

Department of Place

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Hello from the Licensing Service!

Firstly we apologise in advance if any of you receive this letter more than once. We are currently reviewing our licensing records and want to ensure that a letter is received by every member of the licensed trade.

We have written out to Licensed Operators, Hackney Carriage Proprietors and placed a number of news articles on the 'latest news' section of our website in the past 2 months surrounding new ways of working, our new queue management system and also referring to ways in which we would like the trade to effectively contact us. Unfortunately, following feedback from drivers, it is evident that not all drivers have been informed accordingly. Therefore we have now taken the decision to send a detailed letter to all the licensed trade personnel in order to update you on the advancements and changes made in recent weeks.

Below we have listed key areas for your information and action and which will reduce your waiting times and assist in effective communication.

1. Keeping you on the road

The Licensing Service has never been able to answer all incoming telephone calls for which the majority are to book appointments, pay fees or ask for information which is contained on the website. To try and answer all incoming calls would require a huge increase in the number of staff employed and therefore an increase in cost and an increase in your fees. The Service therefore introduced email communication and this works well other than when drivers leave everything to the last minute, or expect immediate replies – and both these points are answered below. One of the knock-on effects of trying to answer more telephone calls is that counter service waiting times increase and recently this has increased to approximately 2hrs. This is a waste of your valuable time and does not help us to provide critical services in a managed and timely manner.

To address this, the Service has for some time offered dedicated counter appointments but the take up has been slow – with drivers queuing rather than booking appointments. To book an appointment all you need to do is email the Service taxi.testing@bradford.gov.uk at least 3 weeks before you need an appointment and one will be provided. Please note that appointments will not/rarely be offered within 5 days of being requested therefore the longer time you allow the better it will be for you.



As the service issues paper licences, badges and plates to the trade, all individuals should know when their badge, plate and licence expires. It is very useful to make a note in your diary to contact the Service to request an appointment at least one month to 6 weeks in advance so that you have plenty of time to go through and renewing application process. If you do this it will be very rare that problems are experienced regarding expiry of your licence.

As we circulated to the trade in September, we are offering two new additional time-saving services:

- a. 'Click and Collect'
- b. 'Drop and Collect'

These services mean you do not have to wait. Simply scan and email, or drop your details in our dedicated 'in-house post box' and we will do the rest. Officers will ring you back and arrange appointments for you.

For information on how do you use 'click & collect' service and 'drop and collect' service please see the leaflet included with this letter. The leaflet talks you through a step by step process to ensure that you are able to complete the processes.

Enforcement Officers have already visited and promoted this by visiting lots of Operator businesses but so far the trade have not really started using this service. We would encourage you all to seek assistance from your Operators in the first instance and would certainly welcome any Operators or Proprietors approaching the officers of the service should they feel like they need some extra support to begin using these new styles services.

Remember - You can renew your badge or plate a month before the expiry date - without any loss of licensing time

2. Keeping in Touch – Emails are Required

It is very important to refer you back to the start of the letter on Page 1 where we refer to the lack of answering phone calls. The service has for many months promoted through meetings and the service web pages the move towards electronic technology and communication. It is therefore essential that you set yourselves up an email account.

Drivers – please be aware you are required to have an email address in order to sign up to the DBS update service – this is a mandatory requirement. Once you have an email address we will also be able to email you up to date information through the year and this will help you keep in touch with service changes.

Operators & HC Proprietors – please remember it is a condition of your licence that you must have a valid email address. It is also very important to remember that we email you invites to Operator Business meetings if you are a PH Operator and also ask all of you to pass on email information to your drivers. Please ensure you check your emails regularly in order to see all key information and invites. Please also ensure you visit the latest news page of the website every month.

To book an appointment and for us to keep you up to date with important information we need you to set up and inform us of a current monitored email address. To inform us of your email address or to change your emails please contact us at taxi.testing@bradford.gov.uk.

3. Contacting the HCPH Service

As mentioned in point 2, emails are absolutely crucial. Please read below for the things that we must see in an email from you in order to help you easily and efficiently. If you forget to include the stated information when you email us then it is likely to lead to a delay in your application.

