

## **Business Operator Meeting**

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2025

### **Officers Present:**

Carol Stos (CS)	Licensing Service Manager
Steven Knighton (SK)	Regulatory and Compliance Manager
Elisabeth Spencer	Customer Service Manager
Emma Stott	Business support Team Leader

### **1. Introduction**

Carol Stos commenced the meeting by expressing her appreciation to all attendees. She noted that forthcoming developments include a government-led review of the taxi industry at a national level. There is increasing interest in establishing uniform national standards, and a formal consultation will be launched shortly, providing an opportunity for stakeholders within the trade to contribute their views. We strongly encourage participation in this process. Our commitment remains to collaborate closely with the trade to ensure Bradford continues to be an excellent and rewarding place to work.

### **2. Outstanding Actions**

There were no outstanding actions from the last meeting.

### **3. Service Agenda Points**

#### Modular Training

We are reintroducing modular training for drivers, beginning with those whose certification has been expired the longest. This training is now delivered online, providing flexibility to complete it at any time and from any location. The program is valid for three years and includes a library of learning resource, to support ongoing development. The cost of the training is £56. Communications regarding this initiative have recently been shared with the trade, and we kindly ask that you encourage your drivers to complete the training as soon as possible upon receiving their invitation. This will help ensure that professional standards remain current and consistent across the service.

Once drivers have completed their training, Drivers can revisit the modules anytime for a quick refresher, ensuring confidence and clarity on the road. This engaging and informative online training is designed to keep drivers fully up to speed with everything they need to know to be a Private Hire or Hackney Carriage Driver.

By staying informed and prepared, drivers not only meet compliance requirements but also deliver the highest standards of service—making every journey safe, professional, and reliable.

**Q. Why do drivers have to do a knowledge test at renewal?**

A. We have introduced the District Awareness Test to ensure Private Hire drivers remain familiar with local areas. For new Hackney Carriage drivers, completion of the Knowledge Test remains a mandatory requirement, and this policy has not changed. Drivers should not be required to retake the Knowledge Test upon renewal; therefore, we will review this matter to ensure compliance with current standards.

**Follow On Info**

We have looked into the issue of driver being charged £1 to complete some of the training, and this has now been amended. Additional training such as the knowledge test and district awareness should not be charged an additional fee. The initial payment of £56 covers all training.

We have also checked that access to the Knowledge test, and this is not mandatory for renewing drivers, only new drivers. If a driver completing their training wishes to complete the training they can do, at no extra charge. We have amended some wording on the training to make this clearer for drivers.

**Q. Most drivers don't have laptops or computers, and it is difficult to complete this training on a phone?**

A. The training is mobile-friendly; however, we recommend that drivers complete it on a laptop or tablet to take full advantage of the course features. Devices are available at local libraries if required. Should anyone experience difficulties in completing the training, we encourage them to contact us via email for assistance.

**Q. Why can't we do the training in person?**

A. Due to the significant increase in the number of licensed drivers in Bradford, we are no longer able to facilitate in-person training sessions. To address this, we have introduced an online training platform that enables drivers to complete the course at their convenience. This approach allows participants to progress at their own pace and revisit the material whenever necessary, ensuring a flexible and comprehensive learning experience. We also gathered feedback from the trade, and they encouraged the training to be placed online.

**Q. Can't we have the training as videos on YouTube?**

A. We are exploring the introduction of additional video content within the learning library to further enhance the training experience and provide drivers with more engaging and accessible resources.

**Q. Why has the price increased when it used to be £30?**

A. Considering the rising cost of living, we have adjusted our pricing accordingly to ensure sustainability. Additionally, the ongoing expenses associated with software solutions and system maintenance represent a significant investment, which has been factored into this revision.

#### Document requests and upload improvements

Beginning in the new year, we will implement mandatory document uploads for drivers as part of the renewal process. These documents, which are typically provided at the time of renewal, must be uploaded before a renewal application can be submitted. This will allow for a more streamlined approach to renewal applications. Communications outlining this requirement will be issued shortly to ensure all drivers are prepared for the change.

#### DBS periodic checking

We have identified a growing number of drivers who are not maintaining their DBS Update Service subscription, which creates issues during the renewal process. To prevent this, we strongly encourage operators to remind their drivers to remain enrolled in the Update Service and to make their annual payment promptly. The payments are not processed via direct debit, they are a continual authorisation on bank cards, meaning card details have to be updated if the card is changed due to it expiring, or being lost/stolen.

