



Help in safeguarding our city

I want to take an opportunity to thank the drivers, staff and partners who have been involved in Bristol City Council's new mandatory safeguarding training for taxi drivers. The one day course has been developed in response to government's new Statutory Guidance for Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards, but Bristol has taken the chance to develop something which is being hailed as best practice.

Everyone has a safeguarding responsibility, but the training introduced as part of the licensing requirements recognises that taxi drivers have even more opportunity than most people to notice the effects of abuse and exploitation. Over 600 drivers have already completed the mandatory course, and we're seeing this result in action on vulnerable people in the city. Police have acted on the information they've been provided by drivers empowered by the course, and we've taken vulnerable children into care as a result.

Taxi drivers are a key part of our transport network but this all highlights their important roles in our communities



too, as touch points for the public and working with vulnerable people across the city. Upskilling our drivers and offering them the tools and support to raise concerns gets better outcomes for the city as a whole and I am grateful for everyone who has taken on the responsibility.

Marvin Rees Mayor of Bristol

Mandatory Safeguarding Taxi Driver Training

All Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Drivers must attend the new mandatory Safeguarding Training. We are in the process of inviting

drivers to attend the training sessions, based on their expiry date. There will be enough sessions for all drivers, however once you have received your invitation, please sign up as soon as possible, to make sure that you don't miss a session before your expiry date. You will need to attend the training and pass the assessment in order for us to issue your Driver's Licence.

Cont.

You may have previously completed other safeguarding training through a different team or organisation; however, you will need to attend one of these new sessions as they have been tailored to your role as a Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Driver in Bristol. The training session will last all day, and you will need to attend for the duration.

We've had really positive feedback from a number of attendees, with one driver saying that the training helps to protect the vulnerable.

We have also had an instance where one driver felt confident enough after completing the training to report a concern to the police, who were then able to take action.



Introducing the new Chair

Please allow me to introduce myself as the new Chair of the Public Safety and Protection Committee and as I take up this role, I send thanks to Councillor Guy Poultney for the work he has overseen during his chair ship. This coming year will see the bedding in of newly revised local policies and I am taking on the baton from Councillor Poultney in lobbying our neighbouring authorities that have lower standards than our own in terms of contributions to the polluted air we are all forced to breathe.

Taxis are, and will continue to be, an essential element of our transport infrastructure as the city moves towards the stated aim of achieving carbon net zero. Part of my role will be to ensure the needs and voices of the trade are heard and included as the infrastructure develops within the city and wider region.

I thank and recognise the contribution the trade makes towards enabling some of the most disadvantaged citizens within our community to go about their day-to-day lives, and that the service you all help to provide ensures some of our most disadvantaged and vulnerable children are supported to access their education.

I look forward to working with and alongside you in this new role.



Councillor Christine Townsend,
Public Safety and Protection Committee

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 with the subject 'Newsletter'.

PC Quinton update – Taxi Cop

I have been spending a lot of time at the police station recently dealing with investigations. 13 of those involve drivers who have received tickets and nominated an unlicensed driver as using it at the time of the offence.

As you know, only a licensed driver can drive a licensed vehicle at any time (no matter what the purpose of the journey is), so allowing someone without a badge to use a vehicle is an offence.

So what are the offences?

For the unlicensed driver, they commit an offence of Driving a Private Hire Vehicle without a Private Hire Drivers licence (section 46(1) (b) and (2) and 76 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976). They may also commit an offence of No Insurance depending on the circumstances.

For the licensed driver who allows the vehicle to be driven, they commit the offence of Aiding and Abetting the driving of a Private Hire Vehicle without a Private Hire Drivers licence (section 44 of the Magistrates Court Act 1988 – fine up to £1000), as well as permitting the vehicle to be used without insurance. I've noticed that some of the nominated drivers live abroad. Licensed drivers can still be prosecuted whether the nominated driver is taken to court or not.

For the licensed driver who has given false information about who was driving the vehicle at the time of the original offence (mostly speeding and red light offences I've noticed), that is the offence of Perverting the Course of Justice. It's a serious offence, which carries a prison term.



Regardless of what action the police take, the Council will also consider if the driver is a Fit and Proper person to hold a licence.

If you know of someone who has given false information about who was driving at the time of the offence, my best advice is that they should seek independent legal advice now.

It's also important that drivers deal with their tickets. Just this month, one Private Hire Driver had their licence immediately revoked by not dealing with their 6 speeding tickets, and at Court they had a 24 month disqualification and £3960 of fines plus costs.

PC Quinton, Taxi Compliance Officer
The Bridewell police station

Fees increase

The Private Hire and Hackney Carriage application and renewal fees increased in August 2022. Our website has been updated with the new fees on the relevant pages.

Increase in Hackney Carriage Fares

Following a review of the current fare structure and consultation with members of the Hackney Carriage Trade, an increase in Hackney Carriage fares was implemented on 1st September 2022. All meters need to be calibrated as soon as possible in order to reflect the new fares. If your meter hasn't been calibrated to the new fares, you cannot charge the higher rates.

