

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Newsletter April 2020



Welcome to the West Suffolk Council April 2020 Hackney carriage and private hire newsletter which provides some updates with regards to COVID-19.

Please continue to check our webpage for updates: <https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/taxi>

Medicals, MOTs and taxi tests

On 27 March, the Chief Executive of West Suffolk Council used emergency powers in order to bring immediate relief by relaxing certain aspects of taxi policy that are increasingly difficult to comply with. The decision will be reported to the next meeting of Cabinet and will be reviewed monthly.

With immediate effect the following has been put in place:

Drivers are required to submit medicals to demonstrate they are fit to drive, but they are unable to attend medical centres due to the pandemic. The decision has been taken to allow drivers to provide self-declarations of medical fitness based on DVLA guidance rather than through a Group 2 medical certificate from a doctor. This change will allow drivers to continue to be licenced and provide essential transport services whilst continuing to ensure they are fit to undertake their duties.

If you have been unable to obtain a medical certificate, you will need to submit a medical self-declaration form with your renewal application, please download our: [COVID-19 Renewal Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Drivers Medical Fitness Declaration](#)

As well as MOTs, taxis are required to have vehicle compliance checks at one of six council approved vehicle test centres. The Government has already allowed a six month grace period for MOT tests and with uncertainty about vehicle test centres remaining open, the decision has been taken to suspend the requirement for a valid MOT on grant or renewal of licence and for mid-term 6monthly vehicle compliance checks.

Approved garages

Due to the current COVID19 pandemic, various garages have ceased operating. Currently the confirmed list of approved garages still operating is limited to:

New Heath Autos Ltd
46 Exeter Road, Newmarket CB8 8LR
Phone 01638 665612

JDG Motor Services Ltd
Finchley Avenue, Mildenhall, IP28 7BG
Only open for emergencies please call 07841 356685

We would suggest calling the garages to ensure that they are still open.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

If an existing driver needs to have a DBS check carried out in connection with their renewal but is unable to obtain one, they will be required to submit a DBS self-declaration form with their application. Download: [COVID-19 Renewal Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Driver Licence Disclosure and Barring Service Declaration](#)

In view of the extenuating circumstances they will be issued with a licence until 31 July 2020, when a further review of the system will take place. We suggest that everybody signs up for the online update DBS service and we will access online DBS checks where available.

Applications

With immediate effect all applications must be submitted via email to licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk as we cannot guarantee that postal applications will be dealt with.

COVID 19 support for business

For information on support for businesses during the COVID19 pandemic, please visit our website: <https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/c19business>

COVID19 - precautionary measures advice

- 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 a cleaning vehicle surfaces especially door handles, seat-belt clasps, any payment devices between passengers with sanitising wipes or spray to get rid of any germs, 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 the Coronavirus (COVID-19), have a cough, temperature or shortness of breath and have been in physical contact with someone from an affected area then the NHS advises you to:

- Stay indoors and avoid contact with other people as you would with the flu.
- Call NHS 111; do not just turn up to A&E or your doctor's surgery.

Consultation on proposed changes to taxi licensing handbook

We are still collating the responses to the consultation and feedback will be provided in due course.

Licensing team contact details

Phone: 01284 758050

Email: licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk

Website: <https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/taxi>