

1. HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE POLICY

1.1 limitation of numbers

1.2 Many local Licensing Authorities, including Denbighshire, do not impose any quantitative restrictions for Hackney Carriages and the DfT regards this as best practice. Should an Authority elect to impose restrictions on numbers, the DfT guidance states that such a decision should be re-considered frequently, taking into account whether the restrictions should continue.

1.3 Where quantitative restrictions are imposed, vehicle licence plates can command a premium. This tends to suggest that there are people who want to enter the market and provide a service to the public but who are being prevented from doing so by the limitations of numbers. It may be difficult to justify a quantitative control in such circumstances.

1.4 If the Local Authority takes the view that a quantity restriction can be justified in principle, the DfT Guidance advises that the level at which the limit should be set be addressed by means of a survey, which would involve hefty costs

1.5 The Council has, at this time, decided not to set a limit on the number of Hackney Carriage Vehicles.

1.6 To apply for a new vehicle licence, the applicant must be able to supply a suitable vehicle and provide proof that the applicant can maintain the vehicle. The applicant must also provide a statement, including documentary evidence, as to why they believe there is a demand for another Hackney Carriage in the County.

2. SPECIFICATIONS AND CONDITIONS

2.1 Local Authorities have a wide range of discretion over the types of vehicles that they can licence as Hackney Carriage vehicles. Government guidance suggests that local licensing authorities should adopt the principle of specifying as many different types of vehicles as possible and encouraged to make use of the “type approval” rules within any specifications they determine.

2.2 Hackney Carriages, will generally be licensed for the carriage of 4 passengers, but applications in relation to larger vehicles that can accommodate up to eight passengers will be considered provided that they comply with the manufacturer’s specifications applicable to such vehicles.

2.3 All Hackney Carriage vehicles will be black.

2.4 All existing licensed vehicles will have “grandfather rights” up to 5 years after the implementation of this policy, by which time all existing licensed

vehicles must be able to comply with 2.3 above eg all vehicles that are not black must have been replaced with one that complies with 2.3 above. This will only be relevant to vehicles that have had a continuous licence. Vehicles that are not renewed before the expiry date of the existing licence will be treated as a new vehicle and 2.3 above will apply. This also applies to any vehicle that is transferred or replaced eg licensed vehicle that has been involved in a road traffic collision.

- 2.5 The Authority shall impose such conditions, as it considers reasonably necessary, on Hackney Carriage vehicle licences. These vehicles provide a service to the public, so it is appropriate to set a criteria for the standard of the external and internal condition of the vehicle, provided that these are not unreasonably onerous.
- 2.6 Appendix 1 sets out the specification and minimum standards in respect of Hackney Carriage vehicles.

3. ACCESSIBILITY

- 3.1 The Authority fully supports the view of the Equality and Human Rights Commission that,
“making successful journeys is critical to the social inclusion of disabled people. Without the ability to travel, disabled people are denied access to life opportunities. Their access to education, shopping, employment, healthcare, as well as social and family life is significantly improved when journeys become accessible”
- 3.2 For this reason, the Authority considers it important that people with disabilities have access to all forms of public transportation. In addition to the general conditions, accessibility for disabled people including, but not limited to, people who need to travel in a wheelchair, is an important consideration.
- 3.3 Different accessibility considerations should apply to Hackney Carriages as opposed to Private Hire vehicles, as Hackney Carriages can be hired immediately in the street or at a Hackney Carriage Rank by the customer dealing directly with the driver, whereas Private Hire vehicles can only be used by pre-booking, usually through an Operator. On the basis that those with disabilities must have equal access to transport services, it is considered to be particularly important for a disabled person to be able to hire a Hackney Carriage vehicle on the spot with the minimum of delay or inconvenience and having accessible Hackney Carriages available helps make that possible.
- 3.4 Licensed Taxi drivers have a duty under Section 37 of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 to carry guide, hearing and other prescribed assistance dogs in their taxis without additional charge. Drivers who have a medical condition that is aggravated by exposure to dogs may apply to Denbighshire County Council for an exemption from the duty on medical grounds. Any other driver who fails to comply with this duty could be prosecuted through a Magistrates’ court and would be liable to a fine and could be deemed not to be a fit and proper person to hold a

Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Driver's licence. Further guidance on this matter can be found on the Department for Transport web-site <https://www.gov.uk/transport-disabled/taxis-and-minicabs>.

