

Proposed Greater Manchester Minimum Licensing Standards – June 2019

Introduction

About the proposed Greater Manchester Minimum Licensing Standards

Around 32 million trips are made in taxis and private hire vehicles in Greater Manchester each year. It's an important way for many people to travel around the city region.

There are around 2,000 taxis (known as black cabs or hackney carriages) and over 14,000 private hire vehicles (where you need to pre-book the journey in advance) licensed by the ten Greater Manchester authorities.



We want to make sure that anyone licensed by the ten Greater Manchester authorities who drives or operates a taxi or private hire vehicle in Greater Manchester meets the same minimum standards.

In addition, we want to support the trade to become fit for purpose for the 21st century and contribute to the vision for an integrated transport system. Currently, older licensed vehicles are damaging our environment and action is needed to address this important issue.

The proposed minimum standards have been developed by the ten Greater Manchester authorities to achieve a single vision for licensed vehicles in future, which support the GM Clean Air Plan proposals to tackle air pollution across Greater Manchester. These proposals will allow any person using a vehicle licensed in Greater Manchester to be assured that a high level and standard of check has been carried out. In addition, this will ensure, as far as possible, that the driver can be trusted, the vehicle is safe, and is not contributing to poor air quality. They will also be assured, as far as possible, that any operator licensed in Greater Manchester who they book a journey with will hold their information safely and that it will not be misused. This supports the key licensing principles of public protection.

It is proposed that where the current standards in a local authority are higher than the minimum standards, the current standards will remain in place.

We want to let the taxi and private hire trade in Greater Manchester know about the proposals before a formal consultation, which will take place later in 2019.

Greater Manchester's Clean Air Plan

Dirty air from road transport can seriously damage our health and plays a part in thousands of deaths every year. Along with other major cities across the country, Greater Manchester needs to reduce air pollution to legal levels as quickly as possible.

The 10 local councils in Greater Manchester, in conjunction with Transport for Greater Manchester, are developing a Clean Air Plan to tackle this major risk to our health.

The current proposals aim to introduce a Greater Manchester Clean Air Zone in which the most polluting buses, coaches, HGVs, vans, taxis and private hire vehicles would pay a daily penalty to drive in. This is alongside major government funding to clean up the region's most polluting vehicles.

We estimate that almost 1,400 taxis (around 69%) licensed in Greater Manchester and just over 4,000 private hire vehicles (about 36%) licensed in Greater Manchester would need to pay a daily penalty if a Clean Air Zone was introduced in 2021.

Find out more about the clean air proposals and take part in the conversation (which is open until 30 June) by visiting cleanairgm.com



The Proposed Greater Manchester Minimum Licensing Standards

Licensed Vehicles – emissions standards

The proposed Greater Manchester Minimum Licensing Standards must support the Clean Air Plan proposals to improve air quality across Greater Manchester in the shortest possible time. Therefore it is proposed that all Greater Manchester licensed vehicles meet the standards in government's Clean Air Framework: Euro 4 petrol engines (typically registered from 2005 onwards), Euro 6 diesel engines (likely to have been registered from 2016 onwards), or an ultra-low emission engine.

You can check the Euro Standard of your vehicle by visiting eurostandards.co.uk

Licensed Vehicles – age requirements

It is proposed that when a vehicle is first licensed, it would be under 5 years old (from the date of manufacture) and would only be licensed until it was 10 years old.

Licensed Vehicles – livery

It is proposed that a standard livery would apply across all vehicles, with the relevant authority issuing door and bonnet stickers to be placed on all vehicles. Private hire vehicles would be white in colour and taxis would be black and wheelchair accessible.

Examples can be seen below:



Licensed Vehicles – other proposals

- CCTV installed in all vehicles and this may include audio as well as visual recording
- Local authority specific licence plates to be displayed on the front and rear of vehicles
- No retrofitting of engines into older vehicles (although retrofit emissions technology may be installed if CVRAS approved)
- All vehicles over the age of three will be tested at least twice a year
- No vehicles that have been written off in any category to be licensed
- No roof signs permitted on private hire vehicles

Licensed Drivers

We are proposing minimum standards for drivers to create consistency:

- Undergo enhanced criminal records checks and register for the update service
- Undertake a Group 2 medical examination
- Have a local knowledge test
- Have an English language assessment
- Undertake driver training and proficiency
- Comply with a dress code

Private Hire Operators

It is proposed that:

- The minimum standards will require operators and their staff to undergo a basic criminal record check to ensure that only safe and suitable people have access to Operator records
- Operators will not be able to use the word 'taxi' in materials relating to their business
- Operators will have to abide by a more stringent set of requirements in relation to their booking records
- Operators will have to take more responsibility for the behaviour of their drivers and where they plot around Greater Manchester awaiting jobs

Common Licence Conditions

It is proposed that a common set of licence conditions will apply for whichever of the ten Greater Manchester authorities you are licensed by.

Criteria for Safe and Suitable Licence Holders

A Greater Manchester policy on the suitability of licence holders and applicants will be included in the proposed minimum standards and will be consulted upon.

Local Authority Standards

It is also important that there are a common set of standards from a regulatory perspective, which will be outlined as part of the forthcoming consultation.

What next?

- Take part in the Clean Air conversation by visiting cleanairgm.com by 30 June 2019
- Consider the implications of the proposed minimum standards for you and your business and discuss with your local representatives
- A formal consultation will take place on the minimum licensing proposals later in 2019. At that time a consultation pack will be available which will include full details of the proposals and key documents