

## ECM PRIVATE HIRE/HACKNEY CARRIAGE TRADE REPRESENTATIVE MEETING MINUTES

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024

### Bolton Town Hall

#### Present:

Cllr Sue Haworth (SH)	Executive Member
Andrew Bolan (AB)	Head of Regulatory Services
Patricia Clyne(PC)	Licensing Manager
Lisa Timmins (LT)	Senior Licensing Officer
Benjamin Brookfield (BB)	GMP
Mahmood Akhtar (MA)	BPHA
Yasif Khan (YK)	BPHA

#### Apologies:

Cllr Sean Fielding	Chair
Cllr Andrea Taylor-Burke	Vice Chair
Garry Parker	Assistant Director
Joe Fox	Principal Engineer Highways

#### 1. Apologies

As above

#### 2. Introductions

As above

#### 3. Minutes from last meeting

SH covered last meetings minutes.

3 Actions from last meeting:

- Medical policy to be looked into – on today's agenda.
- Site visit Train station – Visit took place, JF sent apologies, on today's agenda.
- Invite MA to Hackney Carriage meeting – SH will action when meeting arranged.

#### 4. DBS Service update

LT updated on the move for drivers joining the update service. Currently 287 drivers left to complete the initial process, aiming for all drivers to be completed by early 2025. LT advised when the DBS status check is run there are on average 100+ drivers each time whose subscriptions are failing and have to be contacted.

LT gave examples of the failures:

- drivers not paying the renewal fee,
- not selecting the renewal option when subscribing,

- changing bank details/bank card and not updating subscription,
- cancelling their subscription
- completing a new DBS and not updating their records.

PC outlined as this is a new process the licensing team are currently taking no action against individuals who fail to keep subscription. However, this does form part of the conditions of licence and next steps will need to progress if not being met.

MA gave example from a driver whose subscription had failed, and DBS had advised it was because of insufficient funds, but the driver had funds in his account. When driver spoke to DBS, they advised must have been an issue but did not allow to reinstate subscription and had to complete new DBS.

PC explained DBS service is a third party provider and encouraged MA/YK to raise complaints with DBS service if not agreeing with responses.

PC confirmed the process is working well and advised recent searches had raised two individuals who had convictions brought to light on the back of the update service checks that had not been declared to us.

**Action:**

**MA/YK to obtain list of affected drivers and take back to DBS to raise issues/complaints and report back.**

SH enquired what percentage of drivers not receiving updates from trade reps. MA/YK estimated Approx 20% not getting messages. Members pay £52 a year.

## **5. Safeguarding / CSE Training update**

PC explained in 2019 Safeguarding/CSE Training was introduced for all drivers to complete. The training is free to existing drivers and originally was delivered face to face then during and following the pandemic moved to online.

PC advised there are 477 outstanding drivers left to go through the training process. The training forms part of the conditions of licence and department of transport guidance and drivers were contacted April/May 2023 and advised needed to be completed by the end of 2023.

MA/YK requested link and details to share with trade.

PC confirmed drivers will be notified again and given a final cutoff date of June 2024 if enough dates available with the training provider.

PC offered to enquire if different times available for training such as evenings or weekends to assist drivers.

SH asked what next steps would be if drivers fail to meet deadline and confirmed need to bring project to end. PC confirmed suspension of licence would be the next step.

SH asked if licensing communicate the conditions of licence requirements to drivers. LT confirmed circular emails have been sent to the trade and it is also covered in the

conditions of licence. Drivers are prompted every time a licence is issued to read the conditions and familiarise themselves with the requirements.

Please note that this matter is on the Monitoring of Decisions at the ECM meetings public documents and updated for meetings.

**ACTION:**

**PC/LT to share closing date and communications with MA/YK and enquire about alternative time slots.**

**6. BPHA:**

**a. Medicals**

MA asked for update regarding medicals in relation to allowing 3<sup>rd</sup> parties complete taxi medicals.

YK advised drivers are at mercy of GP's, all charging different prices. YK gave an example of a driver who was charged £130 for his statement of fitness after also paying for his full medical certificate. When the driver challenged the GP regarding the cost the GP refused to sign the document.

