



## Goodbye



**As some of you may know, I am not standing for re-election as a Councillor in May, and so will no longer be chairing the Public Safety Committee or the Taxi Forum. I have enjoyed meeting a lot of you over the past few years, and have come to see the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers**

**in a totally different light. I understand far more of the financial and other pressures you are under, and the unacceptable way you are treated by some customers. I have met many drivers and operators who are conscientious and hard working, and are**

**really committed to positive customer care. Sadly, in my PSP role, I have also come across a few drivers whose behaviour gives the trade a bad name.**

I remain committed to arguing the case wherever ever I can, for HCs and PH to be considered a safe and accessible part of our public transport system (as essential for disabled and older people) and for the Trade to be consulted as early as possible on city development. Personally I look forward to using my car less in retirement and meeting more of you as a passenger!

I sincerely hope as lockdown eases, your bookings will increase, and most of you will be able to stay safe and healthy and to recover financially as quickly as possible. Take care.

**Cllr. Ruth Pickersgill**

## PC Quinton update

Although many of you have seen a big decrease in your work, those of you who read about my work on the WhatsApp groups will know that I am still busy dealing with defective tyres, drivers using unlicensed vehicles, plying for hire, getting drivers their fares back and helping drivers with their problems where I can. The last year has been terrible for you, and although so many of you are off the road my work carries on to keep the public, and you, safe.

We are now looking forward to a recovery in the trade which will inevitably mean a great increase in my workload. So please help me to help you by doing one simple thing before you start work: Check your vehicle. It only takes a couple of minutes to check the lights are working, your plates are properly displayed and you have your badge on display. It really does make a difference, and means I can concentrate on other work to support you.

Talking of support, I have produced a series of Information Sheets on Mobile Phones, Seatbelts, Signage, Driving and Parking, Police Powers, Runners, Face Coverings, Hackneys doing Private Hire work, Customers in Crisis and Lost/Found Property. If you

would like to get a copy, send an e-mail to [taxis@avonandsomerset.police.uk](mailto:taxis@avonandsomerset.police.uk) saying which ones you'd like.

Keep well, and have a safe shift.

**PC Quinton, Taxi Compliance Officer  
The Bridewell police station, Bristol**



# Government roadmap key proposed dates

**The Government has identified key dates in its roadmap out of lockdown throughout the next few months. These are of course subject to change should there be a surge in infections which puts unsustainable pressure on the NHS.**

The current key dates are as follows:



**29 March 2021** People will be able to meet outdoors as either 2 households or in groups of 6. 'Stay at home' rules will also end on this date, but people are encouraged to work from home where possible and minimise the number of journeys they take.



**12 April 2021** Non-essential retail will be able to open as well as personal care services, indoor leisure facilities and self-contained accommodation. Outdoor hospitality can reopen without curfew however social distancing measures will apply and customers must order, eat and drink whilst seated.

It is very likely that there will be an increased need for Taxis as outdoor hospitality reopens. We ask that you get ready and prepare for the expected rise in demand for your services.



**17 May 2021** Limits on meeting outdoors will be raised to 30 people, and indoors 6 people, or two households, will be able to meet. Indoor hospitality can reopen, without curfew however social distancing measures will apply and customers must order, eat and drink whilst seated. Some larger performances and sporting events with audiences will be able to take place.



**21 June 2021** The Government aims to lift all legal limits on social contact. Remaining restrictions on large events and performances, as well as those on premises who have still been required to remain closed, will be lifted.

**The full information and any updates or changes to these dates can be found on the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website [here](https://www.gov.uk)**

## Social distancing and hygiene measures to continue

**As the Government has set out its roadmap out of lockdown and the vaccination programme continues, it has been confirmed that social distancing measures must continue for now.**

There is guidance on the council's website for drivers about keeping yourselves and your vehicles as safe as possible, and how you should socially distance from your passengers which can be found [here](#)

You should still be ensuring that you and your passengers wear a mask unless you or they are exempt from

doing so. Please remember to follow all the social distancing guidelines, in particular:

- **Guidance on face coverings**  
Passengers and drivers must wear face coverings in vehicles.
- **Exemptions for face coverings**  
Some people are exempt from wearing a face covering. This includes children under 11, and people who cannot put a face covering on because of a mental or physical illness or impairment, or disability. Some people who are exempt may identify themselves

by wearing a lanyard or badge which says 'Exempt'.

The full list of people who may not have to wear face coverings can be found on the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website [here](https://www.gov.uk)

- **Disability awareness**  
Some disabled people don't have physical signs of an impairment, and so you may not be aware they are disabled at all. Hidden disability can affect people in lots of different ways sometimes making daily life more demanding, especially if others don't understand their challenges.



People with a hidden disability may not need to wear a face covering, and may also choose to wear a sunflower lanyard, badge or pin, or wristband to identify this. More information about hidden disabilities can be found on the Hidden Disabilities website [here](#)

- **Self-isolating requirements**

If you or someone you live with

have symptoms of Covid-19, however mild, you must self-isolate for at least 10 days from when your symptoms started. You should arrange for a test, and if you receive a positive result you must self-isolate and could be fined if you don't.

