This is information as to whether the individual concerned is included in the children's or adults' barred lists maintained by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

## Annex – CCTV Guidance

It is important to note that, in most circumstances, a licensing authority which mandates the installation of CCTV systems in taxis and private hire vehicles will be responsible for the data – the data controller. It is important that data controllers fully consider concerns regarding privacy and licensing authorities should consider how systems are configured, should they mandate CCTV (with or without audio recording). For example, vehicles may not be exclusively used for business, also serving as a car for personal use - it should therefore be possible to manually switch the system off (both audio and visual recording) when not being used for hire. Authorities should consider the Information Commissioner's view on this matter that, in most cases, a requirement for continuous operation is unlikely to be fair and lawful processing of personal data.

The Home Office '[Surveillance Camera Code of Practice](#)' advises that government is fully supportive of the use of overt surveillance cameras in a public place whenever that use is:

- in pursuit of a legitimate aim;
- necessary to meet a pressing need;
- proportionate;
- effective, and;
- compliant with any relevant legal obligations

The Code also sets out 12 guiding principles which, as a 'relevant authority' under section 33(5) of the [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012](#), licensing authorities must have regard to. It must be noted that, where a licence is granted subject to CCTV system conditions, the licensing authority assumes the role and responsibility of 'System Operator'. The role requires consideration of all guiding principles in this code. The failure to comply with these principles may be detrimental to the use of CCTV evidence in court as this may be raised within disclosure to the Crown Prosecution Service and may be taken into account.

The Surveillance Camera Commissioner (SCC) has provided guidance on the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice in its '[Passport to Compliance](#)' which provides guidance on the necessary stages when planning, implementing and operating a surveillance camera system to ensure it complies with the code. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has also published a [code of practice](#) which, in this context, focuses on the data governance requirement associated with the use of CCTV such as data retention and disposal, which it is important to follow in order to comply with the data protection principles. The SCC provides a [self-assessment tool](#) to assist operators to ensure compliance with the principles set out in the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice. The SCC also operates a [certification scheme](#); authorities that obtain this accreditation are able to clearly demonstrate that their systems conform to the SCC's best practice and are fully compliant with the Code and increase public confidence that any risks to their privacy have been fully considered and mitigated.

The [Data Protection Act 2018](#) regulates the use of personal data. Part 2 of the Data Protection Act applies to the general processing of personal data, and references and supplements the General Data Protection Regulation. Licensing authorities, as data controllers, must comply with all relevant aspects of data protection law. Particular attention should be paid to the rights of individuals which include the right to be informed, of access

and to erasure. The ICO has provided detailed [guidance](#) on how data controllers can ensure compliance with these.

It is a further requirement of data protection law that before implementing a proposal that is likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of people, an impact assessment on the protection of personal data shall be carried out. The ICO recommends in [guidance](#) that if there is any doubt as to whether a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is required one should be conducted to ensure compliance and encourage best practice. A DPIA will also help to assess properly the anticipated benefits of installing CCTV (to passengers and drivers) and the associated privacy risks; these risks might be mitigated by having appropriate privacy information and signage, secure storage and access controls, retention policies, training for staff how to use the system, etc.

It is essential to ensure that all recordings made are secure and can only be accessed by those with legitimate grounds to do so. This would normally be the police if investigating an alleged crime or the licensing authority if investigating a complaint or data access request. Encryption of the recording to which the licensing authority, acting as the data controller, holds the key, mitigates this issue and protects against theft of the vehicle or device. It is one of the guiding principles of data protection legislation, that personal data (including in this context, CCTV recordings and other potentially sensitive passenger information) is handled securely in a way that 'ensures appropriate security', including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures.

All passengers must be made fully aware if CCTV is operating in a vehicle. Given that audio recording is considered to be more privacy intrusive, it is even more important that individuals are fully aware and limited only to occasions when passengers (or drivers) consider it necessary. The recording of audio should be used to provide an objective record of events such as disputes or inappropriate behaviour and must not be continuously active by default and should recognise the need for privacy of passengers' private conversations between themselves. Activation of the audio recording capability of a system might be instigated when either the passenger or driver operates a switch or button. As well as clear signage in vehicles, information on booking systems should be introduced. This might be text on a website, scripts or automated messages on telephone systems; the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has issued guidance on privacy information and the right to be informed on its website.

