



Chair Article

Bristol continues to experience major traffic diversions especially in South Bristol with the closure of Malago Road for the foreseeable future, these will be ongoing. Related to this is the use of East Street as a de facto one-way street to avoid the diversion. As the ward councillor for this area of the city I have been working with officers, other local ward councillors the police and the developers to bring this street back to its' intended use i.e. largely for sustainable transport uses only – we have recognised however the need for some leniency in relation to taxi use, so some change in road use by private vehicles should be seen in the coming weeks and months.

The Clean Air Zone is about to go live as I write this, with the trade having worked towards this for a number of years in preparation the Bristol licensed drivers should see benefits from the cleaner air and fewer non-Bristol licensed drivers in the zone, because if they are there and the vehicle is non-compliant then charges will apply. We ask for patience as drivers, the system and the general public adapt to these road usage changes, no doubt it will take a couple of weeks to see things settle down.

As the Chair I continue to try to work with my counterparts in neighbouring authorities to lobby



for greater alignment of standards both in relation to drivers and vehicles as I know this is a concern in relation to Private Hire Vehicles, this is an ongoing issue that I am committed to taking forward.

Councillor Christine Townsend,
Public Safety and Protection Committee

Christmas and New Year opening hours

The Licensing Service will be closed on the **26th and 27th December 2022**, and **2nd January 2023**. There will be no DBS ID checks available between the **23rd December** and **3rd January**.

Fleet Services and the Customer Service Centre phone lines are open over the festive period with the exception of **26th and 27th December** (in lieu of Christmas and Boxing Day), and **2nd January 2023**

Fleet services opening hours will be **07:00-14:00** for the week commencing **19th December**.

They are open normal hours outside of these times.

PC Quinton update – Taxi Cop

With Christmas and New Year coming up, we can expect greater demand for our Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver's services. With that extra work comes extra risk, and we all know that drivers are subjected to racial abuse, assaults and customers failing to pay. So here are some of my Top Tips for keeping safe during this busy time.

If a passenger starts to verbally abuse you, know how to quickly start recording on your phone. One of the biggest problems we have dealing with these offences is lack of independent evidence.

Has a passenger spat at you? Try to keep the saliva safe as we can take a swab for DNA analysis to identify the suspect and provide evidence of the offence.

Contactless payments - You can take a small or partial payment before the journey starts to make the sure the card actually works. At the end of the journey, ask the customer to wait until the payment goes through. There is more information about runners and contactless payments on my updated Information Sheet.

E-mail taxis@avonandsomerset.police.uk for your copy.

Private Hire – keep your car doors locked until you have confirmed the person is the customer who has booked your vehicle. Keep them locked when waiting for your next job.

Private Hire – once your passengers have got in, you may remove your seatbelt for the duration of that journey if you feel unsafe wearing it.

Hackney Carriage – you can take a surety such as a phone or a driving licence to return when payment is made at the end of the journey

Keep your wallet and other valuables out of sight and definitely out of reach of your customers if possible. Make sure you remove everything of value from your vehicle overnight and leave your glovebox/storage bins open so it's obvious to a criminal that it's not worth breaking in.



Where possible, customers should sit on the rear seats. Unless there's a good reason, if you are transporting a lone female she should travel on the nearside rear seat NOT on the front seat

Consider fitting a CCTV system into your vehicle especially if you are a Hackney Carriage driver who does rank work at night.

Join the Taxi Cop WhatsApp group to get updates on road closures, work opportunities, crime prevention advice and warnings about certain customers or areas. No one will see your details or know you are on the group. To join, message **07469 400832**

If you are a victim of abuse of a crime, call **999** if it is in progress. If not, report it online on the Avon and Somerset Police website. Please also let me know

I wish you safe shifts over this holiday period.

PC Quinton, Taxi Compliance Officer
The Bridewell police station

Clean Air Zone

Bristol Clean Air Zone

Look out for road signs telling you that you are approaching or entering the zone



The Clean Air Zone will start on November 28th. If you have a non-compliant vehicle you will be charged each day to enter the zone from this date.

Please note, there are no specific exemptions available for taxi drivers.

There is funding available for taxi drivers that are registered to Bristol Council. Applications can be made on our website. (Bristol's Clean Air Zone)

If you do successfully apply for financial support, you will be granted an exemption from charges for 90 days. If you then order a new vehicle, this exemption can be extended until July 31st 2023 at the latest.

We have recently published a video in [Polish](#) and [Somali](#) with information on the upcoming Clean Air Zone.

LEVC Loan Scheme

Bristol City Council (BCC) is offering BCC-licensed Hackney Carriage Drivers the chance to try out a LEVC Electric Hackney Carriage for free. The scheme is designed to help you decide if an electric vehicle is the right choice for you.

