



**NEW  
LOOK**

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Criteria Policy**

# Licensing Leeds

Taxi and Private Hire Licensing



# Act now to ensure you receive Train to Gain funding



## Group II Medical Update

To ensure safety for licensed drivers and passengers alike, the requirement for a Group II Medical is now in place for all Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers.

The policy applies to:

- ➔ All new Private Hire and Hackney Carriage driver applications
- ➔ All existing Private Hire and Hackney Carriage drivers at the point of renewal of their existing licence

From age 45, a Group II Medical is required every 5 years.

From age 65, each annual renewal of the licence must be accompanied by a Group II Medical.

Group II Medical Reports will only be accepted from your own GP, or another GP in the same practice. If for any reason your own GP is unwilling to carry this out, please ask them to refer you to another suitable GP, providing a covering letter to inform the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Section.

We will accept a Group II Medical which has already been carried out for any other purpose but it must cover the entire period of the licence being granted. ■

**If you haven't already enrolled** with a training provider to undertake your NVQ Level 2 in Road Passenger Vehicle Driving (Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles) and VRQ Level 2 Certificate in Road Passenger Transport, then now is the time to act.

Remember, the Train to Gain funding which gives you access to free training will not last forever. Please see below for the names of training providers who have, so far, demonstrated to us that they are delivering to Leeds City Council's requirements:

- Hull College** 01482 308058
- ESTL** 01484 609777
- Norton Webb Limited** 0113 2178361
- PDM Training** 01264 321320
- Cablecom Training** 01642 764000
- Tyro Training** 01756 793370
- Joseph Priestley College** 0113 3076042
- Profound Training Services** 0191 5878161
- Yorkshire Business School** 01924 256420
- Trescom/ Park Lane College** 01274 201854
- Bradford College** 01274 433102
- ATL (Yorkshire) Ltd** 01274 735844
- Anissa UK** 01274 499815

Leeds City Council welcomes approaches from other providers who can demonstrate that they deliver to the council's requirements.

### Some Frequently Asked Questions about the NVQ & VRQ:

**Q: I already have a Level 2 NVQ Passenger Carrying Vehicle Driving (Bus and Coach); do I have to go through training again?**

**A:** Yes, the required qualifications for licensed drivers within the Leeds Licensing District are those listed above, NVQ Level 2 in Road Passenger Vehicle Driving

(Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles) and VRQ Level 2 Certificate in Road Passenger Transport. This programme is specifically designed for the Taxi and Private Hire trade and allows drivers to attain two nationally recognised qualifications relative to their job.

It is the certificate for both of these qualifications that we need to have on your file to fulfil your licence obligations from 2011.

**Q: I have been contacted by a training provider who states they can deliver the training in just 4 weeks however I know of other drivers who have been told it will take them 10-16 weeks to complete. How long should it take?**

**A:** The time it takes to undertake the training will vary from driver to driver. However, it is generally recognised by the awarding bodies i.e. the companies (Edexcel, EDI, City & Guilds) who oversee the development of NVQs and approve the assessment Centres, that a 10 week time period should be the minimum time period.

**Q: I have heard rumours that some drivers are being paid to undertake the training with certain providers and are also making use of translators. Is this the case?**

**A:** Training providers have been warned about inappropriate behaviour including:

- ➔ Delivering the training within hours rather than weeks
- ➔ Paying drivers and Operators
- ➔ Using translators

The Learning and Skills Council will investigate all claims of inappropriate behaviour. In addition, an external verifier, someone appointed by the awarding body to report on the quality of the work done by the training provider, may disallow the qualifications before you

actually get your certificate.

If your training provider is inspected and found to be delivering inappropriately you may end up without an NVQ and/ or VRQ so please think very carefully before you sign up to a 'too good to be true' offer!

**Q: English is not my first language and whilst I can speak and understand English, I am concerned that my reading is not good**

**enough to undertake the test. What help can I get?**

**A:** It is NOT appropriate for any aspect of the training or testing to be translated into your first language or for training providers to assist in providing the answers. If your training provider is found to be doing this then your qualification may not be recognised.

All training providers should offer Skills for Life which are designed to help you develop

skills used in everyday life such as reading, writing or maths. Please talk to your training provider or visit [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) if you feel you would benefit from a Skills for Life course.

You will be supported through your NVQ by your assessor however you must undertake the test included in the VRQ qualification yourself, under test conditions i.e. no translation service, with only a bi-lingual dictionary for assistance.