CrimeStoppers.

0800 555 111

100% anonymous. Always.

You may have heard of Crimestoppers, but do you know what they do?

Ten arrests are made across the UK daily because of reports to Crimestoppers. In the West Country alone Crimestoppers receive an average of 257 pieces of actionable information every month which is passed on to the police. Last year this resulted in 536 people being arrested and charged.

If you know something about a crime or a criminal but don't want to go directly to the police, you can contact Crimestoppers anonymously. Sometimes it can be difficult to come forward with information. You might have seen or heard something about a crime but don't know what to do or are scared to come forward. It's easy to think there is nothing you can do, but Crimestoppers offer you a safe way to do this.

Crimestoppers is a charity, and their service is unique and designed to protect your identity, in the 33 years that Crimestoppers have been running, no one has ever been identified after giving information.

Crimestoppers don't record any personal details about anyone making a report and will pass information to the relevant authority without revealing the identity of the person making the report.

You can report information to them by calling them on 0800 555 111 or submitting through their website <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information/give-information-online/> All of Crimestoppers's call agents are trained to support you through the process.

Crimestoppers is not an emergency service and if you see a crime taking place you should ring 999 to report it immediately.

You can follow the Westcountry branch of Crimestoppers on Facebook www.facebook.com/CrimestoppersintheWestCountry or Twitter www.twitter.com/WestCountry_CS

Clean Air Zone

As you will be aware Bristol City Council will be implementing a Clean Air Zone, this was scheduled to be introduced in late Summer but has been delayed.

The Clean Air Zone will now be introduced on Monday 28th November 2022.

You can find out more information about the Clean Air Zone here (Bristol's Clean Air Zone), and you can see if your vehicle is compliant here (Bristol's Clean Air Zone charges and vehicle checker)

Bristol expands free electric van loan scheme with new taxis

In March this year, Bristol City Council launched a new scheme offering free trials of electric vehicles (EVs) to Bristol organisations to encourage them to switch to cleaner ways of travelling ahead of the city's Clean Air Zone launching on Monday 28 November 2022.

People have the chance to trial electric vans and cars for up to two months, to get a better understanding of the benefits and how electric vehicles could work for them. On 7 September 2022, two purpose-built electric hackney carriages produced by LEVC with plug-in hybrid range-extenders will be available to Bristol City Council licensed hackney drivers in Bristol for free loans of two to four weeks on this scheme.

Councillor Don Alexander, Cabinet Member for Transport said, "Our free electric van trial scheme has been hugely popular. More than 60 organisations have tested a van or car so far and had the chance to see what it's like to rely on electric: exploring things like battery range, charging point access and the cost of keeping these vehicles on the road. Many have told us the free loan has made them accelerate their plans to add electric vehicles to their existing fleets."

Taxis are an important part of our transport infrastructure in Bristol, so we're pleased to extend the free EV hire scheme to our licensed Hackney Carriage drivers. Getting a sense for the smooth ride and price of charging will present local drivers with a cleaner vehicle choice and the opportunity to help us reduce toxic air pollution which is so harmful to our health."

Each taxi drives in full-electric mode all the time but is recharged by an 81-hp 1.5-litre turbocharged three-cylinder petrol engine. The taxis will have a zero-emission electric range of up to 80 miles. Their combined petrol and electric range will be up to 377 miles.

If there are a large amount of applications for this trial, the council will prioritise taxi drivers with vehicles which will not meet the emission standards of Bristol's Clean Air Zone or those whose vehicles are nearing the end of their working life.

Taxi drivers applying for a free electric taxi loan must operate at least one petrol or diesel vehicle and make frequent trips in and out of the city on the M32 or other motorways and major routes or travel regularly through the Clean Air Zone.

More information about the scheme and the application form can be found at www.travelwest.info/electrictaxi



Clean Air Zone and Electric Vehicles – Funding available

A range of funding and support offers are available on a first-come, first-served basis for taxi drivers choosing low emission and electric vehicles including licensing subsidies worth up to £3,000 over five years and charging credit of up to £5000.

Private Hires

- Clean air zone grants and loans of up to £1500 for private hires.

Hackney Carriages

- Clean air zone grants and loans of up to £4000 for Hackney carriages – find out more and register your interest [here](#).
- Subsidies from licensing for electric and low emission vehicles hackney carriages worth up to £3000 including funding to cover licensing fees, and temple meads permit – applications on first come first served basis.