## Annex - Staying Safe: Guidance for Passengers

Licensing authorities should provide guidance to assist passengers in identifying licensed vehicles and the increased risks of using unlicensed vehicles. The guidance might include advice on:

- how to tell if a taxi or private hire vehicle is licensed.

Educate the public in the differences between taxis and private hire vehicles e.g.:

- a taxi can be flagged down or pre-booked.
- a private hire vehicle that has not been pre-booked should not be used as it will not be insured and may not be licensed.
- what a private hire vehicle should look like e.g. colour, signage, licence plates etc.
- the benefit of pre-booking a return vehicle before going out.
- arrange to be picked up from a safe meeting point.
- requesting at the time of booking what the fare is likely to be.

When using a private hire vehicle, passengers should always:

- book with a licensed operator.
- confirm their booking with the driver when s/he arrives.
- note the licence number.
- sit in the back, behind the driver.
- let a third party know details of their journey.

When using a taxi, passengers should where possible:

- use a taxi rank and choose one staffed by taxi marshals if available.

## Summary of DfT Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards Consultation Proposals and Responses

### General

| 1. Licensee self-reporting |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| DfT 4.12                   | Licence holders should be required to notify the issuing authority within 48 hours of an arrest and release, charge or conviction of any sexual offence, any offence involving dishonesty or violence and any motoring offence  |
| Current Situation          | 72 hours of any cautions, convictions or warnings including but not limited to driving endorsements, driving convictions, police warnings and reprimands, cautions, community service orders, restraining orders, fixed penalties immigration offences, or other relevant matters, including road traffic offences such as speeding.  |
| Proposal                   | 48 hours (2 days) of an arrest and release, charge or conviction of any sexual offence, any offence involving dishonesty or violence and any motoring offence   |
| Responses                  |   |
| Licensed Driver            | No Problem  |
| Licensed Operator          | Not sure councils can really facilitate 48 hours given they are shut across weekends so there needs to be a clear method by which reporting could take place across weekends/bank holiday weekend etc. Do not agree with having to report arrest and release where there is no further action or pending possible action - policy should be more specific in this respect to avoid having to disclose mistaken/innocent arrests that result in NFA. |
| Resident                   | I believe that 48 hours is too fast and would not be possible to achieve on some occasions, the current 72 hours is adequate. I feel that an arrest and release with no bail or charges should not be notifiable.   |

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Licensed Operator        | <p>We support the use of the 'NR3' database in the short-term. However, in the long-term we believe the most effective way of ensuring all licensing authorities are aware of any given driver's licensing history is through mandating use of a national, real-time database that all licensing authorities and operators use to track driver licence revocation and refusals. This will ensure that authorities have all relevant historical safety records when making assessments of a driver's fitness and propriety, should a driver look to become licensed elsewhere. We have been discussing this with DfT directly and would be happy to explore it further with you to understand how we can best move it forward.</p> |
| Business or Organisation | <p>The time durations are only reasonable whilst licensing authorities have provisions in place</p> <p>a) To make reporting as easy as possible to do</p> <p>b) The ability to deal with the reporting once reported.</p> <p>As many licensing authorities are struggling to currently meet all licensing obligations a robust system needs to be in place for reporting and managing. This will need to take account of lengthy holiday periods like Easter where authorities are shut for over 72 hours.</p>  |

| <b>2. Referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service</b> |   |
|---|---|
| DfT 4.14  | <p>In some circumstances it may be appropriate under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 for licensing authorities to make referrals to the DBS. A decision to refuse or revoke a licence as the individual is thought to present a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult, should be referred to the DBS. The power for the licensing authority to make a referral in this context arises from the undertaking of a safeguarding role. Further guidance has been provided by the DBS.</p>   |
| DfT 4.15  | <p>The Department recommends that licensing authorities should make a referral to the DBS when it is thought that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an individual has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult;</li> <li>• an individual has satisfied the 'harm test'; or</li> <li>• received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence and;</li> <li>• the person they are referring is, has or might in future be working in regulated activity;</li> </ul> <p>if the above conditions are satisfied, the DBS may consider it appropriate for the person to be added to a barred list.</p> |