## Testimonial/ Good News Stories

### **A driver from Streamline-Telecabs who undertook his training with Norton Webb**

I have never had a qualification; I left school without any qualifications at all and I have done alright in life and have a good job but I feel that doing the course and gaining a qualification has been a good thing.

I thought it was going to be really difficult to complete but it wasn't bad at all. The video assessments were quite difficult to work with; as soon as the camera came on it was a bit daunting but you get used to it.

I have had my badge 26 years and I wondered why I had to do the course but there are things I have learnt. I especially learnt about drinking and driving and how long

it takes alcohol to leave the system. I also learnt other things especially about stopping distances and about how long to leave for braking time. A lot of the disability rules were new to me, such as the use of a white stick with the red bands and the burgundy jackets for the hearing dogs.

I had to work really hard to revise for the test and I stayed up all night to read through everything I had learnt so that I could pass the exam first time. It felt great when I took and passed the exam!

I was quite apprehensive to start with but knew I had to do it and I have to admit that I have learnt quite a lot more than I thought I would. I would recommend it to other people. It has been worthwhile.

### **A driver who undertook their training with Yorkshire Business School**

Roz suffered a tragic accident at the age of 9 which left her battling a long illness and meant she entered a schooling system that was not equipped to deal with her needs or support her education after a 2 year absence. This lack of support and understanding meant that she never caught up with her peers and she left school with no qualifications.

Once her children had grown up, Roz visited her local Job Centre to look for work. Her advisor suggested that she looked at taking on the school-run with her local Private Hire Operator. As a Private Hire driver in the Leeds area, Roz was required to undertake the VRQ and NVQ qualification in Road Vehicle Passenger Transport but her poor experience and fear of learning had left her with very low confidence and self esteem making her incredibly apprehensive.

In February 2009, Roz nervously came to the Yorkshire Business School to start her learning. Her tutor talked her through the course and was able to offer the support and guidance Roz needed to face her fear of learning

and computers, "I have not done any learning since I left school, being in a small class size with a relaxed atmosphere meant that it was not as scary as I thought"

Part of Roz's programme involved a learndirect online course and as she had never used a computer before, she was not confident in being able to continue. With support from her tutor however she successfully completed her first online course which boosted her confidence immensely. The next hurdle was undertaking an online test for the VRQ part of her programme and she was convinced that she would never pass an exam, especially a computer based one.

At her first attempt, Roz passed both her VRQ tests and was thrilled to achieve this (her first ever) qualification! She stated that: "Passing the BTEC VRQ on my first go was a great feeling. I knew more than I thought; it really amazed me and boosted my confidence. If any body feels the same as me, do not let yourself be put off as it is not as scary as you would think. The buzz of my achievement was uplifting and made me feel very confident about myself."

### **A driver who undertook their training with Norton Webb**

I have been a Taxi driver for 30 years and thought I knew everything about the trade; how wrong I was.

During the course there were many things I learnt that I was not previously aware of; I have learnt all about Disability Discrimination Awareness (DDA), the correct way to deal with emergencies and health and safety regulations. I have also learnt how to transport children and young people correctly following the law. I now feel I give a more professional service as a Taxi driver.

After 30 years of driving, I actually thought I had lost the ability to learn any new skills but taking the NVQ course opened my eyes and gave me back the opportunity to start learning again and I have now become an NVQ assessor!

I used to find it very difficult to understand computers and was afraid of using them; since taking the NVQ I have become competent in using them.

I would like to thank all those concerned, especially Norton Webb, for giving me the chance to turn my life around. Undertaking the NVQ really did change my life and has given me back the ability to learn. ■





WEST YORKSHIRE  
POLICE

neighbourhood policing teams

npt

Neighbourhood Policing  
in Your Area

# Crime Prevention and Safety Advice

Inspector Tony Reed, Chapel Allerton NPT



I'm the Neighbourhood Inspector with responsibility for the Chapel Allerton area of North East Leeds and one of my responsibilities is to ensure the Police and other partners respond to emerging crime and disorder issues across the Chapel Allerton area, to make the Ward a safer place to live and work. Fear of crime is an issue that affects the quality of life of both individuals and communities alike. Thankfully we have made good reductions in crime in the last 12 months with a 16% overall crime reduction.

## I am aware of issues facing

Taxi and Private Hire drivers and Operators which service the Chapeltown area. In recent months up to April 2009 we had seen an increase in robberies on drivers, generally late in the evening, and whilst the number of instances were relatively few I am aware of how the fear of becoming a victim can effect your feeling of personal safety.

We take instances like this very seriously and I am please to give you the news that significant arrests have taken place recently on two people believed to have been involved in these crimes. One of those people arrested, has been charged and will be appearing in Court shortly.

