

TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING POLICY – REVIEW 2020

MAIN PROPOSED CHANGES

Proposal 1 – Amend the current convictions policy (Appendix D of current policy) to reflect new guidance issued by the Institute of Licensing.

Proposal 2 – Require operators and vehicle proprietors to provide a Basic DBS check. (This would only apply to applicants who are not drivers).

Comment

The Institute of Licensing in partnership with government agencies has produced a document called “Guidance on determining the suitability of applicants and licensees in the hackney and private hire trades”.

The aim is for all authorities to adopt this standard so a consistent approach to criminal convictions is undertaken across the country.

The document states that operators and vehicle proprietors should also be subject to the same criteria.

The Council’s current policy only applies to drivers. It is, therefore, proposed to extend the policy to include operators and vehicle proprietors. Due to DBS legislation it is only possible to undertake basic DBS check

In the majority of cases operators and/or vehicle proprietors are also drivers so are already subject to enhanced DBS checks.

Proposal 3 – Adopt use of the national refusal database

Comment

The Local Government Association has introduced a national register for licence revocations and refusals. If an authority revokes or refuses a licence the applicant details are entered onto the register so other authorities are aware. At present it is possible for an applicant who has their licence revoked by one authority to apply to another authority and the new authority to be unaware of the revocation by the previous authority. It is currently only a voluntary scheme but it is planned to become mandatory.

Proposal 4 – Require all drivers to sign up to the DBS update service

Comment

Current policy requires all drivers to undertake a new DBS criminal record check every 3 years.

New Government guidance states:

Licensing authorities should make use of the DBS update service. This subscription service allows licensees to keep their DBS certificates up to date online and, with the individual's consent, allows licensing authorities (as a nominee) to check the status of a certificate online at any time. Subscription to the service removes the need for repeat checks, reduces the administrative burden and mitigates potential delays in relicensing. Licensees should be required to evidence continuous registration and nomination throughout the period of the licence.

The current cost to join the update service is £13 per year. The cost for a DBS check every 3 years via TDC is £57. Therefore a saving of £18 can be made by signing up to the update service.

Proposal 5 – Implement new “green” requirements for vehicles to promote a reduction in hackney carriage/private hire vehicle emissions to support of the Council’s Carbon Reduction Plan

Comment

As part of the policy review a consultation will take place with a view of implementing measures to reduce vehicle emissions.

Proposal 6 – Amend the assessment criteria for new applications (existing policy - section 5 paragraph 5.7.4) in line with the amendments in proposal 5.

Comment

The Council currently limits the number of hackney carriage plates it issues. If a new plate becomes available, for example, if a plate is handed back by an existing proprietor this criteria is used for new applications. It is proposed to amend this in line with any new requirements decided in proposal 5.