

Department of Environment & Sport

Newsletter

Issue 24 August 2014 **Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Service**

Welcome to our latest Newsletter. In this edition items include welcoming our new enforcement officer, updates on recent changes and expressing thanks to the trade. Please read on for details!

The Licensing Team

Thanks to Operators

We have made regular announcements since May that the service would be closed in the first 2 weeks of September. We asked Operators to ensure that their drivers/vehicles that expired in this period were booked in in advance. We would like to convey our thanks to all the Operators who have worked with the service to ensure this happened.

Thanks to trade

Over the last couple of weeks we have had over 100 visitors a day to reception compared to the normal level of 80 per day. Those who have visited have, unfortunately, experienced longer than usual queues as many of those whose vehicle/badge was due to expire whilst the service closed had left their visits until the last minute!! We thank those who had to wait for their understanding and patience in what has been a very challenging but still successful week.

Training

The service has successfully delivered about 20 driver training sessions in the past 4 weeks. These were delivered to drivers in preparation for their PTS contracting requirements.

The Operator briefing sessions are now well under way and are receiving positive feedback. All Operators are required to attend one of the sessions over the coming weeks.

Message to the Trades

Bradford Council is participating in an exercise to promote the proper spending of public money.

The Council is required by law to protect the public funds it administers. It may share information provided to it with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds in order to prevent and detect fraud.

The Audit Commission currently requires us to participate in its anti-fraud initiative. For this initiative, we are providing personal details of all taxi driver licence holders, so that they can be compared to other information provided by the Council and other public bodies. This will ensure, for example, that earnings are properly declared to benefit paying bodies.

Further information is available on the Council's website at www.bradford.gov.uk

Closure - Reminder

Licensing service at Shearbridge is closed between Monday 1st September and Friday 12th September (inclusive). We will re-open on Monday 15th September. The closure is necessary to enable phase 1 of the new computer systems to be installed and tested.

If anyone has queries during the closure period please email taxi.testing@bradford.gov.uk and officers will reply accordingly.

Contact Details	Opening Hours
Licensing Officers – 01274 434316	Tues 9.30 – 3pm, Mon & Wed - Fri 8.30 – 3pm
Workshop – 01274 433587	Monday – Friday 7.45am – 3.00pm
Email – taxi.testing@bradford.gov.uk	

Knowledge Test Updates

Three groups of HC/PH drivers undertook the new style Knowledge Test but achieved disappointing results - circa 40% pass rate. To review the fail rate two groups of council officers who were not employed in any driver/driving related role were selected at random to take the test and they achieved an average 80% pass rate. A fourth group of drivers then took the test and achieved a circa 90% pass rate.

So What's The Message – please prepare for your knowledge test by familiarising yourselves with the Bradford District, this can be done by studying A-Z maps, Google maps online or simply by observing and learning the places you visit in the district. Operators can assist by having staff in their business assist new drivers.

Monday 15th September – Service Reopens

When the service re-opens you will see changes. There will be the addition of a 4th customer counter which should lead to reduced waiting times.

There will be a new ticket machine for customers. If you have an appointment booked you will be required to enter your name and date of birth on the ticket machine when you visit for the appointment.

Anyone without an appointment will take a ticket without entering any details.

Staff Changes

We would like to introduce you all to our latest new recruit, Matthew Taylor.

Matthew joins the existing team of enforcement officers and has previously spent a number of years working in the Fraud Service.

Contact details

If you would like more information about this newsletter, please contact:

Matthew Bibby, Licensing Support Officer:
taxi.testing@bradford.gov.uk

Understanding Customer Requirements

The importance of training and the knowledge test has been identified previously and is best highlighted by the response the service received (shown below) to a recent complaint where a driver didn't know where a 'fare' lived and couldn't find out how to get them home without asking.

Customer Complaint / Comment

'....I think it highlights the need for taxi drivers, whether new to the job or an old hand, to have regular training on how to respond to disabled passengers and at the very least, a working knowledge of the geography of the area in which they are driving (or an excellent sat nav system). Increasingly when I get into a local taxi I'm being asked to direct the driver to my destination, which is a poor service from my point of view as a sighted person, but a living nightmare for visually impaired people.'

Please consider how you interact with all your 'fares'. If you do a good job you will likely get that 'fare' again!

Trade Rep Associations

If any of you have points/comments you would like to share then please see your trade reps and they will be able to raise them on your behalf.

Association contact details are on the website:
www.bradford.gov.uk/taxiandprivatehire

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