

Consultation Feedback on Taxi Driver Licensing Policy

Response from Anonymous member of the public

<u>Paragraph No.</u>	<u>Comments</u>
5.20	<p>An applicant should be able to see their own GP for a medical examination.</p> <p>An obligation to use a Licensing Authority approved medical centre questions: a) the integrity of the applicant's GP (should that GP be happy to see their patient for a medical examination), b) a compromise of Patients' Rights including opting out of the requirement to submit medical history data to another qualified person and the right of a patient to see their own GP.</p> <p>This is also likely to cause inconvenience to the applicant through time and cost of attending the Licensing Authority approved centre. Suggested to be in Plymouth and used by SHDC employees for required medical examinations, this could raise questions of a conflict of interest as applicants are not Council employees.</p>
<u>9c) p.26</u>	<p>As the driver is responsible for the upkeep and cleanliness of the vehicle, they should not be prohibited from staying nourished and hydrated within the vehicle. E.g. in cases of bad weather, traffic jams in hot weather, medical requirements (e.g. Diabetes) etc.</p>
<u>9g) p.27</u>	<p>This should be reworded to: "Drivers should use common sense when initiating conversation so as not to broach subjects which may cause offence."</p>

Response from Ivybridge Town Council

Set out below is the response to the consultation document:

The courts take a disapproving view of a taxi driver carrying anything that may be used as a weapon albeit as a perceived safety measure.

Appendix A of the draft policy – Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Leasing Criminal Convictions Policy (Section 6) covers many levels of convictions including actual body harm (ABH) and common assault. Section 7 includes convictions for possessing a weapon. In other words the appendix covers convictions rather than giving advice.

However, Appendix B Section 9 deals with the Conduct of Drivers. Perhaps it could include a paragraph to the effect that **the driver must not have about his or her person or within the vehicle anything that could be construed as a weapon.** This would tie in with the theme of the appendix.

Response from Sampford Courtenay Parish Council

Dear Sir/Madam

Travelling regularly around mainland (EU) Europe it's noticeable how many countries such as France adopt a simple **standardised** policy for taxi identification.

The roof of the vehicle has bright red display light for 'in use' and a green one for 'available for hire'. They are clearly visible, always located on the same part of the vehicle roof and offer real clarity regarding availability and what the vehicle is. Here in the UK we appear to have a mix of orange and other displays, i.e. not a uniform means of clear identification.

Perhaps this policy could be adopted in our districts?

Response from a Tavistock based Taxi Firm

PARAGRAPH No		
5.10	COMMENTS	Any knowledge tests must be set against a specific working area or routes. To expect an applicant to know everywhere within west devon is unreasonable and unpractical. If the general working area is either Tavistock or Okehampton then that is the area to be concentrated on. More so for new independent operators as drivers for larger companies will have office control for guidance.
5.13 – 5.16	COMMENTS	Timescale is of utmost importance when recruiting new drivers. Currently taking upto 4 weeks and beyond is restrictive. The DSA are removing the taxi driving assessment test and being expected to take all the PATS courses and safeguarding courses not only takes time, as I suspect there will be limited dates within the month to do these, but they will also mean traveling to the nearest location to get them done. There needs to be regular dates that coincide with each other to make the licencing process a quick as possible and as affordable as possible.
5.21	COMMENTS	If a driver gets initially licenced at 25, potentially not requiring a medical for a further 20 years? I think 5 yr intervals are enough and those over 65 should be subject to a medical every year unless the doctor thinks otherwise. I have two over 65 who are fitter than the younger ones!!
9	COMMENTS	Penalty points are a good idea as long as it is operated correctly

AP A 9.1	COMMENTS	<p>Take lost property to a police station within 24 hrs... where?</p> <p>Tavistock police station does not accept lost property and you have to take it to Plymouth. Having to do that, potentially a few times a week is not practical. Perhaps if there is not a local police station WDBC can hold it at their offices!</p>
AP B 9c	COMMENTS	<p>The driver shall not eat or drink in the vehicle? Its my vehicle!! As long as its clean and tidy why cant we eat when waiting for fares? People complain now that there are not many taxis at dinner time, this will make it worse</p>
AP D step 2	COMMENTS	<p>Tests held one day per month?</p> <p>This needs to be more frequent.</p>