Since the arrests, reported offending against drivers in Chapeltown has reduced significantly. We will continue to do all we can to make your working environment as safe as possible; however, there are steps you can take yourself to further reduce your risk of being attacked. I encourage you to read the practical steps you can take, below, and take on-board the simple advice it offers.

If you have any information which may assist us in making the area safer for everyone please contact us using the details opposite.

It is extremely important that all Taxi and Private Hire drivers, especially those who are new to the industry, understand the dangers involved and learn how to avoid becoming a victim of crime.

## There are many reasons why you are at risk whilst at work

- You work alone
- You work late at night or very early in the morning
- You work in isolated areas
- You are usually in possession of cash
- You deal with strangers

Leeds City Council advise all drivers to avoid displaying national flags, religious items, political paraphernalia etc. This may be a point of disagreement between the driver and passenger which has the potential to result in confrontation.

Have a prearranged code word to be used in cases of genuine emergency to warn the Operator/contact that you require Police assistance, without raising the suspicions of the passengers(s).

■ **NEVER** tell a customer that you've had a good day and made lots of trips or money.

■ **AVOID** driving into alleys/back lanes or areas you are not familiar with.

■ **ALWAYS** know your location at all times.

■ **KEEP** the minimum amount of cash on you.

■ **DO NOT** wear an expensive watch or jewellery as this could provide temptation. Only wear a thin neck chain that would break before it harms you.

■ **KEEP** windows up and doors locked – open your window wide enough to speak but not wide enough for someone to reach in.

■ **BE ALERT** at all times & be aware of what is going on around you, whether you are parked or driving.

■ **BE AWARE** of vague instructions. Make sure that the customer gives you a fixed destination before driving away. Inform your operator of your destination address especially if the customer suddenly redirects you enroute.



WEST YORKSHIRE  
POLICE

If you are reporting a non emergency crime or would like to give information to West Yorkshire Police please call **0845 6060606** or **IN AN EMERGENCY DIAL 999** – you can also call **CRIME STOPPERS** on **0800 555 111** ■

# Seatbelts save lives

What will you be wearing tonight?



Jessica Knapton - model, Leah Francis - make-up

We suggest a seat belt



Seat Belts Save Lives  
It's a fact



Statistics released recently show that 2008 returned the lowest levels of traffic related casualties in Leeds since 1974, when the current district was formed.

However the challenge is not over and an area for continued concern is the killed and seriously injured (KSI) rates for car occupants which have also remained relatively static over recent years and are not decreasing at the rate at which road safety experts would like. This may in part be linked with a continuing reluctance by some car users not to belt up. Surveys carried out during 2008 and 2009 showed an alarming percentage of car occupants choosing not to wear seatbelts and this of course suggests

a reason as to why in car casualties remain static.

A new 'Seat Belt On?' road safety campaign was launched in Spring 2009, developed in a bid to tackle this issue.

### How does this affect Taxi and Private Hire drivers?

Although traffic laws change to address new road hazards, the laws of physics never do. If you hit something, such as another car or a lamp post, you will almost certainly be injured at whatever speed you are travelling. Wearing a seat belt will help reduce the risk of you being killed or seriously injured.

In a crash at 30 mph, an

unrestrained person will be thrown forward with the weight equivalent to a baby elephant, about three and a half tonnes.

It also makes sense to ask your passengers to belt up, because during a crash they too will be thrown forward with the same force and you could be the first thing they hit.

### So why don't you wear one?

Cars are fitted with safety devices to help save your life. Seat belts act against the energy of the crash, slowing down the body and reducing the energy at the point of impact to a more survivable level. By wearing a seat belt you can greatly reduce the damage you may suffer in an accident. The injuries will still hurt but nothing like as much.

The fact that the law of the land allows you to not wear seat belts in certain circumstances is not the issue – your safety is.

### We know why you don't like to wear seat belts.

But it will be of no use to say, "I didn't have to wear a seat belt" when you are in the casualty department and doctors are trying to save your life. If you choose to accept a greater risk of injury than other drivers do, quoting the law of the land will do no good. This argument will not matter at the point of impact; it will not protect you from death or serious injury. Only a correctly worn seat belt will do that.

The 'Seat Belt On?' campaign is a partnership between Leeds City Council, West Yorkshire Police, West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue and the accident and emergency unit of the Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust.

### The Road Safety Promotion Unit have previously carried out a survey of insurance companies specialising in Taxi/Private Hire insurance:

If you are injured in a road collision and the insurance company judges that your injuries could have been reduced by wearing a safety belt, YOU WILL LOSE 20-25% OF ANY COMPENSATION YOU MAY BE ENTITLED TO!

