

Private Hire Trade Association Meeting Minutes

Thursday 27th June 2019 – 10:30am

1. Introductions and Welcome

Steven Knighton (Enforcement Manager) opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. It was advised that all future meetings would be chaired by the Enforcement or Licencing Manager.

Officers present:

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Steve Knighton (STK) | Enforcement Manager |
| Elisabeth Spencer (ES) | Customer Service Manager |
| Sadiya Patel (SP) | Senior Licencing Officer |
| Samantha Kaye (SK) | Licensing Officer (Service Support) |
| Sean Parnham | Keighley Private Hire Association |
| Nadeem Ahmed | Private Hire Operators Association for Drivers and Operators |

2. Minutes from last meeting

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

3. Police Update

All attendees invited to the Business Operator meeting for this update. The update can be read by clicking on the following link; [Operator Meeting Summary](#)

4. Air Quality

All attendees invited to the Business Operator meeting for this update. The update can be read by clicking on the following link; [Operator Meeting Summary](#)

5. Licensing Update

Plate Collection

During May a trial was conducted to allow vehicle plates to be collected from the workshop after passing their test. The feedback from those involved in the trial was very positive. Following a review of the findings from the trial and after making some amendments this was rolled out to the trade on Monday 10th June 2019.

Communications

Communication sent to Operators and Private Hire drivers in May 2019 was regarding GDPR & importance of email addresses. We can confirm that there are

less than 1% of email addresses still outstanding. This will be achieved by contacting drivers and operators.

Thanks given to trade for co-operation and assistance.

Plate collection email was sent regarding information required. Communication with Trade has improved with people sending in documents in plenty of time before their expiry. Ensure all vehicle proprietors send their documents 6 weeks in advance of renewal and from their registered email address.

Of the approx. 3,400 emails received every month, there's some positive feedback including a poem from a driver

Ode to Shearbridge

(Sent by a HCPH Licensing Service Customer)

I would like to say some words of praise
To the Shearbridge staff who spend their days,
In office high (and most likely dingy)
Sorting problems for, the drivers' whingy!

They keep their cool with utmost grace
And wear a smile upon their face,
No doubt their lives, dream to enhance
With a villa in the South of France!

Yet should the drivers all peruse
All missives sent, (not just one they choose!)
Then life for all, would sure run easy
And make Shearbridge work, so easy-peasy!

And that day is sure to come
When drivers and staff, function as one,
With every car in perfect condition and
Shearbridge life is not perdition!

So I would like to say a big "Merci"
To all the staff who were helping me,
Renew my licence on the net
(No easy task, I'd like to bet!)

If I had my way it would be just fine
To supply the staff with loads of wine,
With chocolate by the bucket loads!
(But money's short, that's the way it goes!)

So I'll just say thank you once again
And hope the drivers spare you pain,
But there's one dark cloud, alas I fear.....
....I'll be back again this time next year!!

In response to the above the Licencing Service felt it only polite to reply in kind. They worked really hard in their own time to come up with the following poem:

Ode to Customers

(Response from HCPH Licensing Service)

A message to our cheery chap, who speaks in heart felt rhyme,
How kind it was to note your thoughts, in your own precious time.
I have to say it's very nice, to know that we've been praised,
And with your words of wisdom, our bar should now be raised.

One happy soul is just the start; our aim is to increase,
We want to work in harmony and aim to keep the peace!
We sometimes opt to run with plans, to help the "trade" get by,
We hope all will embrace the change and willingly comply.

Yet often creases raise their heads, to then be ironed out,
With positive approach like yours, without the need to shout.
Year on year the stats improve and drivers continue to learn;
The better service they provide, the more they stand to earn.

A missing bolt, a warning light is not the place to be,
A pristine car and smiling face, is often just the key.
The reason we all come to work, remains the same each day;
We all have hungry mouths to feed and mortgages to pay.

It's not a case of us an them, we're all on the same side,
We're here to serve our customers, with dignity and pride.
We both are Bradford Council, just with a different mask,
We always try to meet the needs, of customers who ask.

And when we can't facilitate, we always try our best,
Until we reach perfection, our plight will never rest!
We're always here to help the "trade", you are the heart and soul,
Of Bradford's wide community..... We share a common goal.

There's no dark cloud as you suggest, you're always welcome here,
So do us proud and spread the joy..... We'll see you in a year.....

iApply

Current Situation – only drivers can apply to renew their Private Hire or Hackney Carriage drivers' licences on-line.

Future goal – to offer all drivers and proprietors the facility to apply and renew all licences on-line through a system called iApply.

This will include:

- A renewal reminder being sent out 6 weeks prior to expiry
- Payments will be made at the same time
- Documents will be uploaded and sent securely at the same time

Awareness and training sessions will cover the following but will not be limited to:

- How to access the systems
- What it looks like
- Taking photographs of documents
- How to upload documents

Support plan will be in place to help go through process of change:

- All records to have personal email addresses to conform with GDPR – currently being addressed by service support
- Test environment to be built and used for training and awareness sessions
- Customer Service Manager (Elisabeth Spencer) working with the trade

Positives will include no backward and forward emails, everything will be done securely in one place. Reminders will be sent for vehicles as well as drivers.

