

# **Hackney carriage and private hire newsletter July 2021**

Welcome to the West Suffolk Council July 2021 hackney carriage and private hire newsletter which provides updates including COVID-19, vehicle taxi inspections and collection of plates.

Please continue to check our webpage for regular updates:

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

## **COVID-19 guidance**

Please continue to consult the Government website for important updates on coronavirus, including recent information on travel.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-taxis-and-phvs>

You should not continue to work if you have coronavirus symptoms, or you have been told to self-isolate. If you have coronavirus symptoms you should get a test as soon as possible. You should stay at home until you get the result. If the result is positive you should not work until your isolation period is over.

It is a legal requirement to self-isolate if you test positive or are told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace. You could be fined if you do not self-isolate. Driving when COVID-19 positive is a serious breach of public health sanctions and any driver found to be driving a licenced vehicle within the period of 10 days of testing positive for COVID could have their licence revoked.

## **Contacting the Licensing Team**

We are currently experiencing a high volume of calls and applications for all the licensing regimes we address now that other businesses are opening. To allow urgent matters to be prioritised, for any general enquiries please consult our website in the first instance or email [licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk).

Please continue to submit all applications and supporting documentation via email to [licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk). You will receive an acknowledgment within three working days. Please only call or email if you do not receive an acknowledgement within this time frame.

## **EU Settlement Scheme**

The deadline for applications to be submitted for the EU Settlement scheme is the 30 June 2021. For your licence to be valid, you must be able to prove your right to work.

To apply to the EU Settlement Scheme visit: <https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eucitizens-families>

## **Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs)**

For clarity, the West Suffolk Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Conditions Policy Handbook which was revised on 2 October 2020 states that all new Hackney Carriages have to be WAVs.

Page 57 of the Handbook at Section 6.1 states that a hackney carriage must be

- a. be a purpose-built taxi which conforms to the 'Conditions of Fitness' for the 'Construction and Licensing of Motor Taxicabs in London' as prescribed by the 'Public Carriage Office', of any colour, or
- b. be a saloon (**existing vehicles only**), hatchback, estate or MPV/minibus type vehicle of any colour.

Section b is causing some confusion within the trade, as some vehicle proprietors are of the belief that if they have a non-WAV at present, they can transfer this right to another saloon vehicle. The grandfather rights to continue to renew a vehicle licence on a saloon is only valid for the lifetime of that vehicle. When that vehicle is replaced it must comply with Section 6.1 a.

Please also note, from 2025 vehicles must be no older than 10 years, except electric / zero emission vehicles for which there is no maximum age.

Exemptions from the Policy will be decided on a case by case basis.

## **Keeping the Licensing Team informed**

As part of your licence conditions, you must inform us, by emailing [licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk), of any changes that can affect your licence with us. Please ensure you are informing us if any of the following occur.

- **Medical changes** - all licence holders must advise the licensing authority within seven working days if any pre-existing medical conditions have deteriorated or his or her health has changed in any way that may affect the licence holder's fitness to drive. This would include informing us immediately of a positive COVID test.
- **Endorsements and convictions** - existing holders of drivers' licences, operator's licence, vehicle proprietors' licence are required to notify the licensing authority in writing within 48 hours of receiving a driving licence endorsement, fixed penalty notice or criminal conviction (including cautions). This includes any matters that are pending or under investigation from any enforcement authority.

- Accidents** - if at any time, a licensed vehicle is involved in any kind of accident, regardless of how minor or who was at fault, the driver must inform the council of the accident within 72 hours of the accident; this can be done by telephone or email. An accident report form will be provided to you and should be completed and submitted to the council by email along with photographs of the damage within 24 hours of reporting the accident. A vehicle is presumed to be unsafe and the licence suspended until such time as contact has been made with the licensing team (within accident report).

