

Taxi and Private Hire Newsletter

June 2015

This is now the ninth edition of the newsletter and the licensing team hope it is useful and informative for all our licensed drivers.

In the coming months the licensing team will be continuing their work on raising awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and implementing the changes outlined in The Deregulation Act 2015 to the taxi and private hire legislation.

Again we would like to thank all those drivers who have supported the CSE and human trafficking campaigns by displaying the stickers in their cars.



Changes ahead

From 1 October 2015, The Deregulation Act 2015 will come into force and will make changes to the existing legislation relating to private hire and hackney carriage licences.

Licensing authorities will be able to issue a drivers licence (badge) for a three years and an operator's licence for a five year period.

Also, private hire operators will be able to sub-contract bookings to other operator who are licensed with other authorities.

The licensing team will provide further information to drivers and operators before the changes come into force.

Operator inspections

The licensing team would like to thank all our operators for their co-operation and assistance in helping the team complete the inspections which we have now almost finished.

Overall the standards and professionalism of our operators has been extremely high with only minor issues needing to be addressed - so a big thank and well done!

Certificate of compliance

Here is a list of the three garages that are authorised by Slough Borough Council to carry out the certificate of compliance test.

P.M. Autos

148 Edinburgh Ave
Slough SL1 4SS
Tel: 01753 533007

Thames Valley Garage Ltd

George House
2A Bower Way
Slough SL1 5HX
Tel: 01628 666100

Triple S Motor Centre

1A Belgrave Road
Slough SL1 3RG
Tel: 01753 533134



Caught speeding?

Thames Valley Police have recently been in contact with the licensing team regarding certain individuals who have been nominated as a driver of a licensed vehicle when it has been caught speeding by their speed enforcement cameras.

The fixed penalty unit will always make contact with the relevant licensing department when a licensed vehicle has activated the camera in order to ensure that the person who has been nominated is in fact a licensed driver.

Some licence holders have named unlicensed drivers as being the

driver of the vehicle at the time the camera was activated (mobile mechanics working at 1am for instance). As an unlicensed driver cannot drive a licensed vehicle, Slough Borough Council will take formal action against licence holder for this offence.

Making a false nomination for any motoring offence could lead to Thames Valley Police prosecuting you for perverting the course of justice. This is punishable by way of a custodial prison sentence and is deemed a serious matter by the courts. Please think carefully before completing the relevant forms.

Missed appointment charge

A missed appointment charge of £20 has been introduced to try and reduce the number of appointments wasted by people failing to turn up.

This is particularly frustrating when we are experiencing a high demand for appointments.

If you have booked an appointment and cannot make it, please call us to arrange another time. One phone call could save you £20!



Drug-driving and prescribed medication

The new law, introduced 2 March 2015 in England and Wales, aims to catch those who put the lives of others at risk while driving under the influence of drugs.

As well as outlawing driving while under the influence of illegal drugs, the new law includes some prescription medicines.

Robert Goodwill MP, Road Safety Minister, says as long as they stay within prescribed levels, most people will still be able to get behind the wheel of a car.

"If you are taking your medicine as directed by your doctor and your driving is not impaired, then you are not breaking the law and there is no need to worry. Prescribed doses do not exceed the limits for legal drugs, so most patients should still be safe to drive."

Get advice

Prof David Taylor, a spokesman for the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and a member of the Department for Transport advisory panel on drug-driving said: "Don't stop taking your medicines,

prescribed or otherwise, if you are worried about this new law. Instead, talk to your doctor or pharmacist for information about how your medicines might affect your ability to drive. They'll be happy to give you the advice you need to stay safe."

Ed Morrow, campaigns officer for road safety charity Brake said the organisation strongly welcomed the new drug-driving law. "This much-needed progressive move by government will make it much easier for police to deal with illegal drug-drivers," he said. "We are confident that the necessary measures are in place to ensure drivers who take prescription medication are not unfairly penalised. However, many prescription medications can have a negative effect on your ability to drive safely, and there is a worrying lack of awareness of this among the public."



Prescription drugs covered by the new law

Clonazepam is prescribed to treat seizures or panic disorders.

Diazepam is used for anxiety disorders, alcohol withdrawal symptoms or muscle spasms.

Flunitrazepam (also known as Rohypnol) is a sedative originally used in hospitals for deep sedation in the 1970s.

Lorazepam is used to treat convulsions or seizures caused by epilepsy.

