

Proposed changes and consideration of best practice

The proposed changes to the policy, as well as comments about the recommendations set out in the Department for Transport's best practice guidance, are detailed below.

The paragraph numbers below are to the numbers as shown in the draft policy.

Inclusive service plan (ISP)

The best practice guidance states that all licensing authorities should develop and maintain an inclusive service plan (ISP), either as a standalone document or as an integral element of a wider strategy. The team will be working with other council departments to link in with council-wide strategies in this area.

Safeguarding

Paragraph 19 has been deleted as this information is covered elsewhere in the document in the Enforcement section.

Application process for new drivers

Paragraphs 36 and 37 have been amended to provide clearer guidance to applicants on application requirements and when, in the process, they can be submitted.

Driver medical certificates

Paragraph 43 has been amended to recommend that doctors have access to the applicant's full medical records.

Driver criminal record check

Paragraph 50 has been amended to provide additional information about DBS checks.

Driving practical assessment

The best practice guidance recommends that drivers undertake practical driving training at first application and renewal (typically every 3 years).

This authority does not consider this requirement to be reasonable or justified. This would add additional costs to licensed drivers and, with no licensing authorities in the North East and Yorkshire having implemented such a requirement, it would only push local drivers to neighbouring authorities, negating the requirement's benefits.

In reaching this decision, the authority has considered the need to balance requirements to reduce regulatory burdens and promote business growth by ensuring requirements are reasonable and justified.

However, Paragraph 57 has been added to provide guidance for drivers around the authority's power to request that a further assessment be undertaken in the event of complaints about their driving ability.

Vehicle condition check

Paragraphs 63 and 64 have been added to require drivers to check the vehicle before use.

Deposit of hackney carriage driver licence with vehicle proprietor

Paragraph 84 has been amended to reflect that the requirement for the deposit of driver badges is limited to when driving hackney carriage vehicles.

Driver conduct

Paragraph 89 has been amended to remove reference to drinking alcohol as this is a duplication of law.

Private hire driver conditions

Changes to reflect the amendments already detailed.

Hackney carriage specification

Paragraph 124 has been amended to:

- Add an emissions standard
- Amended the tint policy to match the best practice

Paragraph 125 has been added to allow vehicles licensed prior to this policy revision to remain licensed on renewal.

Private hire vehicle specification

Paragraph 128 has been amended to:

- Add an emissions standard
- Amended the tint policy to match the best practice

Paragraph 129 has been added to allow vehicles licensed prior to this policy revision to remain licensed on renewal.

Age of vehicle

Paragraphs 130 to 133 have been deleted to remove the age policy (in favour of an emissions standard).

Emissions standards

Paragraphs 134 to 137 have been added to provide information to support the introduction of an emissions standard to replace the current age policy.

Inspection of vehicle

Paragraph 141 has been amended to change the requirement for vehicles to be mechanically tested 6 months into the period of the licence so that it only applies to older (over 6 years old) vehicles.

Paragraph 142 has been deleted to remove the requirement for wheelchair accessible vehicles to be tested three times a year after the age of 12 years.

Plates and decals

Paragraph 146 has been amended to remove the requirement for private hire vehicles to display a front plate.

Application process for vehicle renewals

Paragraph 160 has been amended to remove reference to the previous age policy.

Vehicle proprietor criminal record check

Paragraphs 176 to 178 have been amended to require all basic disclosures to be dated less than 12 months from the date the application submitted. This is easier to understand than the previous requirement and supports local businesses by making the requirement less onerous.

Proprietor complaints from customers

Paragraph 197 has been amended to provide specific details about reporting complaints.

Safety equipment in vehicles

Paragraph 198 has been amended to remove the requirement for vehicles to be fitted with a fire extinguisher.

Accessibility in licensed vehicles

Paragraph 223 has been added to require the installation of a hearing loop where an internal screen is fitted.

Hackney carriage conditions

Various changes to reflect the changes already detailed.

Private hire vehicle conditions

Various changes to reflect the changes already detailed.

Process for new operators

Paragraph 254 has been amended to allow a responsible person (other than a director or a company secretary) as an option to pass the knowledge test.

Process for renewing operator licences

Paragraph 257 has been removed to allow operators to renew up to the expiry date of the licence. Operator renewals can be processed on the same day that they are submitted.

Operator criminal record check

Paragraphs 262 to 264 have been amended to require all basic disclosures to be dated less than 12 months from the date the application submitted. This is easier to understand than the previous requirement and supports local businesses by making the requirement less onerous.

Operator complaints from customers

Paragraph 267 has been amended to provide specific details about reporting complaints.

Private hire operator conditions

Paragraph 287 – various changes to remove obsolete or unnecessary requirements and to reflect the changes already detailed.

Private hire operator digital booking platforms

The best practice recommends that licensing authorities should require operators to ensure that any digital booking platforms comply with the WCAG 2.1 accessibility standard to Level AA and with the principles of the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 as a minimum.

This authority does not consider it appropriate to require operators to comply with standards that are designed for public sector bodies.

In reaching this decision, the authority has considered the need to balance requirements to reduce regulatory burdens to promote business growth by ensuring requirements are reasonable and justified.