

Licensing
Operations Directorate
4th Floor Bayard Place
Broadway
Peterborough
PE1 1HZ

14th February 2012

Proposed variation of conditions of fitness relating to new applicants applying to become licensed drivers

Further to your recent letter regarding the proposed variation of conditions. Although proposed changes to improve the image and professionalism of any business sector are welcomed, my concerns relating to this proposal are the cost, the availability of the course and the delay this will create in recruiting new drivers. As a new operator the length of time it already takes to get through the process of getting a licence is having a negative effect on recruitment of suitable candidates, especially if they are currently unemployed or wishing to join the profession to be told that it could take between 2-3 months for you to obtain a private hire badge is off putting. The proposed increase to get a licence from £189 to £248 will also distract potential employees, as this in a majority of cases will be self funded by the individual driver.

Without seeing the course content or any evidence of drivers that have undertaken the course it would be hard to ascertain whether this would improve standards in the industry or speed up the time it takes for new drivers to get licensed. Or is this just another way for the City Council to outsource its current work and reduce the number of enforcement officers. Although I can also see the benefit of outsourcing this course as it will hopefully allow the enforcement officers more time to concentrate on enforcing current rules and improving standards.

Within my own business I have been looking at several ways to improve the standard of my drivers one of them being gaining a recognised qualification i.e. City & Guilds NVQ Certificate in Road Passenger Vehicle Driving (Taxi and Private Hire), which may include some of the areas that are trying to be improved. Could the proposed course and the City & Guilds course be incorporated and then the drivers will gain an industry recognised qualification. I believe some government funding is available towards the cost of this course.

Yours sincerely,

Tod Howard
Green Leaf Cars

PETERBOROUGH PRIVATE HIRE



DRIVER ASSOCIATION

Build on unity & trust

Ref: Improving new driver test

To whom it may concern,

Firstly we would like to thank Adrian Day and the licensing team for all their hard work in trying to develop a more realistic and true to life testing criteria for all new applicants.

The proposed course & modules

We are in agreement that it should be a day course covering the objectives as set out in the proposal. However there are some additions that we would like for you to strongly consider.

1) Oral spoken English

Oral spoken English of a reasonably high standard should be essential. As communication is a key factor for drivers to have the ability to communicate effectively, for which the benefit to both driver and passenger would be unparalleled.

Throughout our communication and research with our members we have found that the greatest tool for a driver to have is the ability to effectively communicate, in speaking to and understanding the passenger and vice versa. the benefits of which could help in resolving issues on the spot, as some new drivers often get into difficulty due to not having a proper grasp of the English language. This can sometimes lead to heavily intoxicated passengers being verbally and physically abusive towards drivers .

2) Scoring system for a pass

Before this recommendation goes to the licensing committee We would like to know as to how the scoring of new drivers would be tallied up and what the pass mark will be. We would also like to request that a few members of our association be allowed access to the course as a trial, before it goes to the licensing committee as to iron out any unforeseen issues.

3) Verbal and written route directions

In the current testing there is no verbal or written route direction criteria. We recommend that all new applicants should be tested on their navigational skills in writing and verbally illustrating their knowledge of the city by directing from point A to point B accurately. This should be some what similar to Fenland District Councils test criteria. (this is available in paper format)

4) Number of new drivers in to enter the trade in the past 5 years:

2007 = 130

2008 = 121

2009 = 87

2010 = 86

2011 = 77

Total 501

If we were to go by these numbers we would find that in the past 5 years we have doubled the amount of new drivers from approximately 500 to our current approximate of 1000. The effect of which has been extremely detrimental to the trade overall. Who's to say where we will be in another 5 years.

We recommend that PCC should seriously consider increasing the cost of the course as this would benefit both the trade and PCC from the proposed £95 to £500 and accordingly for any re-tests.

Firstly the trade would benefit by having a better standard of new driver entering the trade and would help in controlling the overall numbers.

