

REVISED draft Taxi Licensing Policy (2025 – 2030)

Details of the **main** amendments contained within each Part or Appendix are shown below.

The policy has been edited for clarity and consistency, with duplications and errors

deleted/amended. As such, smaller, inconsequential amendments are not detailed below.

Part 3	Licensing principles, objectives and considerations
3.27	New section added summarising general duties within the <u>Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010</u> , as per Department for Transport (DfT) Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Best Practice Guidance (updated November 2023).
3.30	New section added on <u>Tax Registration Check</u> . HMRC introduced a tax check for renewal applications for drivers of taxis and private hire vehicles, and for operators of a private hire vehicle business in April 2022. This was to address part of the hidden economy by helping applicants for taxi and PHV driver and operator licences to understand their tax obligations and by making access to the licences they need to trade conditional on completing a tax check.
Part 4	General Administrative Issues
4.21	Content deleted as was duplication of 4.28
4.38	Updated section on <u>National Register of Taxi Licence refusals, revocations and suspensions</u> as per the Statutory Guidance on Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022 (updated April 2023). The changes have also been reflected in the National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN) Guidance and DfT Best Practice Guidance. This places duties on licensing authorities in England to share safeguarding and road safety concerns about taxi and private hire vehicle drivers with each other.
4.63	New section added on <u>Compliance and enforcement</u> in line with the DfT Best Practice Guidance and benchmarking with other Surrey Taxi Licensing Policies which currently include sections on compliance and enforcement powers.
Part 5	Driver Licensing requirements
5.15a	Added a <u>Work Area Declaration</u> requirement as DfT Best Practice Guidance recommends that licensing authorities should require an applicant for a taxi driver licence to declare that they intend to work predominately within the licensing authority's area.
5.38 – 5.40	Updated the <u>Certificate(s) of Good Conduct / DBS equivalents</u> to include living and working overseas, and a shorter time period abroad of 3 months (revised from 6 months), as per the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards (updated November 2022).
5.60a	Added a <u>declaration of change in medical fitness</u> for renewal applications as it is considered necessary for the accurate assessment of such applications.
5.109a 5.109b	<u>Language proficiency</u> has been added as the DfT Best Practice Guidance recommends that both oral and written English language skills should be tested. It is also acknowledged that reasonable adjustments will be provided for a Knowledge Test in cases of disability.
5.153	Added to highlight the importance of a holistic assessment of all information available when determining any action against drivers.

