

Joint Taxi Licensing Policy: Summary of Changes

Section	Change	Notes
1.7	Allows for the policy to be updated when there are changes in legislation, statutory guidance or similar	To ensure the policy can be updated immediately when the law changes to ensure it remains current
2.2	Updated reference to DfT Statutory Standards	This was published July 2020.
3	Added section with general guidance on application processes and determination.	This is to assist applicants in their understanding of the licensing process
3.3	Any application that is not completed within 6 months may be treated as withdrawn.	This is to ensure all evidence and checks (e.g. DBS and medical) remain valid.
3.10	Update to confirm we have a privacy notice in accordance with GDPR.	The current version of the privacy notice will be retained on website, which allows for it to be updated as required.
3.11	Added reference to the national register of refusals and revocations (NR3)	This register will be used to share information and check new applicants and existing licence holders.
4.1 and Appendix F	Added a section to confirm introduction of new guidance on determining suitability for all licence holders	The new guidance is the widely accepted standard in respect of determining suitability and brings the councils up to a more rigorous standard consistent with other local authorities
4.2	Added a section to explain 'fit and proper' in more detail	This comes directly from the DfT Statutory Standards and is what they expect all licensing authorities to apply.
4.3	Any applicants who have had a licence revoked or application refused by any local authority will not be licensed for a minimum of 5 years after the date of revocation or refusal	This aligns the treatment of drivers previously licensed outside of the districts with drivers licensed by the councils, to ensure consistency
4.4	All licence holders must report all new convictions, cautions, etc in writing within 48 hours.	To ensure proprietors and operators comply with the same requirements as drivers, and shortened timeframe in accordance with DfT Statutory Standards
4.5	Introducing a requirement for all licence holders to inform the council if they are arrested, formally interviewed as a suspect or charged with an offence by the Police.	This is to allow the council to be aware of any immediate public safety concerns and to take appropriate action, again in accordance with DfT Statutory Standards.
4.6	Added a section to clarify the types of situation where a licence may be immediately revoked.	This ensures drivers are aware of the limited circumstances where a licence may be immediately revoked in the interest of public safety
4.1	Add a requirement for all licence holders to update any changes of email address	To allow greater use of email contact

5.2	Recommendation that licence holders confirm if they are going away for more than 2 weeks	This is to avoid unnecessary suspension of licences where items expire while licence holders are away
6.3 and 6.4	Updated enforcement section with examples of the scale of actions and detail the responsibilities of licence holders to comply with requests from authorised officers etc	This is to assist applicants in understanding the enforcement system and their responsibilities
6.5	Added new requirement for vehicles to display information for passengers on how to complain directly to the licensing authority.	This requirement is included in the DfT Statutory Standards.
7.1	Clarify the position of proprietor as laid out in legislation	This is to assist applicants in their understanding of vehicle licensing
7.4	Clarify that vehicles will only be considered for licensing if they are not already licensed by another licensing authority	A vehicle will only be licensed by one authority at a time as two plates would be confusing for the public
7.5	Added requirement for vehicle proprietors not currently licensed as drivers or operators to provide a basic DBS disclosure on application	This requirement is included in the DfT Statutory Standards.
7.13	The Councils will not license vehicles that have been classified as category 'A' (whole vehicle to be crushed), 'B' (body shell to be crushed) or 'S' write offs (structural damage).	This is to ensure all vehicles are of a high quality and meet the original, statutory safety standards.
7.17	From 1 April 2022 proprietors will be required to have taxis of at least Euro 4 standard to renew their licence; and Euro 4, Euro 6 or zero-emission capable to receive a new licence. From 1 April 2026, proprietors will be required to have taxis of at least Euro 6 standard to receive a new or renewed licence.	This is with a view to the aspiration for all licensed vehicles to be zero carbon by 2030 at the latest in response to the Climate Emergency declared by both councils.
7.27	Clarify legal requirements in respect of tariff fare for HCs used for journeys ending outside the district and pre-booked journeys	This is to ensure drivers are clear on the legal requirements in respect of the tariff
7.31	Allows for the councils to introduce an approval system for such advertisements, with a fee to cover the cost of considering any such applications.	This is to ensure cost recovery for any system that may be required to approve advertisements
7.39	Amended wording from 'novelty' to 'special'.	This terminology was unpopular with the licensed trade
7.47	Where a temporary vehicle licence has been granted due to the original vehicle being subject to accident damage or mechanical breakdown, a new compliance certificate will be required for the previous vehicle	This is to ensure vehicles returning to use after repair are mechanically fit to be used as licensed vehicles
7.3-8.5	Updated section on right to work in the UK	Confirms changes introduced by the Immigration Act 2016