|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Current Situation        | Not routinely undertaken  |
| Proposal                 | Relevant matters to be referred to the DBS in accordance with the current guidance. |
| <b>Responses</b>         |   |
| Licensed Driver          | No Problem  |
| Licensed Operator        | Agree - makes entire sense  |
| Licensed Operator        | YES   |
| Resident                 | Agree   |
| Business or Organisation | Happy with current arrangements   |

## Drivers

| 3. Criminality checks for drivers |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| DfT 6.2                           | All individuals applying for or renewing a taxi or private hire vehicle drivers licence licensing authorities should carry out a check of the children and adult Barred Lists in addition to being subject to an enhanced DBS check (in section x61 of the DBS application 'Other Workforce' should be entered in line 1 and 'Taxi Licensing' should be entered at line 2). All licensed drivers should also be required to evidence continuous registration with the DBS update service to enable the licensing authority to routinely check for new information every six months. Drivers that do not subscribe up to the Update Service should still be subject to a check every six months. |
| Current Situation                 | Yearly  |
| Proposal                          | Every 6 months or as when required  |
| <b>Responses</b>                  |   |
| Licensed Driver                   | No Problem  |
| Licensed Operator                 | Agree - batch checking should make this easy therefore its efficiency makes this an obvious action to take. Issue with lapsed Update Service membership will still be prevalent until subscription by direct debit is permitted - appreciate this is not an SCDC issue.   |
| Licensed Operator                 | Yearly OR as and when   |
| Resident                          | Agree   |
| Business or Organisation          | Whilst a small cost will be incurred by drivers, there will be considerable benefits for them, operators and the licensing authorities, once they are all on the update service   |

| 4. Language proficiency |   |   |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| DfT 6.14                | A lack of language proficiency could impact on a driver's ability to understand written documents, such as policies and guidance, relating to the protection of children and vulnerable adults and applying this to identify and act on signs of exploitation. Oral proficiency will be of relevance in the identification of potential exploitation through communicating with passengers and their interaction with others. |   |
| DfT 6.15                | A licensing authority's test of a driver's proficiency should cover both oral and written English language skills to achieve the objectives stated above.   |   |
| Current Situation       |   | English language proficiency and numeracy is examined to an extent in the Competency test, which all applicants must pass |
|                         |   |   |
| Responses               |   |   |
| Licensed Driver         | No Problem  |   |
| Licensed Operator       | Long overdue - we fully behind anything that enhances language and communication proficiency levels - its always been a vital part of providing a high level service and has sometimes been badly disregarded in the name of 'inclusiveness ' or correctness in perceived discrimination - having decent English skills has always been a essential rather than 'desired' attribute to make a successful licensed driver.     |   |
| Licensed Operator       | Definitely  |   |
| Resident                | agree   |   |

Proposal

## Operators

| 5. Booking and dispatch staff |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| DfT 8.8                       | <p>Licensing authorities should be satisfied that private hire vehicle operators can demonstrate that all staff that have contact with the public and/or oversee the dispatching of vehicles do not pose a risk to the public.</p> <p>Licensing authorities should, as a condition of granting an operator licence, require a register of all staff that will take bookings or dispatch vehicles is kept.</p> |