Secondly PCC would benefit financially by directly charging for the course and then paying PRC for their costs. Therefore PCC would generate a new level of income that the trade would not despair of, as this would help facilitate PCC and current drivers in these economically difficult times.

We have a 500 strong member base that strongly recommends this new testing criteria.

Regards

Peterborough Private Hire Drivers Association

Executive committee

18th February 2012

Adrian Day
Licensing Manager
Peterborough City Council
Bayard Place
Peterborough
PE1 1HZ

Dear Mr Day

PROPOSED VARIATIONS OF CONDITIONS OF FITNESS RELATING TO NEW APPLICANTS APPLYING TO BECOME LICENSED DRIVERS

The Consultation Document dated 26th January 2012 regarding the Peterborough City Councils proposals to vary the conditions of fitness relating to new applicants applying to become a licensed driver in Peterborough has been fully considered by the Federation and our response is as follows:

The Peterborough Hackney Drivers Federation is fully supportive of this proposal and welcomes its introduction. The introduction of any criteria for licensing hackney or private hire that will improve the standards of the trade will always be fully supported by the Federation. We view this proposal as a first stage to ensuring that both drivers and vehicles licensed by Peterborough City Council are fit for purpose.

The Federation considers itself to be in a full and active partner with Peterborough City Council who have always attempted to follow the good practice guidelines of the Public Carriage Office and we will continue to support those guidelines as a benchmark for the safety and security of the travelling public.

Yours Sincerely

Brian W J Gascoyne

**Secretary
Peterborough Hackney Drivers Federation.**

- 1 -

Peterborough is striving to become the Environment Capital of Britain and all Peterborough Licensed Hackney Cabs meet the stringent Euro III or Euro IV emissions requirements. So not only are they purpose built for the work they perform they are environmentally friendly too!!



Robinson Ian

From: Steve Lane |
Sent: 30 January 2012 10:01
To: Robinson Ian; BRYAN TYLER; Nicola Hampshaw
Subject: Re: Taxi driver training

Many thanks, Ian.

I had no problem with the idea in principle, but it was just as though it had come out of the blue, like it was a sudden idea from a well-intended body, but with no background as to how and why. Nor did I realise it was an existing and established practice (not being a taxi driver). I was aware of the legislation you quote from, but there was no mention of this in the attachment to Bryan, or I would probably have said nothing. I am especially pleased the operators are conscious of their responsibilities and seem willing to promote this.

Thanks for your time in replying,

Regards,

Steve

From: [Robinson Ian](#)
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2012 9:37 AM
To: 'Steve Lane' ; BRYAN TYLER ; Nicola Hampshaw
Subject: RE: Taxi driver training

Hi Steve, thanks for your enquiry. Hopefully, in answer to your questions.....

This course will apply to all new applicants, whether hackney or private hire.

There will be a public notice on the PCC Consultation Database, in the ET and in some cases letters sent to individual organisations, as in this case (letters have been sent to drivers, operators, police, Passenger Transport Team, your forum and PHAB.) The consultation period will run until the end of February.

The idea of the course came about after we were initially approached by existing members of the trade, who expressed concerns that they felt the current English Reading & Writing Test wasn't difficult enough. They believed that some recent applicants could not converse well enough with the public. It seemed an ideal opportunity to develop what we already have and include some form of instruction in matters pertaining to the trade.

As Bryan can confirm, last year we unfortunately also had to prosecute some of our drivers for discriminatory offences, such as making additional charges for carrying guide dogs. We've also required a number of drivers attend courses (at their own expense) after complaints that they have conveyed passengers in their wheelchairs, without suitable restraints. So at the very least, I want to ensure that part of the course gives instruction on the driver's responsibilities under the Equality Act.

Section 51 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 places a responsibility on the authority, before the grant of a licence, to ensure they are satisfied the applicant is "fit & proper" to hold a licence. The same section of the act also states an authority can attach any conditions to the grant of a licence that they feel is reasonably necessary.