8.8-8.9	Drivers with drivers with diabetes managed by insulin, a sulphonylurea or a glinide will require a specialist annual medical, and licence holders must advise the licensing team in writing within 7 days of any change in their medical condition that may affect their driving capabilities	Confirming a new system being implemented to cater for the needs of certain drivers with diabetes, and setting a time limit for drivers to notify us of changes to medical condition
8.12	Applicants must declare any pending court cases or hearings, details of any licences previously held, suspended or revoked and failure to disclose any information and the making of false declarations will be considered to be an act of dishonesty and may result in the application being refused or licence revoked	This is to ensure applicants are clear about full disclosure to ensure we can determine suitability
8.13	Certificates of good conduct are only required where the applicant has lived in another country beyond the age of criminal responsibility	This ensures the policy remains current if the age of criminal responsibility changes
8.14	No driver's licences will be issued or renewed without a current enhanced DBS disclosure or one checked through the Update service.	This is to reflect the requirement for all drivers to use the DBS Update Service and clarify that a DBS disclosure or update check will always be required to determine suitability prior to the issue of a licence
8.15	Applicants must obtain their DBS disclosure through the relevant council.	If an applicant provides a DBS disclosure from another registered body, that body is unable to pass on any 'soft information' disclosed under separate cover, and such information is also not available through the DBS Update Service.
8.16	All drivers must sign up for and maintain their annual payments to the DBS Update Service. Failure to do so may result in suspension of the licence.	This will allow the council to undertake instant checking of a licence holder's criminal record, thereby preventing delays. It is also cheaper for drivers.
8.17	If a driver is given notice to undertake a random DBS check by the council, they must provide all relevant documentation for this to the council within 14 days of the request. Failure to do so may result in suspension of the licence.	Reduced from the current requirement which is 28 days
8.18	Updated section in respect of DVLA checks	To reflect change in check procedure, clarify that DVLA photocard must be current and valid and introduce ability for council to undertake random DVLA checks to identify any undisclosed offences
8.22	New applicants who have been disqualified from driving due to motoring offences must have held a full clean licence for 12 months before they can apply to become a licensed driver.	New requirement to strengthen the councils' position on drivers who have committed serious and/or repeated traffic offences resulting in the loss of the DVLA licence

8.23-8.24	Requirement for all new applicants to pass a practical driving assessment before a licence is granted.	New requirement to ensure a satisfactory standard of professional driving, and consistent with other local authorities
8.27-8.30	Amendments to knowledge test section	Create option for councils to use third party providers for delivery of knowledge tests, reduce the number of times an applicant may sit a test in a 12 month period to prevent repeated failures blocking spaces for new candidates, introduction a minimum cancellation period, and add guidance for candidates with a disability
8.31-8.32	All applicants for a driver's licence will be required to pass disability awareness training before a licence will be granted, and once passed the training must be re-taken every 3 years	Brings councils into line with Oxfordshire Joint Operating Framework and ensures that drivers fully understand their responsibilities and how to properly assist passengers.
8.33-8.34	All applicants for a driver's licence will be required to pass safeguarding training before a licence will be granted, and once passed the training must be re-taken every 3 years	Brings councils into line with Oxfordshire Joint Operating Framework and ensures that drivers fully understand their responsibilities and how to raise safeguarding concerns
9.2	All private hire operator licences will be issued for 5 years. Licences of a shorter duration may be issued in exceptional circumstances.	Updated policy to reflect changes brought about by Deregulation Act 2015
9.3-9.5	Amend basic DBS requirement for operators to confirm the certificate is valid for 1 month, those operators who are already licensed drivers are exempt and that in the case of companies, the council may also require the directors and company secretary to provide Basic DBS. Also allows for random DBS checks to be carried out.	This is to ensure all the content of the DBS remains valid and current for all applicants and persons involved in the business, provides a reasonable exemption for existing licensed drivers and introduce ability for council to undertake random DBS checks to identify any undisclosed offences
9.6	Operators should keep a register of all staff who have access to booking information, must obtain basic DBS checks for all such staff and must have a written policy on employing ex-offenders.	This is to ensure operators carry out proper checks on the staff who have access to personal information of customers. This requirement is included in the DfT Statutory Standards.
9.7	Updated section on right to work in the UK for operators	Confirms changes introduced by the Immigration Act 2016
9.9	Requires all new operator licence applicants to pass the knowledge test (except those already licensed as drivers who have taken the test)	To ensure operators have sufficient knowledge of the area, laws and legislation.
9.15-9.17	All applicants for an operator's licence and all staff taking bookings and dispatching work will be required to pass disability awareness training before a licence will be granted, and once passed the training must be re-taken every 3 years	Brings councils into line with Oxfordshire Joint Operating Framework and ensures that drivers fully understand their responsibilities and how to properly assist passengers.

