



Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing

Taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) licensing is a core responsibility of a licensing authority and is crucial to keeping local residents and visitors to your area safe, and ensuring they are easily able to travel around the local area. This tip sheet provides a brief overview of the role, along with some best practice ideas.

Further information can be seen in our [councillor handbook on taxi and PHV licensing](#).

Determine licence applications

- **Make decisions on individual licence applications**

A key role of a (sub)committee is to make decisions on licences and to decide whether a driver is fit and proper to hold a taxi/PHV licence in line with statutory guidance and the council's licensing policy. Decisions should focus on protecting the public and should not take the personal circumstances of a driver into account. Committee members can also attach conditions to the licences of PHV drivers where necessary and proportionate but are not able to condition the licences of taxi drivers.

- **Check if your council has a delegated authority scheme in place**

In the event of allegations of a serious offence being committed by a taxi/PHV driver, it is vital councils can respond swiftly so it can be helpful to have a delegated authority scheme in place which enables officers to immediately suspend or revoke a licence. Councils should carefully consider having such a scheme in place.



Review your licensing policy

- **Set the direction**

Councils should have a single licensing statement or policy for taxi and PHV licensing that brings together all their procedures in one place. This could include policies on convictions, determining the 'fit and proper' person test, licence conditions and vehicle standards. As a licensing committee member, it is important you are satisfied that your council has high standards of conditions to ensure the public are kept safe.

Ensure taxi/PHV licensing is linked into different strategic agendas within the council

- **How can taxi/PHV licensing be more integrated into the wider work of the council?**

How is your taxi/PHV policy linked into the council or local area's wider transport priorities? Is the licensing team assisting with efforts to provide accessible transport for disabled users, or helping with home to school transport? Are policies being adapted to take account of the need to move to 'green' vehicles (and what are the risks to requiring this before 2030)? Are taxi ranks being considered in any town centre regeneration projects? Can licensing officers sit on community safety partnerships to share intelligence provided by licensed drivers? Licensing can help drive progress on different council priorities.

- **Work with interested Cabinet members**

Cabinet members for areas like transport, schools and community safety are also likely to be interested in ensuring your area has an active taxi/PHV trade, and that any safeguarding issues or concerns are swiftly dealt with. Cabinet member engagement can help drive progress within the council and ensure alignment with the council's wider priorities.

Work with external partners

- **Consider how well you are working with local partners**

Effective partnership working is vital to ensuring effective taxi and PHV regulation. It is particularly important to work with neighbouring licensing authorities, or colleagues in your county council. Do your taxi licensing officers have a regular dialogue with neighbouring councils, with a view to adopting consistent standards, developing a common approach and to share relevant information? Does your council have a multi-agency enforcement programme with the police, the Driving and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and neighbouring councils? Such operations help ensure the public remain safe. Are licensing officers, in two tier areas, regularly speaking to colleagues in the county council about home to school transport councils?

- **How well are officers working with the police?**

Joining up enforcement operations with the police is crucial, as taxi licensing officers do not have powers to stop and search vehicles or act against drivers and vehicles that they have licensed. Licensing committee members should ensure your council taxi licensing officers meet regularly with their local police force and develop good relationships.

- **Develop a good relationship with the taxi and PHV trade**

It is important to consider if your council has effective consultation methods with taxi and PHV representatives and taxi users. Many councils have taxi liaison forums which meet on a regular basis, which can be particularly helpful forums when thinking about a taxi/PHV policy. Training for drivers is also important, and councils should consider providing training on disability equality, spotting child sexual exploitation or county lines and other locally relevant issues.

- **Are licensing officers working with external partners to undertake mystery shopping?**

Mystery shopping can be a good way of understanding to what extent drivers are complying with their licences and ensuring disabled residents are able to access taxi/PHV services. Organisations like Guide Dogs can assist with this, however it is important to ensure licensing teams are properly resourced to enable them to undertake this type of activity.

Improve your knowledge

- **Ensure you take advantage of any training opportunities**

This is a good way of ensuring you are aware of current issues in taxi/PHV licensing and that you can discharge your duties on the licensing committee to a high standard. It is particularly important to have a solid understanding of safeguarding issues in taxi/PHV licensing, and a good grasp of the fit and proper person test. Section five of the Department for Transport's statutory standards outlines their mandatory training requirements. Regular officer training should also be encouraged.



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