|                   |  |  |
|-------------------|--|--|
| Current Situation |  | Not currently a condition of the licence   |
| Proposal          |  | It will become a condition of the licence that the operator will be required to keep a register of all staff taking bookings   |
| DfT 8.9           | Operators should be required to evidence that they have had sight of a Basic DBS check on all individuals listed on their register of booking and dispatch staff and to ensure that Basic DBS checks are conducted on any individuals added to the register and that this is compatible with their policy on employing ex-offenders. DBS certificates provided by the individual should be recently issued when viewed, alternatively the operator could use a 'responsible organisation' to request the check on their behalf. When individuals start taking bookings and dispatching vehicles for an operator they should be required, as part of their employment contract, to advise the operator of any convictions while they are employed in this role. |  |
| Current Situation |  | Not currently a condition of the licence   |
| Proposal          |  | It will become a condition of the licence that the operator must ensure that all booking and dispatch staff will be required to undertake a DBS check at the start of their employment and then yearly. Booking and Dispatch staff that work abroad will be required to have a Certificate of Good Character at the start of their employment and then yearly. |
| Responses         |  |  |
| Licensed Driver   | No Problem   |  |
| Licensed Operator | Agree with this move and hope Council have a practical attitude to the various forms of Good Character/Good conduct verification's that may come from abroad.  |  |
| Resident          | It should read "Dispatch staff that work aboard should provide their countries equivalent of DBS or good character certificate" as they may not have exactly the same as the UK.   |  |
| Licensed Operator | We support the intention behind each of these standards - to prevent any bad actors within an operator facilitating harmful activities on TPH trips. It is, however, worth noting that modern, app-based operators such as Uber also use technology to process bookings and dispatch vehicles, and often do not rely solely on human agents. In many cases, it does not make sense to keep a register of staff that take bookings or dispatch vehicles as there may be none involved in this specific process.   |  |

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
|                          | As you implement this standard in your record keeping policies, we would encourage you to reflect these different business models so it is clear where requirements do or do not apply.  |
| Business or Organisation | As it is common practice as a condition of the licence that operators must ensure that all booking and dispatch staff will be required to undertake a DBS check at the start of their employment and then yearly, we do not see any difficulties. Regarding Booking and Dispatch staff that work abroad being required to have a Certificate of Good Character at the start of their employment and then yearly, we feel this is an over-regulatory, impractical and unrealistic requirement that should not be taken forward. |

| 6. Use of passenger carrying vehicles (PCV) licensed drivers  |  |
|---|--|
| DfT<br>8.16   | PCV licensed drivers are subject to different checks from taxi and private hire vehicle licensed drivers as the work normally undertaken, i.e. driving a bus, does not present the same risk to passengers. Members of the public are entitled to expect when making a booking with a private hire vehicle operator that they will receive a private hire vehicle licensed vehicle and driver. The use of a driver who holds a PCV licence and the use of a public service vehicle (PSV) such as a minibus to undertake a private hire vehicle booking should not be permitted as a condition of the private hire vehicle operator's licence without the informed consent of the booker. |
| Current Situation   |  |
| Not currently a condition of the licence  |  |
| Proposal  |  |
| It will become a condition of the licence that the operator must not use a PCV licensed driver and PSV to fulfil a booking without the consent of the booker. |  |
| Where used, the booker must be advised in writing that the driver is subject to different checks and not required to have an enhanced DBS check.              |  |
| Responses   |  |
| Licensed Driver   | No Problem   |
| Resident  | Agree  |
| Business or Organisation  | As PCV (PSV) drivers have different checks and measures and testing arrangements, we do not believe they should be used for PHV or taxi bookings.<br>Licensed Operator   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | While I agree in principle that passengers need to be informed if a PSV vehicle is being used, it is misleading to imply that the driver is subject to different tests, in practice PSV drivers are required to be CRB checked and be of good repute, the difference is in that it is the operators decision on his or her suitability. |
|--|---|

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## Introduction

DfT published its [Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards](#) in July and we understand licensing authorities are required to update DfT on implementation progress in January. Ahead of that, we thought it may be helpful to share our thoughts on implementation of the standards.

We recognise that the TPH sector has changed significantly since the regulatory regime was first created. Many licensing authorities have begun to adapt the way they regulate to reflect changes and new business models. But there continues to be a wide variety of different approaches to TPH licensing across the UK. This is why we strongly support the introduction of national minimum standards, as proposed by the 2017/8 Task and Finish Group, that would improve the consistency as well as the strength of safety standards across the UK. We believe DfT's new statutory standards are a welcome step forward in helping establish a set of minimum standards that apply nationally and better reflect the current market.