- Email Content (What information must my email contain)
 - ✓ Name
 - ✓ Address
 - ✓ Date of Birth
 - ✓ Badge/Plate/Operator Licence number
 - ✓ The type of transaction you are wishing to do - for example, renew by badge, renew my vehicle licence, complete a DBS check,
 - ✓ A contact telephone number

- How long will I have to wait for an email reply and resulting appointment?
 - We aim to answer all received emails within 5 to 10 working days.
 - We will not normally reply to an email within 48 hours.
 - Please do not send multiple emails or attend the counter without an appointment. You will not be seen and you will be stopping others being served in a timely manner.
 - We aim to turn all our work around within a 3 week period.
 - Please ensure that you get documents to us at least 3 weeks before your expiry date.
 - If you approach us less than a week before expiry without an appointment it is unfortunately highly likely you may end up being out of licence and unable to work until we have dealt with you in line with the above time scales.

- What will my appointment be for?

The following services will be by appointment only and by making these appointments it should mean you have very low waiting time:

- Badge renewals
- Extension of Badge / Plate / Licence
- Replacement for lost Badge / plate / Licence
- DBS Form Completion / DBS Update Service
- Change of Operator for badges
- Collection of plates – these will be made at the time of booking / paying for vehicle tests (Appointments are recommended to be made at least 2 days after the test to allow time for any vehicle failures to be found)
- Declaration of DVLA points
- Declaration of Arrests / Cautions / Convictions

We advise that you aim to arrive around 10 to 15 minutes before your appointment in order to ensure you find a parking space and arrive in time. We will unfortunately be unable to see appointments that arrive late due to the impact this will have on other customer's appointments.

It is extremely important to realise that if you arrive at Shearbridge without an appointment for one of the listed appointment reasons above officers will not be able to see you to carry out the transaction. Officers will only be able to see you for the purpose of making you a future appointment.

It is therefore very important that you are organised and approach us well before your expiry of licence to organise an appointment. Failure to do this may well mean you find your licences expire and you are unable to work until an appointment can be made for you.

If you wish to do more than one transaction / application when you visit the office you must book in an appointment for each one. For example, if you want to visit us for a badge renewal and also to collect vehicle plates we will make you 2 appointments. Officers will work with the trade to ensure that those

appointments are booked at very similar times to allow you to minimise your visits to Shearbridge but still allow you to carry out critical work in a timely, efficient manner. We will aim to book back to back appointments for you.

4. Where can I find out more information?

Please log into our easy to use webpage at www.bradford.gov.uk/taxiandprivatehire

Our webpage contains all the forms you need and is a great source of information including frequently asked questions and the latest news and updates.

5. Ticket Machine – Queue Management System

Our new ticket machine was installed in September and has been in use since. On arrival, customers who have arranged pre booked appointments are asked to enter their:

- Surname
- Date of birth

When you enter your date of birth you simply press the day you want on the screen. For example you will be presented with a screen that shows you 31 days if your birthday is in July. If your birthday is on the 27th July you simply press the number 27 on the touch screen. DO NOT press 2 and then 7 or it will not work.

We have been running a new triage service for the past few weeks and this has worked really well. If you are unable to effectively use the ticket machine please ask for assistance from the member of staff who is dealing with arriving customers. They will be happy to help you.

Summary of Key Points:

1. Please use the new 'Click & Collect' / 'Drop & Collect' services to save queuing.
2. Please book appointments – please see reverse of this page.
3. Contact the Service to arrange appointments a minimum of 3 weeks ahead of your licence expiry.
4. Include the information required (see serial 3) when you email the Service.
5. The Service aims to answer all emails within 5 to 10 working days.
6. The Service will not normally reply to an email request within 48 hours.
7. The Service website address is www.bradford.gov.uk/taxiandprivatehire
8. Visit our '**latest news**' web page every month for all updates and urgent information.

Yours sincerely,



Carol Stos
Licencing Manager