To further strengthen compliance, we have increased mid-licence DBS checks, helping to ensure drivers do not fall out of licence. The new software enables us to check hundreds of drivers' DBS Update Service status simultaneously, improving efficiency and oversight.

Additionally, we have noted that many operators are applying for DBS checks on behalf of their drivers. Please be aware that DBS requirements vary by role, and for taxi licensing, the DBS certificate must always state the following: '**Other workforce** should be entered in line 1 and **taxi licensing** should be entered at line 2'. This is outlined in [Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards - GOV.UK](#).

### **Q. Why can't the child and adult workforce cover both for taxi licensing and school contracts?**

A. The DBS service is responsible for carrying out DBS checks and determining the circumstances under which they can be used. Certain DBS checks are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. For example, taxi and private hire drivers fall under this exemption, meaning all convictions must be declared to us. For other roles, we will seek legal advice to confirm whether their DBS checks can be included.

#### Changes to Vehicle Testing

We've received feedback that some vehicles have been receiving their plates after the test. Allowing for a short settling-in period, this process now seems to be running smoothly. Would you agree that this is a positive step forward?

**Answer from Operator.** Yes, I believe this has been a positive change for our drivers, as it allows them to continue working even after their licence has expired.

#### Engagement to be done in January 2026

Links to the statutory guidance will be provided. This guidance is set by the government, and we strongly recommend that everyone reviews it in advance to understand the requirements.

Responsibilities of Operators (from DfT) - [Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards - GOV.UK](#)

#### **Operator Agenda Points**

##### MOT Certificates

The point frequently raised by the drivers is that an MOT certificate issued by an approved MOT garage should be sufficient for taxi testing services to dispatch a new license plate. This measure would help reduce the backlog at the workshop, allowing taxi services to randomly call-in vehicles for check-ups with adequate notice. Is there an option for an approved garage?

**Answer:** Paul has looked at vehicles on behalf of drivers who claim to have had an MOT completed prior to a vehicle test at Shearbridge. Unfortunately, some of these vehicles have not met the required standards, highlighting that not all MOT stations operate to similar standards to each other.

We will be looking at different options for testing in the future. 80% of the trade turn up for test and pass, and some fail with low level issues. Approved garages will be looked at in the future.

##### Dual Badges

A dual badge would allow drivers the flexibility to operate both private hire taxis and Hackney public hire vehicles at any given time, which would eliminate the need for them to hold two separate badges and reduce associated costs.

**Answer-** We are not looking into launching dual badges at the present time.

##### Other Queries

**Operator:** A lot of changes have been made, and we are now about 10-12 weeks ahead with vehicle testing for renewals. If someone gets a new vehicle, why are they automatically put to the back of the queue? Can't we bring transfers back in?

**Response:** We do require an in person visual inspection of a new vehicle, however we will make a note of this and get back to you at the next operator meeting.

**Question:** What happens if a driver has not been sent a link to do his renewal and he's missed his renewal date, and he gets asked to submit a new application?

**Answer:** Once an application expires in the system, it cannot be renewed. In these cases, we will ask drivers with expired applications to submit a new one. However, depending on the circumstances, we will review the driver's documents and may process the new application as a fast-track.

**Question:** If a driver is having issues with the modular training, how do they resolve the issue?

**Answer:** We encourage anyone experiencing issues of any kind to contact us directly via email, quoting the issue faced and their details. We can investigate and resolve most issues internally, but if required we can escalate issues to our supplier.

**Operator:** What if a driver fails to renew their licence on time, due to extenuating circumstances? They are told to apply again as a new driver, but this means that they are then at the back of the queue which is several months long, and they will be unable to work?

**Answer:** There is a misunderstanding around the term "New Applicant". This is a term used internally in the Licensing Service. Once a licence expires, it cannot be renewed, and we need to be in receipt of a "new driver" application in-order to process it on our system.

If there is a genuine reason why an applicant has failed to renew their licence, such as not receiving a renewal invitation from us or other circumstances then we encourage them to submit a new driver application and contact the service at the earliest opportunity so their new application can be picked up by an Officer.

This process will involve checking all documentation and training accreditations are in-order before the licence is granted, but our team will support all individuals through this process.

#### **4. Close**

We would like to thank everyone for attending the Business Operator Meeting.

If any of you have any further comments or possible improvements, please email [taxi.testing@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:taxi.testing@bradford.gov.uk) with your full name and query so we can respond.

The next Operator Business Meeting is to be confirmed.