Oxazepam is used to relieve anxiety, including anxiety caused by alcohol withdrawal.

Temazepam affects chemicals in the brain that may become unbalanced and cause insomnia problems.

Methadone is used in the treatment of heroin addiction.

Morphine or opiates treat moderate to severe pain.

Ban on Khat

Khat goes by various traditional names, such as kat, qat, ghat and chat, Arabian tea, miraa and bushman's tea.

In the past, Licensing have received information about licensed drivers being under the influence of khat whilst on duty. Until now no action could be taken however on Tuesday 24 June 2014 khat became a controlled class C drug in the UK.

This means that it is illegal to have khat for yourself and to sell or give away khat to someone else. If the Police catch you with khat, they'll always take some action. This could be a police warning, a £60 penalty notice, or arrest and possible conviction.

Did you know?

Like drinking and driving, driving while under the influence of drugs is illegal - with some drugs you can still be unfit to drive the day after using. You can get a heavy fine, be disqualified from driving or even go to prison.

Allowing other people to use drugs in your house or any other premises is illegal.

Factsheets about khat and the law are available in Amharic, Arabic, English, Somali and Swahili for information on the reasons for the ban, penalties for use, and where to go for advice and support at www.gov.uk/government/publications/khat-fact-sheet-for-england-and-wales



No smoking - a reminder of the 2007 law

Are taxis/mini cabs covered by the legislation? The law covers all taxi and mini cabs. Any licensed vehicle carrying members of the public must be smokefree at all times.

You must:

- Keep vehicles used to transport members of the public smokefree.
- Display 'no-smoking' signs in all vehicles where they can be clearly seen at all times.
- Make sure that your customers are aware that legally your vehicle must be smoke free.

Can a taxi/mini cab driver smoke in their vehicles if they don't have any passengers?

No.

Can drivers smoke in their own private vehicle? Yes, as long as the vehicle is not licensed as a Private Hire or Hackney Carriage vehicle.

Does the Operator office need to be smokefree?

Yes.

If more than one person works there (full or part time) or if members of the public visit the premises the office is covered by the law.

This means that Operators will need to:

- Make sure that the office premises are smokefree at all times
- Display the mandatory A5 'no smoking' signage at least at one entrance to the premises. All other entrances need to display a sign similar to that for vehicles.
- Make sure that staff and customers visiting the office are aware that the premises are legally required to be smokefree.

What could it cost if you ignore the law?

- Failure to display minimum no smoking signs: up to £1000 or £200 fixed penalty notice
- Smoking in a no-smoking place: up to £200 or a penalty notice of £50
- Failing to prevent smoking in a smokefree place: up to £2500.

Further help on stopping smoking, the law and advice for businesses is available at www.smokefreeengland.co.uk





Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Due to the introduction of a three year drivers badge in October 2015 and the removal of the Notifiable Occupations Scheme (which placed a duty on police forces to notify licensing authorities if a driver was charged or convicted of an offence) the current DBS policy is being fully reviewed.

It will be proposed to make the subscription to the DBS update service (creating a 'living' certificate which can be used by this council and if applying to other councils) compulsory.

Registering the DBS certificate for the update service means that a new DBS application may

never be needed (providing the status and the subscription is maintained). This means there will be a cost saving to all drivers as no additional payment needs to be made to the council.

We will be carrying out a formal consultation on the new policy proposals and will be asking all licence holders for their views and comments.

How to register your DBS certificate

The annual subscription fee is £13 payable to the DBS directly. The update service allows the DBS certificate to be used between different organisations.

This means if you apply for a DBS certificate with Windsor & Maidenhead, register it online, then if you wish to apply to Slough, there may be no need for a new certificate as an online check can be made (please note that the original DBS certificate still needs to be produced).

You can register when you apply for the DBS certificate (with a reference number known as the 'F' number) or within 19 days of the certificate being issued.

More information about registering your DBS certificate online can be found at www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service





Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Human Trafficking

The Licensing Team, Thames Valley Police and Slough Borough Council Engage officers have been recognised for their joint work on CSE, in particular their efforts of raising awareness of the issue. This work is now one of nine case studies being promoted nationally by the Local Government Association.

In light of this, the Licensing Team is now reviewing proposals for all current licence holders and new applicants to complete compulsory Safeguarding Training. The training would cover:

- safeguarding children and vulnerable adults
- making referrals
- signposting to relevant agencies

- domestic violence
- child sexual exploitation and hate crime.