PC raised concerns regarding third party GPs not having access to full patient records.

YK advised he has his medical completed for his PSV/Heavy goods licence and he gives permission to GP to share his records prior to appointment.

PC confirmed looking at full medical being done by third party, but annual checks will need to be own GP. PC explained the importance of drivers understanding their medical conditions and treatment plans and ensuring compliance to medication.

MA advised other authorities allow it including Wigan, Bury, Manchester and Wolverhampton.

MA asked why do drivers need the annual statement of fitness and the full medical certificate and highlighted appointments difficult to make, drivers wait 6 weeks for an appointment and then surgery cancel last minute.

PC explained the full 5 year medical certificate covers all conditions under DVLA group 2 standards and the annual statement of fitness relates to individual conditions.

PC encouraged MA/YK to raise concerns with CCG, (clinical commissioning group) in relation to service provision, difficulty with appointments and cost of documentation.

PC clarified the council have responsibility to make sure drivers are fit and proper to hold a licence and are not able to do that for drivers with medical conditions without medical advice.

YK stated he didn't think any other authorities have a yearly medical check. PC explained relying on drivers to notify us of medical conditions and changes but have found individuals have been diagnosed with conditions and not declared it.

**ACTION:**

**PC/LT shared Bolton GP federation contact details with MA/YK in the meeting so they can raise issues with fees and cancelling appointments.**

**PC/LT to continue to look at Full medical certificate going to third party.**

**PC/LT to confirm we have similar arrangements to the other Licensing Authorities in GM.**

**b. Fees**

MA asked for update on review of fees.

PC outlined the fee setting process and advised end of March 2024 previous years accounts will be closed. Can now look at last 12 months as a typical year following unusual years due to covid etc.

PC explained how hoping this year's figures will show a typical year and can do calculations to work out the cost of providing the taxi service. The accounts close on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 and accountant will start work finalising figures. Looking at May for the work to be completed.

YK asked why fees have gone up every year. PC explained inflation/cost of living payments as standard across the council.

**ACTION:**

**PC/LT to update once budgets finalised.**

**c. Dual badges**

MA requested update on dual badges due to drivers paying two fees. MA explained drivers want to work both as Hackney and Private Hire. When ranks are quiet drivers will complete private hire jobs, but UBER don't accept Hackney Carriage driver (HCD) licences to register on the app so need both.

LT explained how HCD can complete private hire work using HCD licence. PC outlined concerns over losing hackney vehicles and plates being returned. They are relied on for wheelchair users etc.

YK advised drivers can't afford replacement vehicles and expensive with ramps. Private Hire WAV's are all rear loaders and some have lifts, none are side loaders.

PC explained safety on highway, loading from pavement and rank sizes. But acknowledged things have changed and the long term impact could end up with no fleet.

MA confirmed spoken to members and they don't want to leave hackney just need private hire as a sideline. They already have both so just want to pay one fee.

**ACTION:**

**PC/LT - enquire with Uber if hackney can be included on their booking system.  
PC/LT to continue to look at dual badges.**

**7. Feedback from the site visit at Bolton Interchange**

Move to next meeting for highways to discuss.

**8. AOB**

**Taxi Watch**

MA requested taxi watch reinstated.

BB advised it was stopped last time due to GDPR reasons using whats app. Looking at new apps that would work but will be April before GMP have access.

BB advised he didn't think some of the issues with ASB are being reported and acknowledged that drivers don't always have time to call 101 but reports can be done online.

BB informed over last 3 month only 4 ASB reports. No repeat locations.

Brightmet – eggs

Bromley cross - stones

Harwood - eggs

Farnworth – General ASB

SH thanks the Bolton's senior policing team for also making contact on these incidents taxi drivers are raising and offer to work with taxi reps.

**ACTION:**

**BB to share online report link**

**MA/YK to encourage drivers to report**

**Committee meetings**

MA raised concerns over drivers waiting a year for a date for committee.

PC/LT confirmed aware of the backlog and made commitment to clear. Difficult to get through cases due to the workload but are aware of issues and will be addressed.

**Next meeting: 4<sup>th</sup> April 2024**