## Specific considerations

- **Licensing policies (section 3.1-3.5):** We support the publication of licensing policies (including licence conditions of individual licensees), which will help improve transparency of the regulatory regime and therefore further improve legitimacy and consumer confidence. In addition, we believe that:
  - 1) Publishing an explanation of the rationale behind the policies and condition(s) with reference to the facts, the statutory framework and the Better Regulation Framework principles will help further improve transparency and clarify expectations of licensees; and
  - 2) Ensuring as much consistency as possible in how policies and conditions are applied to all licensees will help customers have a clear understanding of what they can expect from a TPH service (regardless of who the licensee is) and, therefore, further build customer confidence in the sector and the licensing regime.
- **[Duration of licences (section 3.6-3.7):** We believe five-year operators licences help bring stability and predictability that enables operators to invest in service improvements and new technologies that will benefit consumers. We recognise that occasionally, in certain circumstances, shorter licences may make sense but, in line with DfT and given the existing powers licensing authorities already have to suspend or revoke licenses during the course of a licence term, we do not see a public safety case for shorter licences. As you implement this standard, we would welcome clarity on your approach to licence lengths and what, if anything, you feel would warrant a shorter licence.]
- **Consultation at the local level (section 3.12-3.13):** We support the use of consultations on proposed changes in licensing rules that may have significant impacts on passengers and/or the trade. But we also believe regular dialogue and operational collaboration (outside formal consultation processes) is invaluable. It helps us, as a licensee, better understand the authority's expectations, and helps the authority understand our business model. As licensing authorities implement this standard, we are encouraging them to set out an approach to engaging with licensees that maintains, and if possible increases, the frequency of dialogue.
- **Changing licensing policies and requirements (3.14-3.15):** As new operators enter the market, consistency in how policies and requirements are applied across licensees becomes ever more important. As you implement this standard, we would welcome clarity on how you interpret the scope of the standard - which licensing requirements will trigger a review of existing licences and what should happen if a licensee is mid-licence term - as well as clarifying how (if at all) specific / special conditions will be used in this context.

- **DBS checks:** We support steps to raise safety standards across the industry and, in that spirit, welcome the standards that increase the frequency of DBS checks across drivers, operators and vehicle proprietors.
  - **For drivers (sections 4.2-4.8):** The DBS Update Service has the potential to be a useful tool that helps improve efficiency for drivers, licensing authorities and operators. However, it is important that it can distinguish between material changes to a licensee's DBS certificate (e.g. new convictions / cautions etc) and administrative changes (e.g. change in address) to reduce the risk of unnecessary friction and cost for drivers and licensing authorities when more regular DBS checks are introduced.
  - **For operators (sections 8.2-8.6):** We are keen to discuss with LAs, DfT and others how the process of undertaking Directors' DBS checks can be streamlined through use of the DBS Update Service (not currently set up for the Basic DBS Checks that Directors are required to undertake).
- **Licensee self-reporting (sections 4.12-4.13):** We support the use of the 'NR3' database in the short-term. However, in the long-term we believe the most effective way of ensuring all licensing authorities are aware of any given driver's licensing history is through mandating use of a national, real-time database that all licensing authorities and operators use to track driver licence revocation and refusals. This will ensure that authorities have all relevant historical safety records when making assessments of a driver's fitness and propriety, should a driver look to become licensed elsewhere. We have been discussing this with DfT directly and would be happy to explore it further with you to understand how we can best move it forward.
- **Complaints against licensees (sections 4.29-4.33):** As DfT acknowledges in the standards, operators are well-placed to support a strong complaints handling process. Elsewhere in the UK, we have developed processes through which we share information on safety complaints with the relevant licensing authority rapidly so that the licensing authority can take any necessary enforcement action quickly to minimise public safety risk. We would be happy to discuss this further with you, as we believe there could be significant public safety benefits to a similar approach being adopted by all operators.

We would also encourage you to consider how technology can be used to give riders the information they need to make complaints (rather than relying on in-vehicle display as is currently cited in the Standards). Our experience suggests digital provision of information can be far more effective at getting information to the passenger at the point they need it and would be happy to explore new innovations to support your implementation of this standard.