Borrow an electric taxi from two to four weeks with:

- free insurance cover (insurance is subject to specific policy requirements)
- a permit to enter Temple Meads station
- a briefing showing you how to drive the purpose-built hackney carriages made by LEVC

Bristol licensed driver, Patrick Masih, has signed up to try a new electric Hackney Carriage Vehicle

through the scheme. He said: "I'm delighted to be part of this trial. LEVC is a very elegant, durable and strong vehicle. It is the way forward to improve our local air quality, reduce noise pollution and lower carbon emissions across Bristol. It is important that taxi drivers test electric vehicles in our current fuel crisis. Trying it out allows us to accurately reflect on the big decision and financial commitment of switching to electric vehicles."

The scheme runs until 2024 and is funded by National Highways. Vehicles are leased from our [Fleet Services team](#) at the Sandy Park Depot where you can also get a [taxi vehicle inspection test](#)

Find out more about the scheme and sign up today at www.travelwest.info/electrictaxi



Bristol licensed driver, Patrick Masih, and Mahad Jama, Director of Magans Taxis, on a visit to Bristol City Council's Fleet Services Depot to take a look at the new electric Hackney Carriage Vehicle's.

Help to go electric – funding available

A range of funding and support offers are available on a first-come, first-served basis for Hackney Carriage Driver's choosing low emission and electric vehicles including licensing subsidies worth up to £3,000 over five years and charging credit of up to £5,000:

- Clean Air Zone grants and loans of up to £4,000 for hackney carriages – [find out more and register your interest here](#)
- Subsidies from licensing for electric and low emission hackney carriages worth up to £3,000 including funding to cover licensing fees and Temple Meads permit – applications on a first come first served basis.
- Vehicle charging – 50% Revive vehicle charging credit for two years or up to a total value of £5,000 (whichever happens soonest). Revive is a publicly owned EV charging network created to meet the needs of the West of England. More information about the Revive discount will follow soon but in the meantime, you can learn more and sign up to [Revive here](#)

Government grants for new plug-in vehicles – find out more on the [government's website](#)

Do you know your licence conditions?

Private Hire and Hackney Carriage licences all have a number of conditions attached (with the exception of Hackney Carriage Drivers, who must still comply with the Hackney Carriage Byelaws). These conditions are printed on the pages which are attached to your licence. It is important that you read and ensure you fully understand all of these conditions.

Failure to comply with conditions attached to your licence is an offence under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. The Council has a policy on the relevance of criminal behaviour which can be viewed [here](#).

To avoid a situation where you may face prosecution or having your licence revoked or suspended please ensure all conditions are complied with. The conditions include (but are not limited to) the requirement to notify the

Council in writing (by close of business on the following working day of the event occurring) of:

- changes to medical circumstances,
- receiving DVLA points,
- being arrested or interviewed for various offences,
- receiving a caution or conviction,
- any change that would require you to provide different information on application to that provided in your most recent application for a licence.

Home to School Travel

The new Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) will start from 1st January 2023. We have completed the first stage of people applying to be on the DPS, and there are new operator's and individual taxi drivers on the DPS. Anyone who is new to providing school transport for Bristol will be contacted to arrange a meeting to discuss travel and go through your paperwork. There are many benefits to travelling actively to school, for both adults and children:

We are now in Stage 2 where those approved have to complete Quality Questions/ Sustainability and Social Value questions and also put bids on routes. We have put out almost 150 current school routes on the DPS for January. We are currently assessing the responses to the questions and giving them a weighting. This is

used alongside each company or person's bid to determine who will be successful. Thank you to all of you who have taken the time to apply. The results will be available before the schools shut for the Christmas holidays.

It is almost the end of the year, but it seems that September to December has gone so quickly. Thank you for getting our children to and from school, you do make such a difference to their day!

How to get support and advice during the cost of living crisis

The rising cost of living is impacting people across Bristol in different ways. If you need help, please reach out. There is advice, support and information available across Bristol. Visit Bristol City Council's [cost of living support webpage](#)

for advice and guidance on topics including food, housing, benefits and financial help, employment and skills, mental health and wellbeing, plus links to useful websites and community organisations across the city that can help you.

The webpage also includes information on

the city's network of Welcoming Spaces where people can meet up, socialise, keep warm and access support relating to the cost of living crisis. What happens at each space will vary according to the venue but could include use of Wi-Fi, access to electrical charging points, activities and community meals. There is support provided by city-wide organisations including practical advice about money and finance, mental health and employment and skills. You can see a list of the Welcoming Spaces on the [Bristol City Council website](#)

Fleet Services Update

Please ensure that you are arriving 15 minutes before your appointment, all vehicles that are brought to fleet services should be clean inside and outside, dirty tissues, empty wrappers and drinks containers should not be left in door pockets or by seats. Vehicles must be presented in a clean and tidy condition; in the same condition you would present the vehicle when working.

