

Guidance Notes for New and Renewal of Combined Hackney Carriage (HC) / Private Hire (PH) Driver Licensing

It is the Council's responsibility to licence all taxi drivers, vehicles and operators to ensure the public receive a safe and reliable service.

Please read these notes and the relevant parts of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Handbook before beginning your application.

The Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Handbook can be viewed online at http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/business/regulation_and_licensing/licensing/taxi_licensing/

New Drivers

There are a number of requirements which must be satisfied before an application can be considered:

- You must have held a full UK/EU drivers licence for a minimum of 12 months which shows your current address.
- You must be able to demonstrate that you have the right to live and work in the United Kingdom.
- You must satisfy us that you are a 'fit and proper person' to hold a driver's licence. This is a wide ranging requirement covering previous convictions, cautions, motoring offences, health and any other such matters as the Council considers appropriate. If you have any concerns regarding convictions, please contact our Licensing Department.

Stage One – Driver Theory Assessment/Document check

The first step in obtaining a driver's licence is to pass a theory assessment and document check. You must bring with you your driving licence, passport, residence permit or any other document that proves your entitlement to work in the UK. There is a fee of £20.00 per assessment and is booked through West Suffolk college.

- The Assessment consists of a written test of ten questions. The pass mark is 80%. The questions will cover subjects such as the Highway Code, taxi legislation, maths, local geography and routes.
- Your driving licence will be checked.
- Your right to work in the UK will be checked. We will follow the general advice given by the UK border Agency, available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/613415/A_Licensing_Authority_guide_to_right_to_work_checks_-_England_and_Wales.pdf

You will be notified of the result by email and a pass certificate issued which must be produced when you make your full application (please see check list on the application form). Anyone who fails can retake the test up to 2 more times (total 3 attempts).

To book your place for stage one, please contact 01284 716246. You can pay over the telephone whilst booking your place. You can also book your driver assessment and complete them both at the same time.

Stage Two Practical Driver Assessment

All new drivers must pass a practical driving assessment equivalent to a Driving Standard Agency test for taxi and private hire drivers.

West Suffolk College are offering the test and you can book a place by selecting this link <http://www.westsuffolkcollege.ac.uk/employers/taxi-driving-practical-assessment.aspx> and can be completed at the time of your theory test.

Other providers are available and acceptable, but the test must have been taken within 12 months of your driving application:

- **Priority Driver Training** <http://www.prioritydrivertraining.co.uk/taxi-assessments/>
- **ROSPA** <http://www.rospa.com/safety-training/>
- **Institute of advanced motorists** <https://www.iamroadsmart.com/iam-business/overview>
- **Total Driving** <http://www.totaldriving.net/advanced-car/taxi-phv-driver-training/>

Drivers of Wheelchair accessible vehicles **must also** have a DVSA approved practical disability awareness course (DSA previously). The certificate of attendance must be presented to the Council on application or renewal of their licence. To book your course <http://www.dmptraining.co.uk/contact-us/> or call 01359 408090.

Stage Three – completing your Level 2 Certificate

Level 2 Certificate

Introduction to the Role of the Professional Taxi and Private Hire Driver

All new drivers are required to pass this qualification before they apply for a 3 year licence

This course is available at West Suffolk College and will be delivered over 2 full days by the College, payment option via three monthly instalments is available. You will need to pass the assessment before the Certificate is awarded.

Follow this link for information on the course content and how to book:
<http://www.westsuffolkcollege.ac.uk/courses/course-search.aspx?ke=driver>

Course Content

Course content may be subject to change depending on legislation or other factors but currently includes the following units:

- Health and Safety in the taxi and private hire work environment
- Road safety when driving passengers in a taxi or private hire vehicle
- Professional customer service in the taxi and private hire industry
- Taxi and private hire vehicle maintenance and safety inspections
- The regulatory framework of the taxi and private hire industry
- Taxi and private hire services for passengers who require assistance
- Routes and fares in the taxi and private hire vehicle industries
- Transporting of parcels, luggage and other items in the taxi and private hire industries
- Transporting of children and young persons by taxi or private hire vehicles (safeguarding)

Stage 4 Completing your Application Form

Incomplete applications will not be accepted. Before we will consider your application, you must submit to the Council:

- a fully completed application form together with the following supporting documents:
- Payment of the fee
- West Suffolk Driver Theory Assessment Certificate
- 1 passport size colour photograph (no head gear of any form unless for religious reasons)
- Full DVLA driving licence
- Completed DVLA Check Code
- Evidence of an appropriate practical Driver assessment
- Current Passport or birth certificate or other proof of entitlement to work in the UK
- Group II medical pass certificate
- Enhanced DBS certificate less than one month old
- Level 2 certificate in Introduction to the Role of the Taxi and Private Hire Driver
- or an equivalent Level 2 qualification such as City & Guilds or BTEC, or confirmation of enrolment at West Suffolk College.

For applicants that have less than 5 years residency and/or holders of non EU passports additional documentation is required:

- a national identify card
- a residence permit, registration certificate or a document certifying or indicating permanent residence (this should contain the persons National Insurance number)
- a biometric immigration document
- a certificate of good conduct/character from the relevant embassy
- a UK driving licence counterpart from DVLA (see form D9)

Please note:

All documents presented must be originals; photo copies etc are not acceptable. Where applicable the applicant must provide, at their own expense, a written English translation of relevant documents/certificates, together with documentary proof that the translation is correct.

DVLA Validation Check Code – “View Driving Licence Code”

This allows the Council to check your driving licence status, issue number and validity dates, vehicle codes and disqualifications/penalties.

