

# **Hackney carriage and private hire vehicles COVID-19 update 20 May 2021**

Please read through this carefully as it contains important information.

## **Licensing appointments**

Public access to West Suffolk Council buildings remains closed. All communication will need to be done via email.

## **Applications**

All applications must be emailed to [licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk) at least 14 days prior to expiry of the licence.

All supporting documentation can be scanned or photographed and emailed to Licensing.

## **Licence renewals for drivers and vehicles**

Vehicle plates and driver's badges are now being issued from West Suffolk House by appointment only. Plates and badges will be issued in the order they were submitted and processed, and you will be contacted when you are able to collect.

In the meantime, temporary taxi and private hire vehicle plates and badges will continue to be delivered electronically to those applicants on completion of the application process. Please ensure these are used as directed below until the physical plates can be collected.

Drivers and operators who have received a 'temporary electronic vehicle plate' along with their 'paper licence' must ensure that the 'plate' is placed in the rear window of the required vehicle, visible to a person standing at the rear of the vehicle. The driver must also carry within the vehicle the explanatory letter from West Suffolk Council authorising the use of the temporary plate. You will need to leave your expired plate on the vehicle and keep the new documentation with you at all times.

Please note that, due to the circumstances, it may take four weeks for some applications to be processed. Applications will be processed in order of date received and once validated as correct.

You must ensure that all application forms are fully completed and that all the relevant documentation is attached, otherwise we cannot process the applications. The council's approved garages can be found on our [Taxi licensing](#) webpage.

## **New vehicle applications**

Applications must be submitted following the same process as renewals via email.

## **Operator applications**

Applications must be submitted following the same process as renewals via email.

## **New drivers**

Applications must be submitted following the same process as renewals via email.

## **Other applications**

Please continue to notify us of accidents, change of address, convictions and so on, on appropriate forms by email, and we will process these as soon as we can.

## **Email addresses**

To enable us to keep you updated, please provide us with your email address if we do not already have this, as we are not currently able to deliver anything by post.

## **Precautionary measures**

The licensing authority is continuing to monitor the developing issue of COVID-19. It is important to exercise precautionary measures, as we should with all general coughs and colds. The current advice is to:

- always carry tissues and use them to catch coughs and sneezes
- dispose of used tissues in the bin as soon as possible
- wash hands with soap and water or, when not possible, use sanitiser gel to kill germs.

We would encourage you to take sensible and routine precautionary measures such as cleaning vehicle surfaces, especially door handles, seatbelt clasps, and any payment devices between passengers, with sanitising wipes or spray and, if you share a vehicle with other drivers, you should also consider cleaning the steering wheel and instruments before the start of your shift.

If you are worried about COVID-19, have a cough, temperature or shortness of breath and have been in physical contact with someone from an affected area, the NHS advises you to:

- stay indoors and avoid contact with other people as you would with the flu
- call NHS 111
- not just turn up to Accident and Emergency or your doctor's surgery.

## **Contact tracing**

Wherever possible, we would ask hackney carriage drivers to keep a record of the passengers they have taken from place to place in line with the 'maintaining records' guidance given by the NHS test and trace service, details of which can be found on [GOV.UK- Maintaining records of staff, customers and visitors to support NHS Test and Trace](#). This includes full contact details of the person making the booking for a journey, such as forename and surname, home address or specific

address of the destination, telephone number. We appreciate that not everyone wants to give this information, however, if most people do it could help a great deal.

One of the features of the NHS mobile app is the ability to scan a QR code poster which confirms the user has visited that venue. All drivers are advised to generate a poster to be displayed within your vehicle so the passenger can scan the QR code confirming they have used your services. The use of the QR code prevents the need for you to record the passenger's details as it will be linked with the details generated through the NHS mobile app and the QR code. To create a QR code poster for this purpose you can visit [GOV.UK – Create a coronavirus NHS QR code for your venue](#) and follow the instructions given. You should ensure that the display of the poster in your vehicle does not obscure the visibility of the windows.

It is also advised for your own benefit to download the NHS mobile app for the test and trace service. This will prevent potential downtime to your business as it will inform you if you have been in contact with a passenger that has tested positive that has also installed the NHS mobile app. The [NHS mobile app](#) will then alert you and give you advice.

## **Payment details**

We will not process anything without payment. Cash and BACS payments are no longer accepted. Payments can be made by debit or credit card or online via our website. Once a complete application has been received the Licensing team will provide instruction on how to make payment.

## **Licensing team contact details**

Email: [licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk)

Phone: 01284 758050