- Up to £5000 of credit over 5 years for vehicle charging.
- Government grants for new plug in vehicles – find out more on the governments's webpage – www.gov.uk
- Free Electric Taxi Experience – find out more information and sign up – [Bristol's Free Electric Van loan scheme – Travelwest](#)
- More information and guides on electric vehicles can be found on the webpages below:
 - Fully Charged You Tube channel – [TX London cab](#)
 - Fully Charged You Tube channel – [metro cab](#)
 - LEVC [Driving tips](#)
 - Case study – [electric taxi](#)

School transport update

The start of the new school year has come around, and the School Transport Team would like to thank you for getting our children and young people to school every day safe and happy over the last year, the work you do is much appreciated by all the team. The team have worked hard on the transport for September, as some students will be leaving school and lots of new children will be starting. Some routes will stop, some will change and there will be new routes to new schools.

Please wear your badge on school transport runs

We've been made aware that a number of taxi drivers haven't been wearing their badge when a random check has been carried out at the school, and we have had drivers state that they don't need to wear it any more. This is not correct, and you must wear your badge during school transport runs, your badge identifies you as a licensed driver to families and schools. Reports of drivers continuing not to wear their badges may be passed to the licensing team to take action as it is a breach of your licence conditions.

Data Breach

In the February newsletter we reported that there was an incident where information was shared which shouldn't have been when a driver shared a Route Schedule which has confidential information about children, on a WhatsApp group. There has been a further incident where a Route Schedule fell out of a driver's vehicle onto the driveway of a passenger who was being dropped off. The route schedule was found by a postman. All information is confidential and should not be shared with anyone, and you should securely dispose of old route schedules by either shredding them or taking them to your office. Route Schedules must be stored in a secure place such as a locked glovebox. We have to report all data breaches and the council could get fined.

Tender process

The current home to school travel framework agreement has been de-commissioned and replaced with a new Dynamic Purchasing Scheme (DPS). If you are registered you will have received an email, if you are interested but have not signed up you can do so here [Supplier registration](#). If you have questions about the DPS they need to be submitted through ProContract, the questions will be answered for everyone to see, however it won't identify who has asked the question.

Fleet Services Update

Since August 2021 all drivers have been required to show their current private hire or hackney carriage badges when presenting a licensed vehicle for vehicle inspection check. Unfortunately, some drivers are still attending their appointment without their badge. If you don't bring your badge to the appointment the compliance test will be cancelled, and you will lose the fee for that booking. This is because a licensed vehicle can only be driven by a licensed driver.

When booking a Vehicle Inspection Check, please ensure that you have booked it in the correct timeframe for the type of licence you are applying

for, if your Vehicle Inspection Test is done too early, your vehicle will be required to complete a further Vehicle Inspection Check, and you will need to pay a further fee. The timeframes are;

- For new applications (grants) the Vehicle Inspection Check can't be older than 6 weeks on the date you submit your application
- For renewals the Vehicle Inspection Check can't be accepted if it was completed more than six weeks before your licence expires
- For expired licences (late renewals) the Vehicle Inspection Check can't be older than six weeks on the date you submit your application

Bascule Bridge Closure

Bascule Bridge in Redcliff will be closed to all traffic including pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles from Monday 1st August 2022 – Sunday 9th October 2022 to allow for bridge Structure works. As a result of this you will need to alter your journeys.

Taxi Services

Taxis are being requested to use sensible routes when operating in this area. Passengers may wish to use Victoria Street or Redcliff Street, both of which are acceptable alternative routes. Please be aware that there will be considerably higher traffic levels in the area, and

we request that you take account of this when parking, dropping off and collecting passengers. No taxi ranks are affected or closed due to these works.

Pedestrians and Cyclists

Bristol Bridge and Prince Street Bridge will be open for both pedestrians and cyclists to use. As Bascule bridge is closed we are expecting footfall in these areas will be higher so please be mindful of all road users in this area.

You can find further information on our website.

[Redcliffe Bridge refurbishment](#)

Letter of Praise

Recently we had a member of the public get in touch with us to praise the service she had received from one of our Hackney Carriage Drivers. We know that there are lots of positive stories about drivers, and this is a great opportunity to share one of those.

"As a wheelchair user, getting taxis is usually a stressful ordeal. Yesterday, I was pleasantly surprised. People are quick enough to complain, but when they have positive experiences, you don't often get the feedback, so I'm here to say thank you.

I got a taxi yesterday from temple meads Station to the slug and lettuce, taxi number 26. This driver was brilliant. In my area, you get bundled into the back and you're rattling around. I dread taking taxis because driver incompetence makes it unsafe.

This man knew exactly where the clamp points are on my chair, I got a seat belt. My chair didn't move once throughout the whole journey. The icing on the cake was he waited until I was safe and he was ready to drive off BEFORE he started his meter. Lots of drivers start it before you're even in the car so they can hike up the fare and charge more.

Honestly, I know it's 2022 and this is just normal and how it should be, but I've never had a positive taxi experience before. It's great to know I don't have to worry when I'm in next in Bristol."

As the member of the public says, people will always complain about bad experiences, but rarely report the good ones... It is great to know there are drivers out there who are providing an excellent service, leaving people with a positive lasting impression of the Bristol hackney drivers.