Once the consultation period is over I will be preparing a report to enable the Licensing Committee to make their decision.

Kind regards, Ian

Ian Robinson
Regulatory Officer
Taxi Enforcement Office
4th Floor, Bayard Place
Broadway
Peterborough
PE1 1HZ

E-mail: ian.robinson@peterborough.gov.uk
Tel. 01733 453541

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From: Steve Lane
Sent: 27 January 2012 20:49
To: BRYAN TYLER; Nicola Hampshaw
Cc: Robinson Ian
Subject: Re: Taxi driver training

Sounds a matter for serious consideration, but I am not clear about how they propose to introduce this in the proper manner.

Does this apply to all new applicants – hackney and private hire?
Where is the consultation document to respond to?
What is the period of consultation?
Who is being consulted?
What legislation gives this any legal weight?
Following on from the process laid out in the pdf document dated 26th January, what happens next?

Over to you,

Steve

From: BRYAN TYLER
Sent: Friday, January 27, 2012 11:04 AM
To: Nicola Hampshaw
Subject: Taxi driver training

Hi everyone
Please find attached details of the Taxi driver training that will soon be introduced.
Any comments please send to Ian and copy me in please
ian.robinson@peterborough.gov.uk
Cheers
Bryan

----- Forwarded message -----
From: **Robinson Ian** <Ian.Robinson@peterborough.gov.uk>

Robinson Ian

From: Day Adrian
Sent: 02 February 2012 10:03
To: Robinson Ian
Subject: FW: Competence course

Response for your consultation

Thanks

Regards

Adrian Day
Licensing Manager
Strategic Regulatory Services
Peterborough City Council
Bayard Place
Peterborough.
PE1 1HZ
Email: adrian.day@peterborough.gov.uk

Telephone: 01733 454437

To find out more about Peterborough City Council please go to www.peterborough.gov.uk
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From: Taxi
Sent: 02 February 2012 08:13
To: Day Adrian
Subject: FW: Competence course

From: Monica Ward
Sent: 31 January 2012 16:37
To: Taxi
Subject: Competence course

Dear Sir/Madam,

In response to the E.T. article on the General Competence Course, I feel this would be an extremely good idea. Whilst I have encountered some very polite and well mannered drivers I feel the course is something that should be embraced by all taxi drivers. Today I tried to park in a designated blue badge slot which was being used by a taxi. I don't think they were waiting to pick up a passenger. I showed my badge and he shrugged his shoulders. I indicated I wanted to park there but he did not move. He then reversed a little but I could not get in. Eventually he reversed some more and I was then able to reverse into the space. As he drove off he raised the middle finger to me. Perhaps the course could give some guidance to drivers to show a little more respect.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs M Ward
Peterborough

consultation entry for website

Please complete and submit by e-mail to: consult@peterborough.gov.uk

Title	Proposed amendment to hackney/private hire driver licensing requirements to introduce a requirement for all new applicants to undertake a Taxi Course run by the Regional College, prior to submitting an application to become a driver
Business group	Taxi Enforcement Office
Who are you consulting with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Peterborough Hackney Driver Federation. • The Peterborough Private Hire Federation • All Peterborough Private Hire Operators and Hackney owners. • Advert placed in the Peterborough Evening Telegraph. • Notification placed on council website. • Sara Thompson - Passenger Transport Operations, Peterborough City Council • Sgt. Nikki Hall – Cambs Constabulary • The Physically Handicapped and Able Bodied Club (P.H.A.B.) • The Peterborough Disability Forum
What is the aim of consultation	To canvas opinion to ascertain if stakeholders are in agreement with the proposed amendment.
What method of consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters to hackney owners, private hire operators, private hire and hackney federations & PHAB 26/01/12 • E-mail to Sara Thompson, Sgt Hall and the Disability Forum 26/01/12. • Published on Consultation Database • Public Notice displayed in E.T. 27/1/12.
What will the results be used for	To ascertain opinion prior to the issue being taken to Licensing Committee for decision.
How the consultation and its results will be marketed to reach target audience	As stipulated above in "consultation method" we have targeted those directly concerned with any proposed changes.
Consultation period	1 st February – 29 th February 2012
When will results be available	At the end of the consultation period.
Contact	Regulatory Officer Ian Robinson, Licensing, 4 th Floor Bayard Place, Broadway, Peterborough. PE1 1HZ E-mail: taxi@peterborough.gov.uk Tel. 01733 453541