This may not be in the small print either but nonetheless it is an industry standard policy. ■





# Private Hire Knowledge Test

## In the Spring issue of

Licensing Leeds we told you about the introduction of the Private Hire Knowledge Training and Testing package that all new applicants to the Private Hire trade must

undertake prior to being granted a licence. Existing licence holders, who have not undertaken an NVQ, will be required to undertake the test as part of a rolling programme.

The test has a pass mark of 90% for each module so it is important that the training pack is studied before attending the training and undertaking the test.



## A further message from the Police

### North East Leeds Division of

West Yorkshire Police has recently attended several incidents involving damage to Private Hire vehicles and assaults allegedly committed by the drivers/colleagues of the vehicles sustaining the damage.

On some occasions drivers have used the call sign '606' followed by their location to summon 'back up' from their colleagues rather than contacting the Police.

This MUST stop immediately for the following reasons:

1. The consequences of these actions are likely to enflame the situation
2. Drivers will contravene Road Traffic legislation when 'responding'
3. The potential dangers of untrained drivers racing across the city to assist colleagues are obvious and will not be tolerated
4. The actions in themselves confuse and contaminate the investigation of the original incident

A recent example of an incident Police attended saw somewhere in the region of 70-80 Private Hire vehicles which had 'responded'. The situation had been made far more volatile than would otherwise have been the case due to the presence of drivers.

So, what action should you take if you find yourself in a tricky situation:

- ➔ Use a prearranged code to use in cases of genuine emergency to warn your operator/ contact that you require Police assistance
- ➔ At the earliest opportunity, report any incident of a criminal nature direct to the Police via **0845 6060606** or **999** where appropriate

By providing a speedy, detailed report to the Police you maximise opportunities to identify and prosecute those responsible. Failure to provide statements will not allow the police to do their job properly. ■

### What happens if I fail the test?

Module Failed	Title	Outcome
1	Knowledge of Legislation and Conditions	Re-sit the seminar and retested on Module 1 only
2	Districts of Leeds	Re-sit and tested on modules 2-4
3	City Centre Locations	Re-sit and tested on modules 2-4
4	A to Z Questions	Re-sit and tested on modules 2-4

*NB. The test is automatically failed if the question(s) regarding 'plying for hire' is (are) incorrectly answered as part of module 1.*

If the test is failed, a second training date will be given however if this subsequent re-test is failed, applicants must wait three months before re-booking to ensure that they have enough time to study the training material.



### Training Seminars

	No. of attendees	Pass	Fail
Actual Volume	249	114	136
%		46%	54%

The training seminars have been running for five months with interesting results. ■

## Building Work Update

### As you may be aware, the

building works are well underway at 225 York Road. In the last month the building of the extension has been completed and it is expected that the office space within the new building will be fully functional by the end of August.

There will be further disruption to our service between the end of August and the end of September when remodelling work begins on the existing Reception and office areas. We will continue to keep you informed, via Operators/ Taxi Associations, our webpage

and information in the Licensing Office, as to what changes may be occurring and when.

It continues to be our aim to ensure that we offer the best possible service in the given circumstances, which have been both messy and disruptive for Licensing Officers to work in, and hope that you will understand that any delays encountered are unavoidable and we will resume business as usual as quickly as possible.

Staff here are doing all we can to try and minimise the level of disruption to the trade and we thank you for your patience and understanding. ■

# Amendments to the Vehicle Age Criteria Policy

On 7 July 2009, proposals to change the age criteria condition upon Hackney Carriage and Private Hire saloon and people carrier vehicle licences were presented to the Licensing and Regulatory Panel.

After considering the proposals, Elected Members of the Panel agreed to change the vehicle licensing Conditions in respect of age criteria and approved the Inspection Regime for vehicles seeking to be licensed beyond 7 years of age.

The amended Condition is listed below:

## 2. AGE CRITERIA

### a) VEHICLES BEING LICENSED FOR THE FIRST TIME

The age of a vehicle, for licensing purposes, shall be determined by the date of first registration on the V5 document (log book). A vehicle will only be accepted for licensing if the date of first registration is less than 5 years from the date of application. The vehicle must be licensed for use within one month from the date of application.

### b) EXISTING LICENSED VEHICLES SEEKING TO BE RE-LICENSED (UNDER 7 YEARS OLD)

A currently licensed vehicle will continue to be re-licensed for up to 7 years from the date of first registration providing that all other licensing requirements relating to that vehicle have been complied with, and that the licence is renewed before

the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Section's last working day of the month of expiry of the licence. Any break in the licence will result in part (a) of this condition coming into effect.

