

Private Hire Operators meeting

Thursday 28th January 2021 - Virtual Platform

Present:

Kellie Hopkins (KH)	Assistant Director, Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services
Elizabeth Pritchard (EP)	Principal Licencing Officer
Patricia Clyne (PC)	Principal Licensing Officer
Lisa Timmins (LT)	Licensing Officer
Insp Abed Hussain (AH)	Police inspector

Asif Vali (AV)	Operator Representative
Mohamed Hanslod (MH)	1 st Call
Kamran Hussain (KHU)	Hastings
Sammy Patel (SP)	Orbit
Nick Astley (NA)	Metro
Connor Loftus (CL)	Triple Zero
Ann Williams (AW)	Pal and Bradshawgate
Aslam Atcha (AA)	United
Kieran Hart (KHA)	Uber

1.	Introductions and housekeeping
	Introductions completed
2.	Relaxation of 6-week grace period for driver renewals
	PC advised the relaxation of the 6-week grace period for driver renewals which was relaxed last year at the start of the Covid 19 pandemic, has been extended until the end of March 2021. This means drivers whose expiry date is more than 6 weeks ago are still able to renew their Private Hire/Hackney Carriage Licence without having to complete new DBS/Medical etc. Requested operators continue to carry out checks to ensure vehicle and driver licences are valid and do not use drivers or vehicles where the licence has expired.
3.	Public Health - asymptomatic testing for 'critical workers' not working from home
	<p>PC shared information regarding the Covid 19 asymptomatic (symptom-free) targeted testing for people unable to work from home. This will help to identify people who are not displaying any coronavirus symptoms but who may still have the virus and could therefore pass it, unknowingly, to others. PC requested when we send out the communication regarding this that operators share with drivers.</p> <p>KH outlined the importance of encouraging drivers to take part and take advantage of the opportunity to get tested.</p> <p>AH asked about vaccines for drivers. KH discussed how the government are currently issuing the vaccines in order of age and/or health issues rather than professions unless at risk on the front line such as NHS workers etc.</p> <p>Action - LT will send out letter and FAQ's via email with full details on how to access the service.</p>

4.	Health and Safety Executive (HSE) / Local Authority Covid Spot Checks
	<p>EP advised the HSE have been completing Covid 19 spot checks on various businesses. From January 2021 they have been focusing on the Taxi and Private Hire trade. They will be making enquiries regarding the implementation of Covid secure guidelines that are being put in place to protect operators, staff and customers.</p> <p>This will be done via a phone call and they will offer support and guidance. Operators are requested to engage with them and if they have any questions to let the Licensing Team know.</p>
5.	HMRC – introduction of tax registration checks
	<p>PC advised she attended a working group with the HMRC and other Local authorities regarding a new check service that was going to be introduced in April 2022.</p> <p>Part of the renewal process for Taxi/private hire licenses will involve a check being completed with HMRC to ensure the applicant is registered for tax. It is still in the early stages of development but looking to work similar to the current driving licence check where the applicant provides a code and the check is completed online.</p> <p>AV asked if the check could not be done using the applicants NINO.</p> <p>PC advised the tax check will be for the business registration side and will not be able to decide how it is completed as it is a government initiative.</p> <p>PC confirmed once she has more information she will share.</p>
6.	Department of Transport and development of the complaint's procedure
	<p>EP asked for operators to volunteer to create a working group to develop the new complaints procedure using the Department of Transport guidance.</p> <p>KH discussed how useful it would be for operators to feed into the process to make it as streamlined and practical as possible.</p> <p>NA from Metro, CL from Triple Zero and KHA from UBER all agreed to be part of the working group.</p> <p>Action – LT to arrange meeting and send out extract regarding complaints from the Department of Transport guidance.</p>
7.	Licensing team update
	<p>EP advised Paul Fraser, new enforcement officer had joined the team.</p> <p>PC requested a message be sent out to all drivers and vehicle owners of the importance of submitting applications in good time.</p> <p>As applications are now dealt with online the more time the officers have to check the information and deal with any issues arising such as missing documents etc the better. Responses will be sent to the email address provided on the application form so to check inbox on a regular basis and phone calls are from withheld numbers so try to answer calls when possible.</p> <p>PC asked for operators to notify us if not receiving communications via email. All licenses, minutes and other information are sent to email addresses on file and if</p>

	<p>this is not correct to notify us immediately. Minutes and trade updates are also available on the Bolton Council website.</p>
8.	<p>Testing stations and operator spot checks</p> <p>EP advised the current tender is due to expire in February 2021 but due to the current climate has been extended to August. Before the new tender goes out, we are looking for feedback on the current process. Anything that needs fixing or that is working well? Need to consider once the new has been adopted it is in for a minimum of 2 years with the possibility of being extended to 4 years.</p> <p>Spot checks are also going to be looked at in line with HSE.</p>
9.	<p>Distribution and display of face covering sticker and booking arrangements</p> <p>EP reminded operators of the face covering stickers that were distributed to all operators to be given out to drivers. Question was asked if directions are being given to passengers at time of booking regarding the requirement to wear a mask to avoid confrontation for the drivers.</p> <p>AW confirmed they advise at time of booking.</p> <p>KH reiterated the information from public health regarding how the new strain of the virus is more contagious and the importance of drivers protecting themselves, their customers and the risk of spreading.</p>
10.	<p>A.O.B</p> <p>AV discussed how previously GMP licensing officer was involved with operator group. Invited AH to join. AH agreed and requested LT to share contact info.</p> <p>PC confirmed next meeting is 1.00pm 29th April 2021 and requested any agenda items are sent to LT/licensing unit by 19th April 2021.</p> <p>Action – LT to share AH contact info</p> <p>Action – Operators to send any agenda items for next meeting by 19th April.</p>