All drivers are required to show their current Private Hire or Hackney Carriage badges when presenting a licensed vehicle for a vehicle

inspection check. This is because only a licensed driver can drive a licensed vehicle. 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.

Please ensure you do not interrupt the tester during the Vehicle Inspection Check, and please be patient when returning for cosmetic or MOT retest.

Mandatory Safeguarding Taxi Driver Training

As you will be aware, since the introduction of our new Taxi Policy, there is a requirement for all drivers to attend a Safeguarding Training session. The majority of driver's have attended and passed one of these sessions. Feedback has been extremely positive and has shown the training to be very beneficial.

You will have received a number of email invitations, if you have not yet attended and passed you will need to prior to the expiration of your licence or we will be unable to renew your licence. Even if you have completed safeguarding training through a different team or organisation, you will need to attend one of these sessions. The

training session will last all day, and you need to attend the whole session, and pass both tests. The next available sessions are;

- [30/1/23](#)
- [31/1/23](#)
- [6/2/23](#)
- [7/2/23](#)

These are the last available sessions which are currently scheduled, so you will need to book one now if you haven't already completed the training, irrespective of when your licence expires.

DBS Update Service

The requirement for all drivers to sign up to the Update Service came in in August 2021, when the new Taxi Policy was adopted. Failure to comply with conditions attached to your licence is an offence under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. The Council has a policy on the relevance of criminal behaviour which can be viewed [here](#).

If you have already signed up to the DBS Update Service, you will not need to complete a further DBS check. If you have not updated us that you have signed up to the DBS Update Service, you need to fill in a DBS Update Service Authorisation Form which gives us permission to check your DBS Certificate, which you can find on our [website](#), you will also need to show us the DBS Certificate which you used to sign up to the Update Service.

If you haven't signed up to the DBS Update Service you will need to contact us so we can create a DBS account for you, and you will need to apply for an enhanced DBS check and sign up to the DBS Update Service.

If you haven't signed up to the Update Service, we will not be able to renew your licence.

Schools and Active Travel

The Active Travel and Engagement Team at Bristol City Council works closely with many schools across the city to encourage the whole school community to travel actively and sustainably to school. This means there is a focus on promoting walking, scooting, and cycling whenever possible, and travelling by bus, car sharing or using a park & stride (parking around 5-10 minutes away from the school and walking the rest of the way), when distance or time mean that walking/scooting/cycling is not possible.

There are many benefits to travelling actively to school, for both adults and children:

- Physical health – daily exercise from walking, scooting or cycling to school is good for the heart, increases fitness and helps us reach 60 mins NHS guideline of exercise every day
- Mental health – active travel is a great way to improve mood because it gives us the opportunity to socialise with friends and family, get fresh air, and gain independence through getting to know the local area.

- Money - cars are very expensive to buy and run. Walking, scooting and cycling are free.
- Fewer cars around the school gates means less congestion, improved air quality and makes it safer and easier to cross the roads.
- Environment – walking, scooting and cycling are better for the environment, both locally and across the planet, and part of the toolkit we can use to help tackle climate change.
- Concentration - active travel doesn't just wake up our bodies but also our brains, making children ready to settle down and learn. Studies have shown that children who travel actively in the mornings have improved concentration and better memories.

Please support your children and local schools by parking responsibly and away from the school gates. We are all working to create a city that is cleaner, safer and healthier for our whole community.

King's Coronation – Meter Calibration

As you will be aware, there is an additional Bank Holiday in 2023, on **Monday 8th May** for the King's Coronation. In order to charge the Bank Holiday fee on the meter you will need to have your meter re-calibrated by this date.

Online applications

We are making some changes to the way you apply for your licence; most applications will be able to be made online, and all documents can be uploaded with the application. This should provide a smoother, and more efficient process for you when you are making your application.

We will also be changing the way you contact us, and we will be providing an online form to make sure we have all your information when you ask us a question or submit information. We will be sending out a newsletter special dedicated to this new process in a few weeks' time so please look out for this.

Good News Story - Nasir Aden

We received some positive news about actions taken by one of our Private Hire drivers recently.

In October Police were alerted that a young woman who had been detained in a mental health unit had been released, and took a taxi, driven by Nasir Aden, asking to be taken to Clifton Suspension Bridge.

Mr Aden identified that she was in crisis and offered to take her home instead. She refused but agreed to be dropped at Clifton village. Mr Aden saw her walking towards the bridge and followed her to check on her wellbeing. She attempted to fall from the Suspension bridge but was prevented from doing so by Mr Aden grabbing hold of her and bridge staff assisting in keeping her safe until the Police were able to arrive and take over.

He has been recognised for his actions by the Neighbourhood Policing Inspector. His actions may well have saved her life, and he brings credit on himself and the trade.