### c) INSPECTION POLICY FOR LICENSED VEHICLES SEEKING TO BE RE-LICENSED BEYOND 7 YEARS

A currently licensed vehicle may continue to be re-licensed beyond 7 years from the date of first registration providing that it is:

- ➔ In suitable mechanical condition
- ➔ Safe
- ➔ Comfortable

and meets all licensing conditions. This will be determined by a formal inspection by an Authorised Officer of the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Section. It is the responsibility of the vehicle proprietor to ensure that vehicle inspection arrangements are in place prior to the expiry of the vehicle licence, allowing sufficient time for both the inspection and any remedial work to be completed prior to the expiry date.

A copy of the inspection policy for vehicles seeking to be licensed beyond 7 years of age can be requested from:

Taxi and Private Hire Licensing, 225 York Road, Leeds, LS9 7RY.

Tel: 0113 2143366

[taxiprivatehire.licensing@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:taxiprivatehire.licensing@leeds.gov.uk) ■



# Private Hire Consultation Research

In December 2008 an external company, QA Research, was commissioned by the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Section to conduct research that would gather drivers' views on using an external agency to manage consultation amongst our licensed drivers and Operators, and the financial implications of using this approach.

The aims of the consultation exercise were:

1. To understand if current levels of consultation are sufficient

2. To evaluate the existing methods of delivering information to the trade
3. To identify any improvements
4. To identify the preferred method of consultation amongst drivers and Operators
5. To gather views on a licensing fee increase to allow for an external agency to carry out consultation

In April 2009, 5,000 licence holders, predominantly Private Hire drivers were sent a survey pack which included a 4 page survey. Thank you very much to all of those drivers who completed and returned their surveys. The results have been collated and analysed by QA Research and the final report has now been received by the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Section and is currently being reviewed.

We will keep you informed of any changes to the way in which we consult as applicable. Once again, thank you very much to all those drivers who contributed. ■



A day in the life of...

# The Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Operations Manager

Martino Deplacido

I'm a familiar face at Taxi and Private Hire Licensing having joined the section as a Vehicle Examiner in 1991 after 11 years with the council's Central Vehicle Workshop and I've seen a lot of changes over the years!

I joined the council straight from school, firstly as an apprentice mechanic before becoming a fully qualified vehicle technician and I joined the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Section as a Vehicle Examiner when we were housed in the old tram shed; drivers and Operators who were involved in the trade at the time will remember that set up only too well! There was just one inspection pit, shared by two examiners, if it rained the pit would fill up with water and need to be bailed out before any further inspections took place. Those were the days! When the new facility was built in 1999

it was a whole new world of up to date equipment and clean, bright conditions.

I became an Enforcement Officer in 2001 and really enjoyed incorporating all aspects of the role; dealing more with drivers and Operators. As you can imagine some of the work involved dealing with licensed

proprietors and drivers who were in conflict with licensing Conditions. I found this the side of the job very rewarding, and I still believe that our Enforcement function improves standards within the industry.

After three years as an Enforcement Officer, I became the Senior Vehicle Examiner. It was my responsibility to carry out a survey of the licensed fleet of vehicles in Leeds. You will be well aware of the consequences of that survey and resulting report that went to the Licensing & Regulatory Panel of the council on 7 July 2009.

I officially became the Operations Manager in August 2008 and I'm now able to put to use the knowledge and experience gained over the years to effect the future of the Taxi and Private Hire trades for the better and continue to see standards improve. I'm enjoying this challenging role although the working days seem to be somewhat longer that they use to be!

One of the most enjoyable things about working in this job is the different types of people you deal with on a daily basis. Over the years I have come to deal with a whole range of people and you come across some real characters! This only makes the job more interesting; it is never boring. However, there are times when I need to exercise my responsibility and that brings conflict with individuals who may not want to abide by the rules but that's my job and I will continue to do it to the best of my abilities.

The standard of licensed vehicles in Leeds has improved enormously since I first joined the Section but there are still a number of proprietors that need to clean up their act when it comes to maintaining their vehicles for the benefit and safety of drivers and their passengers however, on the whole I find the people who work within the trade in Leeds to be honest, hard working people who want to earn a living, provide for their families and it's a good feeling when I can help people to do that.

**Martino Deplacido**  
Operations  
Manager

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Section Opening Hours: Mon-Thurs – 08:00-15:30 Fri – 08:00-15:00

Staff Training: 2nd Tuesday in every month 08:00-10:00