4. MAXIMUM AGE OF VEHICLES

- 4.1 The Authority shall consider how far its Policy can and should support any local environmental initiative and future initiatives, such as setting vehicle emissions standards or promoting cleaner fuels, as well as ensuring a modern standard of its licensed vehicles.
- 4.2 All vehicles licensed under a new application must be a maximum of 3 years old and, if compliant with the requirements for licence, shall therefore be granted a renewal of a vehicle licence until the age of 10 years, whereupon the vehicle must be replaced with one of a maximum age of 3 years. This also applies to any licensed vehicle that is transferred/replaced or been involved in a road traffic collision.
- 4.3 All existing licensed vehicles will have "grandfather rights" for 5 years after the implementation of this policy, by which time all existing licensed vehicles must be able to comply with 4.2 above eg all licensed vehicles aged 10 years or over must have been replaced with one of a maximum age of 3 years. This will only be relevant to vehicles that have had a continuous licence. Licensed vehicles that are not renewed before the expiry date of the existing licence will be treated as a new vehicle and 4.2 above will apply.

5. VEHICLE TESTING

- 5.1 Prior to the granting of a licence, each vehicle shall be examined and tested at a designated testing station, approved by the Authority.
- 5.2 Hackney Carriage vehicles are used for hire and reward purposes and as such are subject to much higher annual mileages and more arduous driving than normal private vehicles. Therefore, in the interests of passenger and other road user's safety, a more stringent maintenance and testing regime is required. This Policy Statement considers the MOT inspection Manual for Car and Light Commercial Vehicle Testing issued by DVSA as a basic inspection standard for Hackney Carriage vehicles. However, in addition to the DVSA standards, it is a requirement for all vehicles to conform to the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Inspection Guidance. Therefore, when assessing the mechanical condition of a vehicle, it is more likely an item which would ordinarily pass an MOT test with an advisory note, could fail the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle test.
- 5.3 All Hackney Carriage vehicles must be maintained to no less than the standards set out in the DVSA publication 'MOT Inspection Manual – Car and Light Commercial', ISBN 0-9549239-0-1 as amended and the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Inspection Guidance.

5.4 The purpose of the Hackney Carriage vehicle test is to confirm vehicles meet the more stringent standards set out in this Policy Statement. Vehicles must be submitted fully prepared for the test. It is not intended that the test be used in lieu of a regular preventative maintenance programme. It is an offence under the Vehicle Construction and Use Regulations 1986 to use an unroadworthy vehicle on the public highway. Hackney Carriage drivers/proprietors who fail to maintain their vehicles in a safe and roadworthy condition may have their licence(s) suspended, or revoked by the Council.

5.5

AGE OF VEHICLE (from date of first registration)	NUMBER OF MOT/COMPLIANCE TESTS	TEST VENUE
ALL NEW TO FLEET VEHICLES (irrespective of age)	2 x MOT to include Compliance Tests	Initial MOT and Compliance to take place at County's Fleet Services All further Compliances (up to the age of 5 years) to take place at any Designated Testing Station
Licensed Vehicles under 5 years old	2 x MOT and Compliance Tests (every 6 months)	At any Designated Testing Station
Licensed Vehicles 5 years and over and up to 10 years old	2 x MOT and Compliance Tests (every 6 months)	1 at Fleet Services and 1 at any Designated Testing Station

5.6 Vehicles that are presented for their MOT and Compliance tests in a condition that would result in a failure, will be subject to a re-test fee, to be determined by the Designated Testing Station.

