

Meeting: Private Hire Licensing, Compliance and Enforcement Meeting
Date: Wednesday, 23 January 2019
Location: 230 Blackfriars Road, Southwark
Agenda: 1. Review of licensing actions / 2. Licensing update / 3. Review of compliance actions / 4. Compliance and enforcement update / 5. AOB
Attendees: Addison Lee, Carlton Cars, Private Hire Board, Chauffeur and Executive Committee, Crawfords, GLH, GMB Drivers, Licensed Private Hire Car Association (LPHCA), Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), Transport for London (TfL).

1. Review of licensing actions

Expired licence discs: TfL outlined its current mechanism for collecting expired private hire vehicle licence discs and its plans to improve this process; this included IT system improvements and a proposal (subject to the outcome of a consultation) to introduce annual coloured licence discs that would make it easier to determine whether a vehicle is currently licensed. The trade asked if it could be provided with confirmation of the responsibilities of a private hire vehicle owner when selling their vehicle (see actions).

Mogo licence plates: TfL confirmed that it would obtain further information and clarify its position on mogo plates. The trade said that it was disappointed that TfL did not have a comprehensive answer at this meeting.

English language requirement: The trade said that it was disappointed that TfL had failed to engage with trade representatives regarding the implementation of the English Language Requirement (ELR) for private hire drivers and that consequently a large proportion of drivers have not taken action ahead of the 30 April 2019 deadline.

Online topographical assessment: The trade were given a demonstration of TfL's new online driver topographical assessment. This received positive feedback and trade representatives thanked TfL for engaging with them throughout the development and introduction of the new online assessment. The LPHCA also thanked TfL for attending its roadshow to demonstrate the online test to trade attendees.

2. Licensing update

TfL presented slides on driver and operator licensing, driver assessment and vehicle licensing.

Telephony: The trade said that call waiting times were unacceptably long. TfL said it had implemented a number of measures to reduce phone waiting times and to resolve queries in a timely manner, these included multi-skilling staff and targeted phone closures to focus staff on clearing significant numbers of licensing tasks. TfL said it is also working with NSL to improve call handling and that NSL had recently recruited five additional staff members. The trade also raised the issue of callers being cut off and not allowed to join the queue.

TfL said it would investigate this, but that it was likely to be when all available phone lines were in use (see actions). TfL reiterated that if the trade had specific issues from their members that were time critical they could continue to raise them with the stakeholder team.

Further breakdown on licensing data: The trade asked if the figures presented in the licensing presentation for new operator licences could be broken down to differentiate those that were new to the industry from those that were being relicensed / changing licensing tier (see action).

Vehicle inspections: The trade said that vehicle owners were experiencing delays when trying to book a vehicle in for inspection and asked when online bookings would begin. TfL said that it was hoping to implement this by March/April of this year and said that NSL had recently increasing its vehicle testing capacity by 200 vehicles per week. The trade said that the requirement to have an MOT 14 days prior to a licensing inspection was restrictive. The trade requested that this period be extended and TfL said it would consider this (see actions).

The trade said that it believed that many inspection failures resulted from vehicle owners being unaware of the inspection standards. TfL said that the vehicle inspection manual and other guidance was available on its website and that it would look at providing targeted guidance via email and Twitter (see actions).

3. Review of compliance actions

Heathrow: TfL said that it continues to work closely with Heathrow Airport authorities regarding reports of drivers circulating around the airport and bypassing the Authorised Vehicle Area (AVA) facility. TfL said that it has a compliance presence at the airport virtually on a daily basis and that this includes both uniformed and plain clothes officers. The trade said that they had received complaints from the London Borough of Hillingdon regarding driver behaviour in the neighbourhoods surrounding the airport. TfL asked to be provided with this information so that it can take appropriate action (see actions).

Prosecution information: TfL will consider publishing prosecution information in its OnRoute magazine on a six monthly basis.

Unannounced operator inspections: TfL and the trade discussed unannounced compliance inspections. The trade requested that they be forewarned of unannounced inspections. TfL confirmed that both announced and unannounced inspections are undertaken and that there may have been an increase in the former due to its Safer Travel at Night operations in conjunction with the MPS. Inspections can be carried out at any time if the business is operating at the given time. Where possible, compliance officers will inform the operator of a visit but there may also be a cause to carry out unannounced inspections to deal with any non-compliance detected on street or for any other reason. TfL said it was a positive reflection on the trade that it

had conducted checks on 750 drivers as part of this operation and found that all were compliant.

Second MOTs: TfL sought clarification on the trades request for information regarding compliance with second MOTs and explained that there was data on these from the taxi slides which are published in the TfL website. TfL would consider any additional request if needed.

4. Compliance and Enforcement update

Compliance checks: The trade asked TfL to provide further information regarding vehicle checks and for examples of non-compliant issues that had resulted in an advisory notice being given. TfL invited trade representatives to attend a compliance operation to observe how vehicle checks were conducted (see actions).

5. AOB

OnRoute magazine: The trade raised concerns about the editorial content of TfL's trade publication and stated it would be writing to TfL to outline these. TfL said that it worked hard to ensure that there was balance in OnRoute and always welcomed any feedback or suggestions from the trade for news or feature items.

Unanswered emails: TfL apologised that two pieces of correspondence from a trade body had gone unanswered; stating that the vast majority of emails and letters are answered in good time. The nature of these complaints, both regarding private hire operators, was discussed.

Open Actions				
Meeting Date	Item Name	Action Details	Due Date	Commentary
23/01/09	Vehicle ownership	TfL to confirm the responsibilities of a PHV owner when transferring ownership of their vehicle	ASAP	As action
23/01/19	New operators	TfL to provide additional details regarding the licensing of new PHV operators.	Next meeting	See slide 7 of the licensing presentation.
23/01/19	Telephony	TfL to investigate calls being cut off and not permitted to join the call queue.	ASAP	As action
23/01/19	Vehicle inspections	TfL to consider the trades views regarding extending the 14 day MOT vehicle inspection window	Next meeting	As action
23/01/19	Vehicle licensing guidance	TfL to provide guidance to licensees regarding vehicle inspection standards	ASAP	As action
23/01/19	Heathrow	GMB to pass on complaints received from LB Hillingdon regarding private hire drivers	ASAP	As action
23/01/19	Vehicle compliance checks	TfL to invite trade reps to observe vehicle compliance checks	ASAP	As action