You must also self-isolate if returning from abroad from some countries.

If the country is not listed on the travel corridor list, then you must isolate when you return and you may be fined if you do not.

Further information on self-isolating can be found on the gov.uk website [here](#)

The list of countries on the travel corridor can be found on the gov.uk website [here](#)



## Vaccinations

Vaccinations for Covid-19 are now well under way and the vaccine is currently being offered to people most at risk from coronavirus. You can find information on who is currently eligible for the vaccine, where vaccinations are taking place and answers to common questions on the Healthier Together webpages [here](#)



## Helping visually impaired customers

We have produced a video guide to help you understand some of the challenges faced by visually impaired customers, and how you can help them feel comfortable when they are using taxis and private hire vehicles. The video can be found on the council's YouTube account [here](#)



# EU Settlement Scheme – Deadline 30 June 2021

If you're an EU, EEA or Swiss citizen, you and your family must apply to the EU Settlement Scheme if you want to continue living in the UK after 30 June 2021.

EU nationals and their family members who have lived continuously in the UK for five years should be entitled to get Settled Status, meaning they are free to go on living and working in the UK indefinitely.

People with less than five years' residence can get pre-settled status, which after five years of continuous stay can convert to settled status. If you do not register by the required date you may not be entitled to remain in the country or have access to particular funds and benefits.

The deadline for applications is 30 June 2021.

More information can be found on the council's website [here](#) or gov.uk website [here](#)

## Mental health and well-being

It's important to ensure you are taking care of your mental health and wellbeing, particularly at the moment. There are a range of online resources that can be accessed for free to help you with this, including some listed below. If you are from a BAME background you may face specific issues relating to your mental health. Some additional links which you may find useful are included.

- [Rethink Mental Illness](#)
- [Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic Mental Health at RMI](#)
- [Bristol BME Service at RMI](#)
- [Bristol Mental Health](#)
- [Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic Information and links at BMH](#)
- [BAME Mental Health Support](#)
- [Thrive at Work West of England](#)

## M5 J19 Overnight closures

Highways England are undertaking final works to complete works at the M5 J19 gyratory. These works are due to finish in early April and will involve some overnight road closures. More information can be found [here](#)



## Taxi renewals and documents

We are continuing to accept renewals online and by email. In order to help us process your application as quickly as possible please take the following steps:

- Renew online where you can. Please upload all of the documents when submitting your application.
- If you can't renew online email your renewal form and all supporting documents to [licensing@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@bristol.gov.uk) Make sure you put your name and plate or badge number in the subject line of the email so we can easily identify it.
- Try to send all the documents in one email where possible. If you send multiple emails this takes more time to process.
- Complete your pre-checks (DBS, DVLA and medical) well in advance and as soon as you receive the reminder letter. We send these reminders out around three months in advance, and if you haven't received the letter in this time frame you should contact us to check what you need to do. If you haven't completed your pre-checks by the time of your renewal we might not be able to issue a new licence.
- Pay the fee – if you sent your application by email and haven't heard from us within 24 hours of submitting it, contact us to make payment on 0117 357 4900.

Please make sure you submit your application and accompanying documents well in advance of the expiry date to allow us to process it in good time. You can submit renewals up to six weeks in advance of your expiry date.

# Online DBS applications and DBS Update Service

**You can now apply for your DBS online. We'll send you an email with a link to the online form, along with your login details. You'll be asked if you want to sign up to the DBS Update Service (GOV.UK) when you receive your certificate. You should strongly consider doing this as it allows us to check your DBS status at any time, and you won't need to complete a full DBS check every three years if you maintain your update service subscription. This will also avoid delays in DBS checks when you apply to renew your licence.**

Because of the introduction of the National Standards by the Department for Transport it is likely the DBS update service will become a requirement of the policy in the near future. To allow you to sign up now if you want to we, are creating accounts for everyone when they are due to renew their licence.

You'll have been sent login details by email, once received you should:

- Login and complete the form, remembering to complete all information including previous names or aliases and addresses where appropriate.
- You need to email copies or photos of your ID documents to [licensing@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@bristol.gov.uk) Check the GOV.UK website for acceptable forms of ID.
- We'll check your ID when we receive it, and send you an appointment for a video call. You need to have your ID with you for the video call, so we can verify it against the ones you've sent by email.
- Once your ID has been verified, we'll end the video chat and call you by phone to take payment for the DBS application for £51.
- We'll verify the DBS online form and send it off.

More information about DBS checks can be found on our website [here](#)

The National Standard can be found on the Government's website [here](#)

## Taxi policy consultation – update

The taxi policy consultation ended on 21 March 2021. The next steps are for the policy and comments to be looked at and any appropriate changes made.

The council will then decide whether to implement the new policy and when.

