

**Report of the Assistant Director to the
General Licensing Regulatory Board
to be held on the 16 February 2022**

LICENSING AND ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report, is to provide Members with an overview of the enforcement work Licensing Officers have recently undertaken and the advice and support given to the hackney carriage and private hire trade during the COVID pandemic.

2. Background

Members are minded to note, that Licensing Officers have continued to proactively work with the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Trade and other Local Authorities to ensure that those who chose to work through the COVID pandemic did so whilst ensuring to the best of everyone's ability that both customers and drivers remained safe.

In addition, on the 18th November 2021 Licensing Officers carried out an taxi and private hire licensing enforcement operation at Springwell School. A summary of the enforcement operation is detailed below.

3. Current Position

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

Members will be aware that for a period it became a legal requirement for passengers to wear a face covering in taxis and private hire vehicles, although there were exemptions and drivers needed to be mindful of

customers who were exempted from wearing face masks through age, disability or underlying medical issues.

Officers also strongly advised and encouraged all our drivers to also wear face coverings.

We advised that operators should confirm with their customers at the time of booking the expectation for them to wear face masks or provide reasons they would be unable to.

Officers also assisted drivers by sourcing 40,000 face masks that that could be distributed to passengers who did not have a face covering when entering a licensed vehicle. The masks were also given to the taxi marshals so they could offer them to customers in the taxi queue prior to them entering a vehicle.

On the 18 November 2021 Licensing Enforcement Officers alongside Vehicle Examiners from the Smithies Lane Depot, took part in a day time operation focusing their attention at Springwell School and the drivers and vehicles that are contracted to transport children to the school on a daily basis.

The Chair of the Licensing Regulatory Board, Councillor S Green, was also in attendance.

In total 8 licensed vehicles and drivers were inspected on the day, the results of which are detailed as follows:

- 5 vehicles were found to be compliant
- 1 driver was issued a written warning for failing to complete his daily vehicle check.
- 1 Vehicle licenced by another local authority was checked and found to have an inoperative off side brake light. The vehicle details were reported to the relevant local authority for further action.
- 1 vehicle licensed by another local authority was checked and found to have a near side front tyre below the legal limit. The

vehicle details were reported to the relevant local authority for further action.

Vehicle non-compliance is not just an issue Officers are concerned with during the undertaking of each and every enforcement operation; it is one that continues to be at the forefront of every Vehicle Examiners mind. Defective vehicles are not acceptable and cannot be excused, coupled with failing to complete basic vehicle inspection sheets, which is a tool that ensures the very safety of a licensed vehicle, is not acceptable.

4. Proposal

As the COVID case rates in South Yorkshire remain high drivers will be supported if they wish to continue promoting the wearing of face coverings for themselves and their customers, as the Government suggests, you should continue to wear a face covering in crowded and enclosed spaces where you may come into contact with people you do not normally meet.

Private Hire and Hackney Carriage vehicles are licensed for the maximum number of people they can carry, as we are cautiously returning to plan A in England, Officers will support drivers who, in the interests of safety, restrict the number of passengers they are comfortable to carry.

Officers also still encourage drivers to continue to ventilate their vehicles by keeping the windows open where appropriate and to clean their vehicles, especially touch points frequently.

Proactive enforcement operations will also continue to take place. Vehicle failures are always unacceptable and our operations must convey the message that operators, vehicle proprietors and drivers must accept responsibility for their failures and make a change.

Failure to do so, will put the safety of the public at risk when using a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle in Barnsley.

The principal consideration must be one of public safety.

Members are asked to support Officers and encourage private hire and hackney carriage drivers and operators to continue to keep their vehicles as safe as possible for both drivers and customers at all times.

5. Background Papers

Enforcement Officer Reports which contain exempt information are not available for public inspection

6. Officer Contact

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