

**Report of the Service Director Legal Services
to the General Licensing Regulatory Board
to be held on the 9 September 2020**

ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report, is to provide Members with an overview of the work Licensing Officers are currently undertaking to advise and support the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trade during the COVID pandemic.

2. Background

Members are minded to note, that Licensing Officers are continuing to proactively work with the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Trade and other Local Authorities to ensure that those who choose to work through this COVID pandemic can do so whilst ensuring to the best of everyone's ability that both customers and drivers remain safe.

At the time of writing this report no specific official guidance has been released in relation to Hackney and Private hire vehicles, drivers and operators.

3. Current Position

Officers have been working extremely hard in difficult circumstances to help and support drivers and Operators whether they have chosen to work or not during the COVID pandemic.

With limited access to our Office in Westgate, Officers have been attending the building for a few hours every week to produce vehicle licence plates and driver badges and posting these to drivers to ensure the continuity of their business where possible.

The decision has been made not to grant any extensions to vehicle or driver licences at this time as there is still a matter of public safety with the view that if a vehicle is licensed and working then it should be maintained and tested accordingly. As members will be aware we outsourced our MOT testing of licensed vehicles a few years ago to private garages and the majority of these

have remained open during the lock down and so have maintained the facility for drivers to obtain the required n MOT.

We have cancelled all local knowledge tests and are not accepting any new applications for drivers whilst the COVID restrictions remain in place.

Existing drivers are expected to maintain and renew their licence as normal if they are still working.

Partition Screens

Officers have received several enquiries in relation to the use of partition screens in licensed vehicles to divide the driver from passengers. Transport for London has a guidance document in relation to partition screens and we are asking that all drivers follow this guidance accordingly. A copy of the guidance is attached as Appendix 1.

Face Masks

Officers have also received several enquiries in relation to the mandatory requirement for both drivers and customers to wear face masks. Officers are following the guidance issued by The Department for Transport in relation to the mandatory wearing of face masks on public transport in that it does not apply to taxis and private hires. However, in an attempt to support our licensed drivers and keep both them and their customers safe, Officers have distributed in excess of 1700 face masks to all hackney carriage vehicles. We have also given a supply to our taxi marshals so these can be distributed to customers who may have forgotten or lost their mask during the course of their evening in town.

4. Proposal

Members are asked to support Officers and encourage licensed drivers to keep themselves and their customers as safe as possible during this current COVID situation.

5. Background Papers

None available

6. **Officer Contact**

Debbie Bailey

07786525961