## Vehicle inspections

All vehicles must have inspection/compliance test carried out at an approved vehicle testing station from the list of approved testers supplied by the council at least twice a year. All approved garages are currently open. The list of approved garages can be found on our website

[https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Business/Regulation\\_and\\_Licensing/Licensing/Taxi\\_licensing/index.cfm](https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Business/Regulation_and_Licensing/Licensing/Taxi_licensing/index.cfm)

Please note, a mid-term vehicle inspection is a more stringent inspection than an MOT. You may have an MOT and vehicle inspection completed on the same day, if you wish to do so, however an MOT certificate **cannot** be supplied instead of a vehicle/compliance test certificate.

Upon completion of your taxi compliance test by one of our approved garages, please ensure you are provided with a copy of the full inspection sheet along with the test certificate. You are required to submit both documents by email to [licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk) as part of the vehicle application and/or mid-term taxi test.

Please see example table below of when to have compliance (plate) tests carried out:

Licence Expiry 01 January 2021	Initial taxi compliance test (plate test) 18 December 2020	Mid-Term test required by 18 June 2021
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## Application forms

Please ensure you are referring to the website for up-to-date documents <https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/taxi>. Do not use other search engines as old documents may appear.

The following application forms are now available to download on our website:

- Hackney carriage and private hire vehicle licence application  
[https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Business/Regulation\\_and\\_Licensing/Licensing/Taxi\\_licensing/upload/Hackney-carriage-and-private-hire-vehicle-licenceapplication-2.pdf](https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Business/Regulation_and_Licensing/Licensing/Taxi_licensing/upload/Hackney-carriage-and-private-hire-vehicle-licenceapplication-2.pdf)

- Hackney carriage and private hire driver licence application  
[https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Business/Regulation\\_and\\_Licensing/Licensing/Taxi\\_licensing/upload/Hackney-carriage-and-private-hire-driver-licenceapplication.pdf](https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Business/Regulation_and_Licensing/Licensing/Taxi_licensing/upload/Hackney-carriage-and-private-hire-driver-licenceapplication.pdf)
- DBS Update Service permission form  
[https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Business/Regulation\\_and\\_Licensing/Licensing/Taxi\\_licensing/upload/DBS-Update-Service-permission-form.pdf](https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Business/Regulation_and_Licensing/Licensing/Taxi_licensing/upload/DBS-Update-Service-permission-form.pdf)

Old forms will no longer be accepted. Please continue to email [licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk) for any other forms.

## **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Update Service reminder**

A subscription to the DBS update service must be made when making a new application. This means that all drivers must be subscribed by July 2023.

A new DBS permission form is now available on our website <https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/taxi>. This form must be completed and submitted to the licensing team with your driver application form. This gives your consent for the council to carry out periodic checks as per the policy.

All convictions must be declared on your application forms.

## **Submitting applications electronically**

Please continue to submit all applications and supporting documentation via email to [licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk). You will receive an initial automated response from our inbox and then a further response from a member of the licensing team within three working days, acknowledging if your application is complete and will be processed or, if it has been rejected and what additional information is required.

Applications can currently take up to four weeks to process. Please submit any applications well in advance and at least 14 days prior to the licence expiry date. Applications will be processed in order of when the complete application has been received and not based on expiry date.

Applications or payments submitted by post will not be accepted and the council will not accept liability for the loss of any documentation for applications submitted via post.

## **Medicals**

A Group 2 medical will be required for all new applicants. A Group 2 medical will be valid up to the applicant's 45th birthday. Thereafter, a further Group 2 medical will be

required every five years at ages 50, 55 and 60 until the age of 65. The medical will then be required every year thereafter.

In order to ensure all drivers are compliant and align with the adopted policy, we will be contacting any drivers whose medicals are not currently aligned to the ages above. In some instances, this may result in medicals being required more frequently than every five years. For example, a person who is 43 upon first driver application will be required to submit a second medical at the age of 45.

The council will not accept Medics on Wheels Group 2 Medicals at any time. No medical fitness assessment form will be accepted where the person completing the form does not have access to the applicant's patient records.