5.7 The inspection regime for vehicles has not been designed so as to create difficulties for the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trades, but to promote vehicle and road safety. The Council therefore considers the inspection requirements to be justified by the risks it aims to address.

5.8 Any authorised Officer of the Council or any Police Constable has the power at all reasonable times to inspect and test for the purpose of ascertaining its fitness, any Hackney Carriage vehicle licensed by Denbighshire. If the Officer feels the licensed vehicle is unfit for use as a Hackney Carriage, or the licensed vehicle is in breach with taxi legislation or the Council's Licensing Policy and Conditions, the vehicle licence may be suspended, revoked or not renewed.

6. SIGNAGE/PLATES AND ADVERTISING

- 6.1 It is important that the public should be able to identify and understand the difference between a Hackney Carriage and a Private Hire vehicle.
- 6.2 Vehicle identification plates are a key feature in helping to identify vehicles that are properly licensed. All licensed vehicles shall display one plate at the front and one on the rear of the vehicle
- 6.3 A Hackney Carriage licensed by the Council must carry an illuminated roof-mounted sign. The roof sign must state "Taxi/Tacsi" and must be illuminated when plying for hire.
- 6.4 Only one advert is permitted on Hackney Carriage vehicles. Details of any signs or advertising shall be submitted to the Senior Technical Licensing Officers for due consideration as to content. If the advertising is not approved by the Officer then the advertising request will be referred to the Licensing Committee for its consideration

7. SECURITY/CCTV

- 7.1 The Hackney Carriage trade provide a valuable public service particularly late at night when other forms of public transport are not available. Security for drivers and passengers is of paramount importance. CCTV can be a valuable deterrent as well as protection for the driver from unjustified complaints.
- 7.2 It is not proposed that such measures such as CCTV should be required, as part of the licensing regime, as it is considered that they are best left to the judgement of the owners and drivers themselves.
- 7.3 In any licensed vehicle where a CCTV security system is fitted, the proprietor shall ensure that the system is properly maintained and serviced to ensure clear images are recorded. It will be the driver/proprietor's responsibility to comply with all aspect of the law regarding such surveillance equipment. Please refer to Appendix (to be confirmed) for guidance.

8. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

- 8.1 The procedure for applying for a Private Hire vehicle licence is not prescribed but shall be made on the specified application form in accordance with the application procedure set out in Appendix (to be confirmed)

9. CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Council shall consider all applications on their own merits once it is satisfied that the appropriate criteria have been met and the application form and supporting documents are complete.

10. RENEWAL OF LICENCE

- 10.1 Application forms, appropriate fees, and supporting documentation, as set out in Appendix (to be confirmed) shall be produced at the Licensing Office. It is the licence holder's responsibility to ensure that licences are renewed prior to their expiry.
- 10.2 Licences will not be renewed after expiry. If a licence holder fails to renew their licence on or before the respective expiry date, the licence will lapse and become invalid. Licence holders should note that if they allow their licence to expire, they will be required to make a new application in full. This will obviously incur a potentially significant time delay, and dependant upon the age of the existing licensed vehicle, it may require a change in vehicle to meet the age and colour requirements set out in Sections 2 and 4 of this policy. The cost implications of failing to renew a licence could therefore be significant, and licence holders are therefore strongly advised to ensure that they renew their licence before the expiry date. If the licence holder is aware of any reason that they may not be able to renew their licence before the expiry date, they must inform the Licensing Section immediately.

11. TRAILERS

- 11.1 Hackney Carriage Vehicles are prohibited to tow a trailer.

12. ACCIDENTS

- 12.1 A licence will be suspended if, upon reporting an accident to a vehicle, the Council is of the opinion that the damage caused materially effects the safety, performance or appearance of the vehicle or the comfort or convenience of passengers carried therein.