Please provide the following information	
Name of Officer completing form	Ian Robinson
Contact phone number	453541
Date form submitted	27 th January 2012

Robinson Ian

From: Taxi
Sent: 01 March 2012 09:09
To: Robinson Ian
Subject: FW: Applicant testing
Importance: High

From: Rukhsana Akhtar |
Sent: 28 February 2012 20:14
To: Taxi
Subject: Applicant testing
Importance: High

Dear Taxi Licensing

I, along with the view of many Taxi Drivers strongly object to the proposed change in licensing requirements for the following reasons:-

1. The process is already rigorous with the current test requirements.
2. Peterborough being a much smaller city compared to larger cities where the tests are less rigorous.
3. Unemployment is high in Peterborough and this proposal will disadvantage those who are less able to read and write.
4. The cost of the course is more than paying for a diploma in Literacy or numeracy.
5. Why should you increase business for a private education business at the detriment of self employed taxi drivers, who work long hours to provide a safe journey home to many residents in and around Peterborough City.
6. The Council should run free on-going sessions for new and current drivers who pay hundreds of pound each year for taxi licensing. Topic areas: Equality, disability, basic Maths and English, customer services etc....
7. Why can't you be more supportive to taxi drivers who are victims of abuse and violence, instead of imposing extra unnecessary bureaucratic systems to cause them more stress in this climate of high unemployment.

We strongly object to the proposals. We do hope that these views are shared at the Licensing Committee meeting.

Mrs Akhtar

Robinson Ian

From: Day Adrian
Sent: 02 February 2012 10:04
To: Robinson Ian
Subject: FW: Article on Cabbies.

Another response

Regards

Adrian Day
Licensing Manager
Strategic Regulatory Services
Peterborough City Council
Bayard Place
Peterborough.
PE1 1HZ
Email: adrian.day@peterborough.gov.uk

Telephone: 01733 454437

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From: Taxi
Sent: 31 January 2012 08:31
To: Day Adrian
Subject: FW: Article on Cabbies.

For allocation.

From: Reginald Briggs
Sent: 31 January 2012 07:03
To: Taxi
Subject: Article on Cabbies.

Good morning.

Also teach them not to open doors to on coming traffic. Driving straight out at junctions. Parking in the middle of the road. Double parking when collecting or picking up disabled children, (LINCOLN RD)

Some of the worst drivers in Peterborough are Taxi drivers,

Maybe a LARGER sign on cabs informing the public as to where THEY can report IRREGULARITIES.

Reg Briggs 157, Chaucer Road, Peterborough PE13LS.

Robinson Ian

From: BRYAN TYLER
Sent: 30 January 2012 11:17
To: Robinson Ian
Cc: Steve Lane
Subject: Taxi drivers course

Hi Ian

One question i did mean to ask. Who is carrying out the "disability" part of the training put together by PRC? Will it be run by a person with a disability or will it be part of the one day course and run by an able bodied trainer?

I know from experience when its part of a "package" the disability element seems to be an afterthought or not very well done and ends up as a tick box exercise. This is an opportunity to make long term improvements to taxi services in Peterborough and i,m a bit concerned about how much can be done in one day especially if the drivers are sitting several parts of the course!

Is it possible to see a copy of the Disability Awareness Training?

Cheers

--

Bryan

Bryan Tyler
Disability Forum Manager
DIAL Peterborough
01733 265551
www.dialpeterborough.org.uk
www.sportingpeterborough.btck.co.uk