- **CCTV (sections 7.7-7.13):** We recognise that there can be safety benefits to installing CCTV in TPH vehicles but, as the standards rightly acknowledge, CCTV installation is not a straightforward question from a privacy and data protection perspective. The key question that needs to be answered by any licensing authority that supports use of CCTV cameras is to identify 'who' the data controller is and 'how' the data can be accessed and shared with law enforcement agencies in the event of an incident. It is also important to ensure CCTV requirements are affordable to drivers. We are keen to contribute to any consultation processes with our own experience and that of drivers using the Uber app.
- **Booking and dispatch staff (section 8.7-8.12) and record keeping (section 8.13-8.15):** We support the intention behind each of these standards - to prevent any bad actors within an operator facilitating harmful activities on TPH trips. It is, however, worth noting that modern, app-based operators such as Uber also use technology to process bookings and dispatch vehicles, and often do not rely solely on human agents. In many cases, it does not make sense to keep a register of staff that take bookings or dispatch vehicles as there may be none involved



in this specific process. As you implement this standard in your record keeping policies, we would encourage you to reflect these different business models so it is clear where requirements do or do not apply.

- **Joint authorisation of enforcement officers (section 9.2):** We strongly support joint authorisation of enforcement officers and believe this will help to improve the consistency of standards across the UK if mandated nationally. We have long-advocated delegated enforcement powers but, as far as we are aware, only West Yorkshire and Merseyside have formally gone down this route. Without joint authorisation, our experience suggests that there can be delays in taking enforcement action. We believe this is preferable to strict cross-border driving bans which could adversely impact passenger safety by limiting options for those who need to travel across authority boundaries.
- **Setting expectations and monitoring (9.3-9.4):** We support use of a points-based system which records minor driver breaches as this helps to ensure any penalties are proportionate to the severity of the non-compliance. This avoids an all-or-nothing scenario that can lead to decisions that have a disproportionate impact on a driver's livelihood and is inconsistent with the principle of proportionality that is applicable to all TPH licensing decisions.

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 18 January 2021 13:42  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: Taxi Consultation

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**From:** South Cambridgeshire Executive Operators Group [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 14 January 2021 11:06  
**To:** Taxi Consultation <Taxi.Consultation@scambs.gov.uk>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] South Cambridgeshire Executive Operators Group  
[REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Taxi Consultation

Good Morning,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the policy amendments proposed following the publishing of the July 2020 DFT Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards. The consultation did not give any opportunity for any other comments so please can you add this email for consideration.

The Guidance states on section 7.13 regarding the fitting of CCTV states:

*Imposition of a blanket requirement to attach CCTV as a condition to a licence is likely to give rise to concerns about the proportionality of such an approach and will therefore require an appropriately strong justification and must be kept under regular review*

SCDC taxi policy imposes a blanket requirement for CCTV contrary to the recommendations. It has long been the stance of this executive operators group that plate exemption vehicles should also be exempt from CCTV requirements, however one of the reasons given for denying this has been that there is no separation of complaint recording between mainstream private hire & executive operators.

Please can you confirm that in accordance with the recommendations there will now be separation of records and that this policy will be reviewed on a regular basis and the trade will be consulted within that review?

Best Wishes

[REDACTED]  
South Cambridgeshire Executive Operators Group

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## Appendix E

**Received 11/12/2020 09:59**

I'm saying no to cctv and protecting my passengers request and freedom for privacy ! Please read link <http://chng.it/qTvXz6R6>

Save my business

Regards

**Received 11/12/2020 10:43**

To whom it may concern

I don't exactly know what you people want from me about this ?

I have learned over the past 2 years that what ever I say as a Executive Driver/Chauffeur with my own private clients who want privacy and do not want to be spied on in the car via cctv and prefer the trust we have in each other (NOT a street car taxi driver picking drunks and people the drivers do not know going to unknown destination) my clients requests and other Executive Drivers opinions are totally ignored !

Regards

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