In addition to the Safeguarding training, we are also looking at introducing a taxi and private hire 'hotline' where information can be passed confidentially to officers.





Once a draft policy has been prepared, all licensed drivers will be formally consulted with and we look forward to your comments and support.

There have been several articles regarding CSE and Human Trafficking, however as it's such an important issue we will continue raising awareness through the newsletter.

Taxi and private hire drivers are vital in identifying victims of sexual exploitation as you might come into contact with children and young people who are transported in taxis. Please remember that you can anonymously share any concerns about a young persons' welfare by calling Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

To help you identify young people at risk or subject to exploitation the main things to be aware of are listed below.

To assist you in your work when transporting vulnerable passengers we have also included the National Working Group (NWG) Code of Conduct for licensed drivers and operators.

Suspicious activity such as:

- Taking/collecting young people (girls and boys) from hotels/ B&B's/house parties
- Picking up young people from other cars
- Young people who look distressed or intimidated
- Observing suspicious activity in hot-spot areas
- Young people under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol
- Bribes by young women to avoid paying fares
- Regular males requesting taxi rides to and from locations - taking young people with them

- Taking young people to A&E, who are not in the presence of parents
- Young people with injuries such as bruising or blood stains

What to do:

- Make notes about the information you know
- Call 101 to report your concerns about possible sexual exploitation

Information to share:

- Names
- Locations/addresses of concerns
- Descriptions of people
- Car registration plates/ makes and models of vehicles
- Description of concerning activity.



Selling your licensed vehicle?

Licensed drivers frequently buy a car with a current vehicle licence on it from another driver.

An application to transfer the vehicle licence needs to be made to the licensing office in order for our records to be updated with the new owner's details.

Both parties need to attend the office for the formal transfer to be completed.

If you have a question regarding vehicle licence transfers then please contact the licensing team.



NWG Code of Conduct - when working with v

This guidance aims to promote good safeguarding practice for drivers and staff working with vulnerable passengers in the taxi or private hire trade. It is recommended that the following safeguarding principles should be embedded into staff/ driver training and practice:

- All drivers should register in and out of shifts. A shift register should be maintained and at the point of registration the driver should confirm his/her identity and the registration number of the vehicle in use.
- Drivers should carry photo ID at all times.
- The booking process should include a check for vulnerability issues so that provision can be arranged.
- When making a journey with vulnerable passengers, photo-identification should be

produced to the carer responsible for the vulnerable person. If necessary, the driver/staff should obtain a record of the career's contact details if there is no chaperone.

- Never double up passengers unless formal consent and authorization has been obtained.
- If a vulnerable passenger is refused service a responsible person should be informed so that alternative arrangements can be made.
- Always ask if a vulnerable passenger needs help, do not assume.
- Drivers/staff should remain professional at all times and should not:
 - Touch a vulnerable person inappropriately



vulnerable passengers

- Behave in a way that may make a vulnerable passenger feel intimidated or threatened
- Make offensive or inappropriate comments (such as the use of swearing or sexualised or discriminatory language)
- Attempt to misuse personal details obtained via the business about a child (for example communicating with a child at their postal address, or by social network, internet or mobile telephone or by using any other information disclosed as part of placing a booking, or obtained by any other aspect of the business).
- A log should be kept by drivers when a service has been provided to a vulnerable passenger and should include all the details of any incidents

occurring/actions taken or refusals of service.

- If a driver or member of staff is concerned about the safety, welfare or behavior of a vulnerable person, he/she should report this to the Police and their operator.
- As with all professions if you are concerned about the conduct of someone you work with report your concerns to your operator or the Police.

Thank you for joining us to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking.

For further information:

www.nationalworkinggroup.org

www.barnardos.org.uk

Keeping a copy of documents

We would like to remind you that all licensed private hire and hackney drivers are required to keep a copy of the following documents in their vehicle:

- current certificate of motor insurance
- certificate of compliance
- DVLA driving licence

You could receive three penalty points per missing document so please check that you have your up-to-date copies.





Awareness of radicalisation and extremism

There has been extensive media coverage on terrorism and in particular the issues relating to radicalisation. As part of our ongoing safeguarding awareness raising Slough Borough Council has been training all their front line employees on how to spot the potential signs.

