

Hackney carriage and private hire newsletter December 2020

Welcome to the West Suffolk Council December 2020 hackney carriage and private hire newsletter which provides updates including COVID-19, medicals, and the Zone A livery.

Please continue to check our webpage for regular updates:

<https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/taxi>

COVID-19 guidance

Please continue to consult the Government website for important updates on coronavirus, including recent information on travel over the festive period.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-taxis-and-phvs>

You should not continue to work if you have coronavirus symptoms or you have been told to self-isolate. If you have coronavirus symptoms you should get a test as soon as possible. You should stay at home until you get the result. If the result is positive you should not work until your isolation period is over.

It is a legal requirement to self-isolate if you test positive or are told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace. You could be fined if you do not self-isolate. Driving when COVID-19 positive is a serious breach of public health sanctions and any driver found to be driving a licenced vehicle within the period of 10 days of testing positive for COVID could have their licence revoked.

Keeping the Licensing Team informed

In line with policy requirements you must inform us, by emailing licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk, of any changes that can affect your licence with us. Please ensure you are informing us if any of the below occur.

- Medical changes; all licence holders must advise the licensing authority within seven working days if any pre-existing medical conditions have deteriorated or his or her health has changed in any way that may affect the licence holder's fitness to drive. This would include informing us immediately of a positive COVID test.
- Endorsements and convictions; existing holders of drivers' licences are required to notify the licensing authority in writing within 48 hours of receiving a driving licence endorsement, fixed penalty notice or criminal conviction (including cautions).
- Accidents; if at any time, a licensed vehicle is involved in any kind of accident, regardless of how minor or who was at fault, the driver must inform the council of the accident within 72 hours of the accident; this can be done by telephone or email. An accident report form will be provided to you and should be completed and submitted to the council by email along with photographs of the damage within 24 hours of reporting the accident.

Medicals

A Group 2 medical will be required for all new applicants. A Group 2 medical will be valid up to the applicant's 45th birthday. Thereafter, a further Group 2 medical will be required every five years at ages 50, 55 and 60 until the age of 65. The medical will then be required every year thereafter.

In order to ensure all drivers are compliant and align with the adopted policy, we will be contacting any drivers whose medicals are not currently aligned to the ages above. In some instances, this may result in medicals being required more frequently than every five years. For example, a person who is 43 upon first driver application will be required to submit a second medical at the age of 45.

The council will not accept Medics on Wheels Group 2 Medicals at any time. No medical fitness assessment form will be accepted where the person completing the form does not have access to the applicant's patient records.

We will only accept medicals on the latest medical form (version December 2020). Forms must be fully completed, and all pages fully completed. Any incomplete or incorrect forms will be rejected.

Livery

The revised West Suffolk Council hackney carriage and private hire conditions policy handbook was approved by Cabinet on 2 October 2020. One of the changes to the policy is that Zone A hackney carriage vehicles no longer have to have a black and yellow livery.

Please be aware that there is no requirement for the removal of the livery on current vehicles. However, if you choose to remove the livery you will need to make both the DVLA and the licensing authority aware.

All those with vehicles licensed in zone A were written to on 27 November 2020 detailing the process to follow if the livery has been removed. If you have any queries, please contact us.

New application forms

New application forms are now available to download on our website. The following forms are available:

- Hackney carriage and private hire vehicle licence application
https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Business/Regulation_and_Licensing/Licensing/Taxi_licensing/upload/Hackney-carriage-and-private-hire-vehicle-licence-application-2.pdf
- Hackney carriage and private hire driver licence application
https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Business/Regulation_and_Licensing/Licensing/Taxi_licensing/upload/Hackney-carriage-and-private-hire-driver-licence-application.pdf

- DBS Update Service permission form
https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Business/Regulation_and_Licensing/Licensing/Taxi_licensing/upload/DBS-Update-Service-permission-form.pdf

Old forms will no longer be accepted. Please continue to email licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk for any other forms.

Please ensure you are referring to the website for up to date documents <https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/taxi>. Do not use other search engines as old documents may appear.

Submitting applications electronically

Please continue to submit all applications and supporting documentation via email to licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk. You will receive an initial automated response from our inbox and then a further response from a member of the licensing team within three working days, acknowledging if your application is complete and will be processed or if it has been rejected and what additional information is required.

Applications can currently take up to eight weeks to process. Please submit any applications well in advance and at least 14 days prior to the licence expiry date. Applications will be processed in order of when the complete application has been received and not based on expiry date.

Applications or payments submitted by post will not be accepted and the council will not accept liability for the loss of any documentation for applications submitted via post.

Payment process

Once a complete application has been submitted the licensing team will contact you by telephone to take card payment. We are looking at introducing the option to pay online via the council website in early 2021.

Please do not submit payments via BACs.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Update Service reminder

A subscription to the DBS update service must be made when making a new application. This means that all drivers must be subscribed by July 2023.

A new DBS permission form is now available on our website <https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/taxi>. This form must be completed and submitted to the licensing team with your driver application form. This gives your consent for the council to carry out periodic checks as per the policy.

Vehicle inspections

Upon completion of your taxi compliance test by one of our approved garages, please ensure you are provided with a copy of the full inspection sheet along with the test certificate. You are required to submit both documents as part of the vehicle application.

Transfers of vehicle licences

A licence must be transferred with the attached vehicle from one owner to another. This must be done as a complete transaction where the already plated vehicle is transferred completely with its plate from one person to another.

If proprietors need to be removed or added to a vehicle licence a transfer application must be completed and submitted to licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk.

Christmas opening hours

West Suffolk Council will be operating the following business hours:

Christmas Eve – 08.45am to 2pm
Christmas Day – CLOSED
Monday 28 December – CLOSED
Tuesday 29 December – 08.45am to 5pm
Wednesday 30 December – 08.45am to 5pm
New Years Eve – 08.45am to 2pm
New Years Day – CLOSED

The Licensing Team would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you and your families a very happy, healthy and safe Christmas and New Year!
Thank you for continuing to provide your vital service to the people of West Suffolk.

Licensing team contact details

Phone: 01284 758050
Email: licensing@westsuffolk.gov.uk
Website: <https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/taxi>