

Group 1 Consultation: Email Responses

Response From:	Response Details:	Officer Response:	Change to policy:
1. The Application Process			
<p>GMB on behalf of the GMB Professional Drivers Association (Leeds)</p>	<p>Group II Medical: Following a full consultation with GMB members employed in the private hire industry in Leeds we wish to respond as follows.</p> <p>We fundamentally object to this policy as our members feel that it is another unnecessary cost to drivers at this time of severe austerity.</p> <p>Drivers currently have a class 2 medical every five years but for drivers over forty-five years of age the examination is every single year at the same £80 cost.</p> <p>The group 2 medical test is not necessary for private hire drivers; the financial costs are unbearable at a time when many of our members earn less than the minimum wage. It costs £80 for a class 2 medical test, this cost is borne by the individual driver,</p>	<p>Licensing Committee agreed to the introduction of the Group 2 medical in line with the same requirement for other public transport providers.</p> <p>It is still considered proportionate and necessary to ensure the safety of the traveling public.</p>	<p>No change.</p>

	<p>when costs are added up to include car tax, insurance, fuel, company weekly rent and all the licensing fees and taxes then many of our members in Leeds earn less than £6 per hour.</p> <p>Our members believe that it would be sufficient to obtain a doctors note in order to provide proof of fitness, this would reduce the cost significantly and satisfy the criteria regarding the safety of passengers.</p>		
Resident	<p>I would agree with the proposals set out in the consultation. I particular note the new(?) requirement for a certain standard of English speaking to be achieved by new drivers. I have personally experienced a number of drivers with whom it has proved almost impossible to communicate because they lacked even basic English - even to the point of having great difficulty communicating the name of a street. As a standard English speaker, with no strong accent I find that is incredible!</p>	<p>The English comprehension test was introduced by the Licensing Committee previously and continues to be a pre-application requirement.</p> <p>Any drivers who have substantiated complaints regarding their English comprehension can be referred to attend the test.</p>	No change

2. Medical Exemptions Process			
The JTC (Joint Trade Council)	<p>We do not have a serious response to this policy, other than to ask VLE to remain at all times reasonable, and understanding to the drivers medical conditions, should he or she find themselves in an unfortunate position of being unable to carry out these duties as a wheelchair Hackney Carriage driver.</p> <p>There are times when drivers may be unable to either carry out these duties due to medical problems. All we ask is that as stated above the VLE Dept remains reasonable.</p>	The existing policy allows all drivers to apply for an exemption should there be a temporary change to their medical fitness.	No change.
3. Private hire driver conditions			
Resident	1) in my experience speeding is almost universal. I am not sure what the Council can do about it, but if you take a look at Kirstall Road or Burley Road on any night you will see private hire drivers speeding at 40 mph plus all the time. My personal record is to be in the back of a car that exceeded 50mph on Kirkstall Road close to the YTV studios!	<p>Comments regarding speeding in these areas have been referred to the enforcement team who will liaise with the police on the matter.</p> <p>Both hackney carriage and private hire driver applicants are required to take a geographical knowledge test.</p>	No change.

	<p>2) I also experience drivers whose knowledge of the geography of the city is poor - to the extent that on one occasion I had personally to direct a driver to Boar Lane in the centre of the city! He admitted that it was his first week in the city! Again I don't know what can be done about this - I guess asking them to pass 'The Knowledge' (like London Cabbies) might be a bit much!</p>		
Resident	<p>As a Weetwood Resident I can say that I find the parking of taxis on the road outside 'The Three Horse Shoes' Pub To be a real nuisance. They park on double yellow lines there, in the evening, thus blocking Weetwood Lane at the point where it meets the Otley Road. They also do the same outside Bryan's Fish and Chip Restaurant.</p>	<p>Comments passed to the enforcement team for further investigation who will liaise with the council's parking services team on the matter</p>	No change
Resident	<p>There is no part in the conditions that requires a driver to return to the off street parking at the base after completing a booked fare, however in the operator conditions there is a section where operators should ensure</p>	<p>Further legal advice would be required before making such a change to the conditions, and a further period of consultation required before any change is implemented. It is felt that this proposal should be considered</p>	No change

	<p>that the off street parking is used.</p> <p>Propose any amendment to add a condition that drivers should return to the off street parking at the private hire company after they have completed a booked fare.</p>	<p>alongside the review of the private hire operator's conditions which will consider the use of off street parking and the responsibilities of the operator to ensure private hire vehicles are parked correctly when not responding to a booking.</p>	
Police Inspector	<p>re: paragraph 10, can include something like:</p> <p>"Drivers must not convey passengers who they suspect are engaged in criminal activities, transporting stolen goods or Drugs, and are under a moral obligation to report suspicious incidents they come across in their communities, to the local police".</p>	<p>Awareness campaigns are run to advise drivers what they should do if they suspect their vehicle is being booked for an illegal activity. The section is currently running a human trafficking awareness campaign for drivers.</p>	No change
The JTC (Joint Trade Council)	<p>Any Private Hire driver parking on a Hackney Carriage rank should suffer a heavy fine or suffer a period of suspension for one year of their license.</p> <p>All Private Hire drivers/Cars must return to their designated base on completion of each specific job. This would alleviate the problem</p>	<p>Further legal advice would be required before making such a change to the conditions, and a further period of consultation required before any change is implemented. It is felt that this proposal should be considered alongside the review of the private hire operator's conditions which will consider</p>	No change

	of Private Hire drivers/cars illegally waiting in town either on taxi ranks or parking on unauthorised parking areas.	the use of off street parking and the responsibilities of the operator to ensure private hire vehicles are parked correctly when not responding to a booking.	
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