The testing that we do for iApply will be a lot easier with some volunteers, so thank you to those who have volunteered and if you know anyone else that would like to be part of this from the start please email taxi.testing@bradford.gov.uk for the attention of the Customer Service Manager (Elisabeth Spencer). We will be in touch in the near future when the process is due to start.

❖ Will this system allow you to book a vehicle in for test online?

Response: You will not be able to book the vehicle inspection online however you will be able to give your details, send in the documents and make payment online, all at your own convenience. The service will then contact proprietors to book the vehicle inspection test.

❖ Would the service implement the phone lines again so drivers can ring in and book appointments when it is convenient for them?

Response: As the service is working towards streamlining automated systems to allow customers to make applications in their own time the phone lines would not be needed. The service will contact to ask the customer a convenient time to speak. The phone lines were no longer a viable option as this would require a team of staff working full time on the phone lines. In the past the information required on the phone was mostly about general Licensing queries. To address this, the service has established and regularly updates the FAQ section of the website. The FAQ's can be found by clicking the following link; [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

- ❖ How do you pay for a re-test?

Response: Retest fees will be payable at the workshop before a retest is carried out by a vehicle inspector. The workshop will not take payments over the phone.

- ❖ Is there any way you can pay the re-test fee before the appointment in the workshop as some hire companies pay the fee and not the customer?

Response: If you would like to pay the re-test fee before the appointment you can email the service on taxi.testing@bradford.gov.uk clearly stating what is required with as much information as possible and a member of staff will contact you to take payment.

- ❖ Is there any way that you can pay the re-test fee online?

Response: It is not currently possible to pay the retest fee online. The service is working on a solution as part of the iApply project. Retest fees can be paid at the workshop before a retest at the moment.

6. Enforcement Update

Vehicle test stats for Q1

- 1,126 PH Vehicles tested
- 76% of vehicles passed first time with no defects
- Failure rates for serious defects are averaging at 9%
- April the failure rates for serious defects dropped to just 5% - This in an all-time low

- 28 foot patrols including joint partnership working with the police and parking services
- 270 vehicles were checked
- 21% were suspended due to the following which could have been avoided with daily safety
 - Tyres
 - Decals
 - Visors
 - Missing paperwork

Questions raised by the association members with responses

- ❖ It is the opinion of some that your vehicle tests are of a higher standard than VOSA, how are they different?

Response – The Licensing Service has a legal obligation to ensure all Private Hire licensed vehicles meet the criteria set out in section 48 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. To do this we ensure all licensed vehicles are of a higher standard to transport the travelling public.

- ❖ The engine management light can come on for anything, especially with the newer cars so it could be something or nothing, therefore is not unfair to suspend a vehicle?

Response – Any warning lights that appear indicate a fault within the car. Until it can be determined that the vehicle is safe to continue using as a Private Hire licensed vehicle it is the duty of the service to ensure the car is not being used to transport the travelling public. The service will not suspend a vehicle for longer than necessary.

Modular Training

Good feedback received for Modular training such as being informative and valuable knowledge when you are a new driver. The Service strives to continue an excellent service and welcomes feedback.

5* Operator Base Checks

There were 4 vehicle safety seminars held at Grange Interlink to inform operators about vehicle safety aspect of the 5 star audit. 5 star base audits trialled since April 2019 – positive feedback received.

Trials confirmed many Operators would not achieve this star. Enforcement officers provided information re:

- Appeals process
- What to do if a vehicle has a major fail
- How operators can achieve a 5 star rating

The following question was raised regarding the 5 star rating:

- ❖ What are the stars based on?

Response – They are awarded for the following:

- Stars 1 and 2 – Earned through compliance, e.g. booking records and how they deal with complaints
- Star 3 – Vehicle safety – An Operator must ensure all the vehicles working for them must be to the highest standard. This means no failures with unsuccessful appeal can be recorded. If there are any recorded the Operator will not achieve this star.

Stars 4&5 are still in development but are likely to cover Customer service, Equality, disability access and looking to the future e.g. environmentally friendly vehicles, not idling engines when stationary etc.

7. Agenda points

*How soon can a driver who accumulates 12 points reapply for his taxi license?
Would it be when the points have gone below the 7 point mark or is there a set period of suspension a driver has to serve?*

Any person wishing to apply for a licence with Bradford MDC as a licensed driver can do so at any time. All applicants are advised to read the suitability policy themselves and make an informed decision to submit an application if they are satisfied they meet the criteria of the suitability policy. These are the guidelines used to assess every application and licence held with Bradford MDC.

Suspension and revocation are two different processes. Suspension is a temporary measure until the licence holder has fulfilled a set condition. A revocation applies when the decision to refuse/remove a licence is made.

8. Peer Review

The updated peer review is published on the website. You can find the updated peer review on the website by clicking the following link; [Bradford Peer Review](#)

9. Date of next meeting

Thursday 22nd August 2019.

All meetings will be held at Shearbridge Depot and will start promptly at 10:30am.