Part 6	Vehicle Licensing
6.39a	Added details on <u>carrying children safely</u> , as per the updated DfT Best Practice Guidance.
6.61 – 6.64 and App F (iii) and App G (iii)	<u>Fire Extinguisher</u> requirements deleted as the Highway Code advises that should a vehicle catch fire the occupants should get out of the vehicle quickly and to a safe place rather than attempting to firefight. The National Fire Chief Council (NFCC) recommends that licensing authorities that require fire extinguishers to be provided in vehicles, should ensure that suitable and sufficient training is undertaken by drivers. The NFCC's advice is that if a licensing authority elects not to require drivers to undertake training on the safe way to tackle a vehicle fire, vehicles should not be required to carry fire extinguishers and drivers should 'get out and stay out' of the vehicle.
6.86 – 6.87	<p>Updated <u>environmental policy approach</u> in reference to the Council's Climate Change Strategy (2022 – 2030), which recognises that we have an obligation to reduce carbon emissions not only from our own operations but should also support businesses to do the same. There is a significant opportunity available for the Council to act as a facilitator and enabler for change to reduce levels of air pollution and helping to improve public health as a result. The Runnymede Climate Change Action Plan (February 2024) provides a framework to take action to reduce emissions, such as to create a low-carbon and resilient transport sector. In the borough we have 2 designated Air Quality Management Areas, and as such, one of the priorities in the resulting Runnymede Air Quality Action Plan is "low emission transport".</p> <p>It is proposed to improve the Taxi fleet by setting minimum emission standards for vehicles licensed by the Council. This is also in line with the vast majority off all other Surrey Local Authorities.</p> <p>Whilst a change such as this has to be balanced with the resulting financial pressures that any new requirements might have on the trade, the new requirement will be for latest Euro engine emissions standards (i.e. Ultra Low Emission Vehicles) to be met or exceeded by 2030. This gives the trade a long lead in time to meet requirements and is in line with the Sustainable Fleet Management Strategy for the Council vehicle fleet to transition to zero emissions by 2030. It is noted that the majority of the licensed vehicles in the borough (approx. 84%) already meet or exceed the standard currently. It is important to set standards that are common to all within the licensed taxi trade, to ensure consistency and a level playing field for vehicle proprietors, operators and drivers.</p>
6.99b	<u>Installation and use of in-vehicle CCTV</u> updated in line with the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards (updated November 2022).
Part 7	Operator Licensing
7.13e	Added <u>Health and Safety management arrangements</u> for staff, including in relation to lone working as per the DfT Best Practice Guidance on protection of (lone) workers.
7.38	Recommendation on <u>disability awareness training for PH Operator staff</u> in customer facing and managing service delivery roles as per the DfT Best Practice Guidance.
7.46 - 7.48	Deleted specific details required in a <u>Hiring Record</u> as this is referenced and included in Appendix K (i – xv).
7.57 7.57a and App K (no. 10)	There are conflicting legal views about whether an <u>Operator's base</u> has to be a physical premises located within the boundary of the Authority. The increasing popularity of app-based Private Hire Operations who may wish to work outside the Borough, or via "virtual offices" was not considered as an operating model in the legislation and does not reflect modern society. This section has been updated to state that we will consider applications for PH Operators located outside the Borough, which is proportionate given the additional requirements also added in this section. This is also a generally accepted operating model by other Boroughs within Surrey.

Part 8	Scheme of Hackney Carriage Fares
8.4	Updated <u>Frequency of Fare review</u> in line with updated DfT Best Practice Guidance.
App B	The Borough of Runnymede The information regarding the Borough of Runnymede and maps have been updated as per the latest information available.
App D	Policy relating to the relevance of convictions, cautions and driving licence endorsements This has been substantially updated to reflect the Department for Transport recommendations on the assessment of previous convictions in the <u>Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards</u> . This draws on the work of the Institute of Licensing, in partnership with the LGA, the National Association of Licensing Enforcement Officers (NALEO) and Lawyers in Local Government, in publishing its guidance on determining the suitability of taxi and private hire vehicle licensees. This places passenger safety as the priority while enabling past offenders to sufficiently evidence that they have been successfully rehabilitated so that they might obtain a licence. In considering an individual's criminal record, licensing authorities must consider each case on its merits, but they should take a particularly cautious view of any offences against individuals with special needs, children and other vulnerable groups, particularly those involving violence, those of a sexual nature and those linked to organised crime. These National Standards achieve consistency with a clear policy for the consideration of criminal records and mitigate the risk of successful legal challenge.
App E	Knowledge test policy 2. <u>Language proficiency policy</u> has been updated as the per DfT Best Practice Guidance and to align with the Part 5 policy amendment at 5.109a above. 4. Disqualification in relation to <u>cheating</u> has been added.
App F (ii) and App G (ii)	Private hire drivers and vehicle licences - conditions and requirements Hackney Carriage drivers and vehicles – licensing conditions, requirements and bylaws (j) Added clarity that if an imported vehicle doesn't meet European and UK vehicle safety standards, it will require certification of modification and testing under the IVA (Individual Vehicle Approval) scheme.
App F and App G	Re-formatted so that Equality Act 2010 Guidance is moved to the end of each section, in order to keep conditions, requirements (and bylaws) separate from the Guidance.
App L	Table of Hackney carriage fares Updated as per the latest fare review, which came into force April 2024.