## Clean Air Zone

**On 25 February 2021 the council's Cabinet approved the Full Business Case for the CAZ which will now be submitted to Government who will confirm if they accept it in the spring.**

The Clean Air Zone would be implemented from October 2021. A number of other authorities are beginning to introduce Clean Air Zones beginning with Bath on 15 March 2021, and Birmingham on 1 June 2021. More information and updates on the Clean Air Zone for Bristol can be found on our website [here](#)





## Government guidance on safely fitting screens

The government has issued guidance on fitting screens in licensed vehicles. It can be found [here](#) The council has

previously issued guidance on fitting screens which we have attached to the end of this newsletter.

## Fleet services update

Fleet services would like to remind everyone of the requirements for booking tests and the measures they are taking to keep you and the testers safe. Please make sure that when you book a test, you take the following steps to make sure your vehicle is ready for inspection:

- All booked test slots must be paid for the day before by card payment only.
- Vehicles must arrive 10 minutes before test starts.
- Vehicles must be clean inside and outside.
- All rubbish is to be removed from the vehicle.
- Windows should be lowered to air the vehicle before exiting.

The vehicle will be sanitised by the testers before and after your test to reduce the risk of spreading Covid, please advise the tester beforehand if you wish for this not to be done.

Some vehicles have been brought in filled with personal items or rubbish, you must make sure this is cleared out before bringing the vehicle for inspection; your vehicle should be brought to Fleet Services as if it is ready to take your next fare.

When presenting the vehicle for test, please come alone. Do not bring pets, children or another person with you. You may need to remain outside for the duration of the test and that there may not be shelter available so please make sure you bring suitable clothing/umbrella.



Where 2m social distancing cannot be maintained, then you'll need to wear a face covering unless you are exempt.

If you aren't able to exit the vehicle for your test please call Fleet Services on 0117 9036319 before your test takes place so that we can make suitable alternative arrangements.

If you don't follow the guidelines, they may not be able to carry out your test. More information can be found on our website [here](#)

## Helping the community during Covid

Lots of you have been helping out your local communities during Covid, including volunteering, delivering food and groceries to vulnerable people, and helping out at vaccination centres. Here is Mo, a former taxi representative pictured alongside Chair of the mosques, Arif Khan. He has been volunteering at his local mosque which is acting as a vaccination centre.



# Guidance – Installation of temporary screens in vehicles during COVID-

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The council in line with the Local Government Association (LGA) has produced the following guidance on temporary screens to be installed in licensed vehicles. Some drivers may wish to install a screen as a temporary measure during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The LGA highlights that there is currently limited evidence of temporary screens reducing the risk of transmission of coronavirus. The need for fitting temporary screens in vehicles is currently unclear, and it is entirely up to driver's proprietors and operators if they wish to install a temporary screen. The installation of temporary screens is a short term measure and the council reserve the right to require their removal.

The guidelines below will help protect you and your customers from the spread of infection, and give confidence to customers that licensed vehicles are one of the safer forms of public transport.

The following guidance should be considered when installing temporary screens:

- Screens must be compliant with government and industry regulations, for example the
- Road Vehicle (Construction and Use) Regulations and relevant safety, UK and European Community (EC) legislation.
- All screens shall be constructed of PETG (Polyethylene Terephthalate Glycol-modified) or polycarbonate.
- The screen and installation shall not compromise the integrity of the vehicle's structure and built in safety features such as air bags.
- Screens must be professionally and securely fitted in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Fleet Services are able to carry out a check of the fitting of screens.

- The screens shall not impede the driver's vision, movement, or communication with passengers, or the driver or access to the vehicle. The screen shall remain clear of scratches, clouding or stickers.
- Insurers should be notified of any modifications made to the vehicle. Drivers should ensure their insurance will not be invalidated as a result of installation.
- The screen shall be disinfected between bookings and at the start and end of each working day.

If you decide to install a screen you must provide the following before installation:

- 1 Details of the proposed screen – including what it will be made from and how it will be fitted.
- 2 Evidence from the screen manufacturer of compliance with Road Vehicle (Construction & Use) Regulations.
- 3 Evidence that the screen is constructed of PETG (Polyethylene Terephthalate Glycol-modified) or polycarbonate.
- 4 Confirmation from the screen manufacturer that the installation does not compromise the integrity of the vehicle's structure and safety features.

The following should be provided within five working days of the screen being installed:

- 5 Notification that a temporary screen has been installed.
- 6 Evidence that the temporary screen has been installed professionally and securely fitted in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- 7 A copy of your notification to your insurance company informing them a screen has been installed;

We know the COVID-19 pandemic has brought many challenges for the taxi and private hire trade, and we want to help you return to work and continue operating as safely and quickly as possible. If you have any queries please contact the Licensing Team via email at: [licensing@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@bristol.gov.uk)

## What would you like to see?

**The Licensing Team aim to improve communication between the council and the Trade.**

Remember, this is your newsletter! If you have something you think would be useful, or would like

to see included in future issues, or you have a good news story or information you want to share, please get in touch at [licensing@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@bristol.gov.uk) with the subject 'Newsletter'.