

Summary of key changes to existing policy / practice (should the policy be introduced as proposed).

1. Requirements in relation to individuals:
 - a) Introduction of a local definition of “fit and proper person” in relation to taxi and private hire licensing, and clarification on the factors that will be considered as part of making an assessment of fitness and propriety (this will include non-conviction information and any other relevant information).
 - b) Significantly more rigorous guidelines relating to the relevance of convictions / caution etc. This will, for example, result in those convicted of a sexual offence having their licence revoked (or their application for a licence refused). These revised guidelines will be applied to all drivers and operators within three months of the policy becoming effective.
 - c) Requirement of all drivers and operators to subscribe to the Disclosure and Barring Service online update service. This will allow the council to undertake instant checking of a licence holder’s criminal record.
 - d) Requirement for drivers to hand in their licence if they are not intending to work as a licensed driver for a period in excess of four months (due to illness or being out of the country for example).
 - e) Enhanced knowledge test, and assessment of English Language and Maths ability.
 - f) Requirement for all drivers to hold a BTEC Level 2 qualification in ‘The Role of the Professional Taxi and Private Hire Driver’. All licensed drivers will be required to possess this qualification (or an equivalent) within 12 months of the policy being introduced.
 - g) Requirement for all drivers and operators to undertake child and adult safeguarding awareness training (to be provided by the Council). All drivers and operators will be required to undertake this training within three months of the policy being introduced.
 - h) Introduction of a mandatory dress code for licensed drivers.
 - i) Introduction of a mandatory code of practice for licensed drivers and operators when working with vulnerable passengers.
 - j) Requirement for licensed drivers to have held a full UK driving licence for at least two years before being considered suitable for licensing.
 - k) Additional checks to be carried out on non-EU nationals in order to determine fitness and propriety (in the event that existing UK / EU

processes do not provide sufficient information to make a determination on an applicant's fitness and propriety).

2. Requirements in relation to vehicles:

- a) A 10 year age limit on licensed vehicles (12 years for purpose built wheelchair accessible vehicles), vehicles that are not the subject of a renewal application must be no older than five years old on the date that the licence commences.
- b) Requirement for additional plates / notices on vehicles to facilitate the rapid identification of the vehicle and driver.
- c) Prohibition on the fitting of part worn tyres to licensed vehicles, and a requirement for a minimum tread depth of 2.0mm. In addition, space saving spare wheels must not be used (except in certain situations).
- d) Prohibition on the carriage of children in the front seat of licensed vehicles (subject to certain exemptions).
- e) Requirement for all licensed vehicles to be fitted with Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) that must meet the specification set by the council and must be in operation at all times that the vehicle is being used as a taxi / private hire vehicle. The system will record video at all times, along with audio in particular circumstances. All vehicles will be required to have CCTV installed within three months of the policy being introduced.
- f) Accidents to be reported to the council within one working day.
- g) Wheelchair access will be permitted through suitable rear doors on vehicles (in addition to side doors).

3. General requirements:

- a) The policy and standards will be applied to all new applications where the licence is determined after the date that the policy becomes effective. In addition, the policy will be immediately applied to all currently drivers, operators and vehicles (subject to the implementation scheme).
- b) A prohibition on taxi firms using vehicles or drivers that are licensed by other councils (i.e. all drivers and vehicles working for Rotherham taxi firms will meet the new standards).
- c) Taxi firms will be held to account for the actions of their drivers and the condition of their vehicles – this may lead to the removal of the firm's licence.
- d) Mystery shopping / customer testing of licensed vehicles.

- e) The introduction of a Quality Assurance Scheme for vehicles and operators (similar to the Scores on the Doors Scheme that is applied to food premises in the Borough).
- f) The introduction of a scheme that will see 'penalty points' issued to drivers and operators for minor breaches of licence conditions (where the safety of the public has not been compromised) – upon reaching a trigger level the driver / operator will be required to attend a Commissioner's Case Hearing Meeting (or Licensing Board).
- g) Clarification that the credibility of the witness / complainant and the licence holder will be taken into account when determining an appropriate course of action following a complaint against a licence holder. This may mean that action could still be taken even in cases where it is 'one person's word against another'.
- h) Private Hire Operators will be held accountable for the actions of drivers under their control (as far as is reasonable), and as such may receive penalty points due to the conduct of drivers.
- i) In the event that an operator licence is revoked, the trading name will not be able to be used by another operator until a period of six months has elapsed (since the date that the revocation became effective).