Driver consent is captured through a unique ‘check code’ generated by the driver using DVLA View Driving Licence Service (www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence). The code generated must be valid for at least 14 days on the date you apply for your licence. The code must be submitted with your application form.

If possible please print off the code or the results sheet and submit with your application, printed results sheets will speed up the process.. If you cannot print please write the code clearly making sure upper and lower case letters are clear and easy to distinguish.

Medical examinations

A group 2 medical will be required for all new applications. The Council follows the DVLA group 2 medical guidelines for the purposes of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing.

A group 2 medical will be valid up to the applicant’s 45th birthday. Thereafter, a further group 2 medical will be required every 5 years until the age of 65. The medical will then be required every year thereafter. The Council will not accept Medics on Wheels Group 2 Medicals after the age of 45.

In addition, medical certificates may also be required in any case where the council thinks it appropriate should there be reason to believe that a new medical condition has emerged.

Medical forms are obtainable from the council website www.westsuffolk.gov.uk, and completed forms must be submitted at application.

Insulin treated Diabetes

Drivers with insulin dependant diabetes are required to hold a DVLA C1 category Group 2 licence (i.e. one issued after 1 January 1998). This licence must be produced to the council annually for inspection.

Disclosure & barring service (enhanced criminal records check DBS)

The Council is obliged to be satisfied that any licensed driver is fit and proper to hold a driver licence and the enhanced disclosure is one of our means of establishing this. New applicants will need to obtain an **enhanced** DBS disclosure which includes Child and Adult workforce, prior to their application being determined. Licensed drivers will need to complete a new enhanced disclosure, or have their status checked, every three years.

The DBS has now introduced an update service, to which you may subscribe: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/disclosure-and-barring-service-update-service-now-available>. For more guidance on the update service, and how to apply, follow this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-update-service-applicant-guide>

If you subscribe to the update service, and you have had an enhanced DBS disclosure which includes the category child and adult workforce, which has been issued since 17 June, 2013, then please bring along your **original DBS certificate**. The council will then be able to check your status on line free of charge.

If you do not subscribe to the DBS update service a DBS certificate can be obtained from GB Group by following the instructions below.

Registration with GB Group

To be able to Sign In and complete the disclosure application, you first need to register at - <https://gbg.onlinedisclosures.co.uk/Registration/Registration>

To self-register use the following:

| | Secret Word | PIN |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------|
| West Suffolk Council | Drive | 168952 |

You will be sent an activation email, follow the instructions in the email to create your password.

Now you will be able sign in whenever you like and complete your DBS application online.

Verification of ID documents

Your ID documents will need to be verified at a Post Office. The nearest Post Office to you, offering this service can be found during the application process. Currently in this area Newmarket, Haverhill, Bury St Edmunds and Thetford Post Offices offer this service.

In order to have your ID verified, you must print out the ID verification form and take this to the Post Office, along with the ID documents you have listed. Any payment required should be made at the Post Office once they have verified your ID.

GB Group Contact Details

Helpdesk: 0845 251 5000

Opening times – Mon to Fri 8.30am to 5.30pm

Email: onlinedisclosures@gbgplc.com

How to submit your application

Once you have received your DBS certificate, passed your driving test, course and your medical you should prepare your application by getting all the required documents together.

Make sure that all the questions on the application form are completed and submit with all original supporting documents and the correct fee.

Payment should be made by card or cheque made payable to the appropriate Council. You can submit your completed application to the address below Monday to Friday 8.45 am to 5.00 pm.

We do not accept incomplete applications under any circumstances.

Please note:

We are required by law to protect the public funds we administer. We may share information provided to us with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds in order to prevent and detect fraud.

Licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk

customer.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk

Tel: 01284 758050

<https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/contact-us.cfm>

Renewal Applications Guidance to follow on next page (6)

Renewal Applications

A reminder pack will be sent out to the last address we hold for drivers 2 months prior to expiry date of licences.

If for any reason you do not receive a reminder, it remains your responsibility to make sure a renewal application is received in plenty of time and at least two weeks prior to your expiry date.

Before we will consider your application, you must submit to the Council:

- a fully completed application form together with the following supporting documents:
- Payment of the fee
- 1 passport size colour photograph (no head gear of any form unless for religious reasons)
- Full DVLA driving licence
- Completed DVLA Check Code
- Current Passport or birth certificate or other proof of entitlement to work in the UK
- Group II medical pass certificate (if required this will be sent with the renewal pack)
- Enhanced DBS certificate less than one month old

Please note:

All documents presented must be originals; photo copies are not acceptable. Where applicable the applicant must provide, at their own expense, a written English translation of relevant documents/certificates, together with documentary proof that the translation is correct.

It is an offence to drive a licensed vehicle without the appropriate licence, for which the maximum fine is £1,000. **If you allow your licence to lapse, any subsequent application will be treated as a new application.**

DVLA Validation Check Code – “View Driving Licence Code”

As per New driver application.

Medical examinations

The Council follows the DVLA group 2 medical guidelines for the purposes of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing. If you are due a medical at time of renewal a form will be included with your reminder

In addition, medical certificates may also be required in any case where the council thinks it appropriate should there be reason to believe that a new medical condition has emerged.

Disclosure & barring service (criminal records check)

As per New driver application.

If you have not subscribed to the DBS update service, make sure that you obtain your DBS check via the online system before making your application to renew. Allow up to 60 days for return of your DBS.

How to submit your application

As per New driver application.

We do not accept incomplete applications under any circumstances.

PLEASE NOTE:

We are required by law to protect the public funds we administer. We may share information provided to us with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds in order to prevent and detect fraud.

licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk

customer.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk

Tel: 01284 758050

<https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/contact-us.cfm>