We will only accept medicals on the latest medical form (version December 2020). Forms must be fully completed, and all pages fully completed. Any incomplete or incorrect forms will be rejected. Please continue to email [licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk)

## **Payment process**

Once a complete application has been submitted the licensing team will provide details of how to make payment. For relicence applications a link will be provided to make payment online. Please do not make payments prior to receiving an acknowledgement from the team.

## **Collection of plates**

You will be contacted by a member of our team when your taxi plates are available for collection. Collection will be appointment based and from West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds.

## **St Andrews Street, Bury St Edmunds**

A polite reminder that idling engines are not permitted.

## **Drivers forum**

In order for the forum to take place we need to ensure a balanced representation of the trade, and terms of reference needs to be agreed. To view the full terms of reference visit

[https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Business/Regulation\\_and\\_Licensing/Licensing/Taxi\\_licensing/upload/West-Suffolk-Drivers-Forum-Draft-Terms-of-Reference-May-2021.pdf](https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Business/Regulation_and_Licensing/Licensing/Taxi_licensing/upload/West-Suffolk-Drivers-Forum-Draft-Terms-of-Reference-May-2021.pdf)

Please see below that which has been proposed with regard to numbers:

- Hackney Carriage Trade representatives (max ten and attendees must be nominated by their recognised organisation(s) and be from both Zone A and Zone B.
- Private Hire Trade representatives (max ten and no more than two per organisation which can be either operators or drivers' representatives).
- Up to five drivers nominated by particular communities.

If you would like to put your name forward to join the forum please email [licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk)

## **Approved garage change of address**

Please note that Thurlow garage are now based at:

Church Farm Workshop  
Bury Road  
Great Thurlow  
Suffolk  
CB9 7LG

Telephone number 01440 783248

## **Independent licensed vehicle research**

A reminder that you would have received a consultation in relation to zones within West Suffolk sent to you via email (posted if we do not hold an email address on your record).

We need to hear from as many of you as possible in order to take into account your views and experiences of the taxi service. Being on the ground you have access to a lot of information it would otherwise be very difficult to obtain. The aim is to receive your responses, update the briefing paper and then hold a working meeting where final discussion could occur to inform the ultimate decision about amalgamating the zones or otherwise.

## **Electric vehicles**

The Government plans to end the sale of petrol and diesel cars in the UK by 2030 with new hybrid vehicles allowed until 2035. By working with the Government and other partners we hope to make that choice easier for residents and businesses now.

We have now installed chargers in The Corn Exchange car park in Haverhill. It brings the total number of EV chargers we have installed in West Suffolk to 46 across 15 locations. We are also in the process of installing EV charges in the George St car park in Brandon to go live later this year and are continuing to look at other locations.

Alongside this West Suffolk Council also offers a Greener Business Grant which means it will match fund a business up to £1,000 towards the cost of an electric vehicle or company charge point.

EVs are cheaper to run than petrol or diesel vehicles – generally 3p per mile instead of 10p a mile. Improvements in technology mean that EVs can make many long journeys on a single charge and they are becoming a more realistic option not just for residents but for businesses including trades people and small-scale suppliers. By switching to EVs people are helping reduce air pollution which cost this country at least £16 billion in health costs each year according to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

Both the Haverhill and Brandon EV charges are being paid for through investment secured from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) and BP Chargemaster – and investment of approximately £60,000.

As with our other car parks, the charging stations will be available on the recently rebranded BP Pulse network. Users will need to register for a BP Pulse account to use the charging bays.

This is all part of our wider work around reducing air pollution, work which includes reducing vehicle idling and encouraging greater use of clean energy particularly solar energy. See <https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/protecting-our-environment/index.cfm>

If you want to find out more including about EVs please visit <https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/protecting-our-environment/electricvehicles.cfm>

For more on the Greener Business Grant and other support to businesses visit <https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/protecting-ourenvironment/energy/businessenergy.cfm>

## **Licensing team contact details**

Phone: 01284 758050

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

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