Everyone within the community has a role to play in helping to prevent terrorism. You can do this by remaining vigilant and reporting any suspicious activity to the police. Suspicious activity can include:

- Someone noticeably behaving different for no obvious reason
- Someone with passports or documents in different names for no obvious reason

- Someone who travels for long periods of time but it vague about where they're going
- Someone buying or storing large amounts of chemicals for no obvious reason

Thames Valley Police have a confidential Anti-Terrorist hotline and your call will be taken by specialist officers - call 0800 789 321.

The internet is also used by some people to radicalise vulnerable people and promote terrorism and extremism. The government and the police have a dedicated webpage where you can report online content you think might be illegal, or which you find offensive.

Illegal terrorist or extremist content might include:

- Speeches or essays calling for racial or religious violence
- Videos of violence with messages of 'glorification' or praise for the attackers
- Chat forums with postings calling for people to commit acts of terrorism or violent extremism
- Messages intended to stir up hatred against any religious or ethnic group
- Bomb-making instructions

To report terrorist content on the web go to [direct.gov.uk/reportingonlineterrorism](https://www.direct.gov.uk/reportingonlineterrorism)



Heathrow Airport by-laws

Heathrow's Taxi Tout squad have asked us to make all private hire and hackney carriage drivers aware of the new by-laws which have come into force at the airport this year.

These by-laws are being strictly enforced and contravening them could 'land' you with a fine. They make reference to 'private hire vehicles' and this includes hackney carriage vehicles that are picking up or dropping off passengers for pre-booked journeys.

1. Private hire vehicles

No person shall cause or permit a private hire vehicle to enter the airport for the purpose of loading passengers unless that private hire vehicle has been pre-booked or is to be parked in an official car park in anticipation of such a booking.

2. Loading of private hire vehicles

No person shall cause or permit a private hire vehicle to load passengers

at the airport other than in an official car park.

3. Offer of service

No person shall sell or distribute anything, offer anything for sale or hire or make any offer of services for reward.

4. Taxi touting

No person shall in the terminal building or other public building, car park or any other public place on the airport offer his or any other vehicle (unless that

vehicle is a taxi or public service vehicle) for hire.

5. Wearing of badge

Taxi and private hire vehicle drivers shall display their badge at all times whilst at the airport.

6. State name and address

A person shall, if requested to do so by a constable or airport official, state his correct name and address and the purpose of his being on the airport.



Carrying children as passengers

The licensing team frequently get queries from drivers regarding the laws relating to the carrying of babies and children in licensed vehicles.

Firstly, wherever possible, a baby or child should travel in the correct child seat. However the law does allow for private hire and hackney carriage

vehicles can carry babies and children when a child seat is not available.

- A child under three years of age may travel unrestrained in the rear of the vehicle
- A child aged 3-11 or less than 1.35 metres tall must use an adult belt when travelling in the rear of the vehicle

- A baby is classed as a passenger, so if a vehicle is licensed for four passengers then you can carry three adults and a baby.
- It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that the baby or child is restrained in the correct manner.



Can I licence that vehicle?

The past few months has seen an increase in the number of people buying vehicles that are too old to be licensed.

The licensing team would like to remind everyone of the age policy which is that a vehicle being licensed for the first time must be less than five years old at the time it is licensed.

If you are buying a new vehicle check:

- the date of first registration in the log book (V5) to ensure it complies with the policy.
- the vehicle complies with our vehicle type policy, and
- the vehicle complies with our no tints policy

It could be a costly mistake if you buy a vehicle we won't licence.

Please contact the licensing team if you have any queries regarding the age policy or refer to pages 11, 12 and 13 of the private hire policy and conditions booklet and pages 14, 15, 16 and 17 of the hackney carriage booklet which details the age policy in full.





Slough Borough Council website

Visit www.slough.gov.uk/business to view the web pages relating to hackney carriage and private hire licensing.

The webpages are constantly updated and copies of the current policy and procedures booklets are available to download along with a variety of application forms.

Contact us

Licensing



📞 01753 875664

✉ licensing@slough.gov.uk

The licensing team has an appointment system for all taxi applications.

Appointment times

Monday: 9.00am - 12.00pm 2pm - 4pm

Tuesday: 9.00am - 12.00pm 2pm - 4pm

Wednesday: **No appointments**

Thursday: 10am - 12.30pm 2pm - 4pm

Friday: 9.00am - 12.00pm 2pm - 4pm