9.18-9.20	All applicants for an operator's licence and all staff taking bookings and dispatching work will be required to pass safeguarding training before a licence will be granted, and once passed the training must be re-taken every 3 years	Brings councils into line with Oxfordshire Joint Operating Framework and ensures that drivers fully understand their responsibilities and how to raise safeguarding concerns
9.22	Add requirement for operators with a premises open to the public to have minimum £5m public liability insurance.	Ensure a reasonable standard of insurance cover for the premises
9.24	Operators who propose to change their base must obtain a licence to operate from the new address prior to commencement of operating from the new base.	Clarification of the process to assist operators in understanding the process for moving base
9.25	A private hire operator may sub-contract a booking to another licensed operator or hackney carriage driver. A record of whom the booking was sub-contracted to and when must be kept.	Clarify wording to reflect changes brought in by the Deregulation Act 2015 removing cross-border hiring restrictions and provide advice on safeguarding.
9.26	Advice for operators about use of PSV vehicles and PCV drivers	This requirement is included in the DfT Statutory Standards.
9.27	An operator shall only use trading or company name(s) that are included on the operator licence, or other trading name(s) approved by the Council in writing.	To ensure officers are able to carry out effective enforcement
9.28	Advice for operators about data protection	To ensure operators are aware of their obligations under data protection legislation.
Appendix A and Appendix B para 1	Removed minimum engine capacity	Reflect modern automotive technology and reduce vehicle emissions, allow for solely-electric vehicles to be licensed
Appendix A and Appendix B - Para 2	Amended tinted windows specification and require all licensed vehicles (except PHVs with a plate exemption) to comply with the tint requirement. Existing licensed vehicles with factory/manufacturer tinted glass will be allowed to continue being licensed, but those with a tinted film fitted will need to have the film removed from the vehicle.	There is currently some confusion over the tinted windows requirement. This proposal seeks to prevent the licensing of new vehicles with excessively tinted windows on safety grounds, whilst allowing existing vehicles with manufacturer-fitted tint to continue to be licensed.
Appendix A para 5 and Appendix B para 6	Clarify that meters should be tested for two tariffs over the measured mile, waiting time charge tested when the vehicle is stationary, and all meters to have an intact tamper proof seal	Clarify the process required for testing meters
Appendix A para 6 and Appendix B para 7	The requirement to carry a bulb kit and fire extinguisher have been removed. All equipment must now be marked with the vehicle plate number to ensure that it remains in the nominated vehicle at all times.	Modern vehicles often require substantial work to replace bulbs. Current fire service advice is simply to evacuate burning vehicles due to the risks of fighting a fire with limited equipment. Marking of equipment allows better enforcement.

Appendix A para 12 and Appendix B para 15	Added new requirement for vehicles to display information for passengers on how to complain directly to the licensing authority.	This requirement is included in the DfT Statutory Standards.
Appendix A para 17 and Appendix B para 18	Drivers and passengers will not be allowed to use electronic cigarettes or so called 'vaping' equipment in licensed vehicles.	The risks from 'vaping' are still unknown and un-necessary exposure can be avoided.
Appendix A para 18	Both councils will set a maximum hackney carriage tariff.	Setting a maximum tariff protects the public and ensures consistency while still allowing competition between companies. New style meters reduce fraud risks. Only 4 councils in the country do not set a tariff.
Appendix A para 34 and Appendix B para 41	The proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage must report any lost property found in the vehicle to Thames Valley Police in accordance with current procedures, if they are unable to contact the passenger directly	Change in lost property procedure at Thames Valley Police in that police stations no longer accept lost property.
Appendix A para 39-40	Introduce requirement for hackney carriage proprietors to record all pre-booked journey details and make such details available for inspection	To ensure checks can be made that vehicles and operating in line with policy and to assist in respect of investigations into complaints and similar matters.
Appendix D	Added a separate section for operator licence conditions, including new requirements to report complaints to the council, guidance on bookings with assistance dogs and the use of approved trading names	Separating this section makes the requirements for operator licences clearer for licence holders
Appendix E	Updated driver conditions to reflect policy changes, not to allow vehicle engines to idle, not to 'tout' for business and to detail requirements in respect of assistance dogs and wheelchair users	Wording of some conditions amended to provide greater clarity for licence holders, reducing engine idling to improve air quality and updates from the Equality Act 2010
Appendix G	Penalty points system expanded and updated and now applies to all licence holders. Added a system for review of points without the need to refer to Panel so that system may be reserved for the more serious matters.	Removal of separate scheme for operators to avoid confusion, added new offences which reflect the experience of operating the points system and reviewed levels of points to ensure they accurately reflect the severity of the breach
Appendix H	New section added on Safeguarding	Guidance on responsibilities of licence holders in respect of safeguarding
Appendix I	New section added on Disability Awareness	Guidance on responsibilities of licence holders and confirming requirements of Equality Act 2010 reference carrying assistance dogs and wheelchair users without any additional charge

Appendix J	New approval system for advertising on licensed vehicles	This approval will ensure that any adverts displayed on licensed vehicles are appropriate.
Appendix K	Glossary moved to the end of the document	For ease of reference
All	<p>Various sections moved around, duplicate sections removed, policy boxes removed, document re-formatted and updated agency details and contact information as required.</p> <p>Removed figures of licensed vehicles, vehicle tax bands and reference to Air Quality Plans.</p>	Amended for ease of reading, updated information and removing any figures and details that may not remain current for the life of the policy