

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR NEW HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER APPLICANTS

To drive a Brighton & Hove Hackney Carriage or private hire taxi, you will need the relevant hackney carriage driver licence or private hire licence, issued by the council. The procedure for getting either licence is the same and it is possible to hold both licences at the same time. This document will provide you with the information you need to know about becoming a Brighton and Hove taxi driver - read it carefully.

This information pack also includes an application form, a medical form and information on Licensing Conditions. Make sure you have all these and do not discard them as you will need them for your First Application appointment.

Where do I start and what is involved?

1. You will need to make sure you are suitable to begin the process of becoming a Brighton & Hove taxi driver, see section **Suitability**.
2. You will need to start learning The Brighton and Hove Knowledge, see section **Knowledge Schools and the Knowledge Test**. It is highly recommended that you enrol at a knowledge school, as they will be able to provide you with the best tuition and guidance. They will explain to you what tests you will need to take and what time frames are involved.
3. You will need to pass the Equivalent (as decided by the Council) of the Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) Taxi Drivers Test or Private Hire Drivers Test and produce the necessary pass certificate before undertaking a knowledge test. This assessment can be carried out by Sussex Taxi Training (call 07710 379634 after 3pm) or The Blue Lamp Trust www.bluelamptrust.org.uk
4. You will need to have passed one of the following; the BTEC Level 2 Certificate in Introduction to the Role of the professional Taxis and Private Hire Driver (QCF) the Catstream Drivers Disability Awareness Training (call 01273 729403) DHAATC training, Uber Access Training or equivalent award (as decided by the Council).
5. You must have an adequate knowledge of both written and spoken English and must show proof of competency by means of relevant certificate / qualification at the time of submitting application. For example GCSE English Examination Certificate or an ESOL English: Entry Level 2 Certificate from a Language School etc. If officers are not satisfied with the standard of spoken or written English language a further certificate of competency from an English Language School will be required before an application will be considered further.
6. All applicants must be able to provide a full 5 years UK address history for their Disclosure and Barring Check (DBS). Applicants who have resided outside the UK for all or any part of the 5 years, prior to the date of application will be required to complete a further overseas DBS check through GBG Know your people.

7. Driver Licence Checks - DVLA Driver Licence checks are carried out by GB Group PLC (KnowYourPeople) on behalf of the Council. You will be required to complete an e-consent form that will be emailed to you on application for your DVLA licence to be checked. Once you have submitted your e-consent we will be able to check your DVLA licence is valid and details of any motoring convictions.

8. You will need to take and pass your Brighton and then Hove Knowledge and Route tests. Information on these tests can be found in section **Knowledge Schools and the Knowledge Test**. Your Knowledge School will be able to provide you with detailed information regarding these tests. Please note that you cannot book any of the tests until the council has received a reply from the DBS known as an Enhanced Disclosure (which can take several weeks from the date of your First Application) and all other checks are complete and satisfactory including passing the BTEC & DVSA test. Once you have commenced the knowledge tests you are required to complete them all within two months, otherwise you will need to retake all the knowledge tests again.

Suitability

To be granted a licence:

1. You must have held a full UK or EU driver licence for at least 3 years when you come in for your First Application appointment. An EU driver licence must be converted to a full UK driving licence prior to this appointment.

2. You must be a “fit and proper” person to hold a licence: The Council must ensure that applicants / licence holders are and remain fit and proper to hold a licence. In assessing whether someone may be fit and proper the Council will take into account the following, and not exclusively, information in to account:
 - Criminality
 - Good Character
 - Human Rights
 - Period of holding a driver’s licence
 - Number of endorsed driving penalty points
 - Right to work
 - Medical fitness
 - Enhanced driver Competence
 - Geographical knowledge of the area
 - Professional Qualifications (Btec/NVQ)
 - Disability Awareness
 - Spoken English

In addition the Council will also consider further information sources such as the Police (including abduction notices), Children and Adult Safeguarding Boards and other statutory agencies.

As the idea of what “Fit and Proper” means, has not been defined the officers discretion to decide what is relevant information and source it can be obtained. To be relevant, evidence has to be more than mere suspicion or innuendo. Public protection is an important function and



information that may mean that a person or persons are not fit and proper will be considered.

Where there are aggravating factors such as hate crime (homophobia; racism and so on), this will be taken into account.

In making its decision the council will consider the nature of the information, its own guidelines on the relevance of Cautions, Convictions, Conditional Cautions, Community Resolutions Anti-Social Behaviour Orders, Criminal Behaviour Orders, Injunctions to prevent nuisance and annoyance, County Court and High Court Judgments and Fixed Penalty Notices (personally or business related), in the licensing process and any other factors which may be relevant. These guidelines will also be taken into account in relation to renewal applications, and decisions to suspend, revoke or not to renew a licence. Full details can be found on the councils taxis licensing page of the Council's website.

3. You must provide a completed medical form and comply with the medical requirements of the council (DVLA Group 2 driver licence medical standards) in order to be deemed medically fit. DVLA Group 2 standards are more stringent than those for an ordinary DVLA driver licence. Information on the DVLA Group 2 driver licence medical requirements can be found at www.gov.uk "Assessing Fitness to Drive". If in any further doubt, you should contact the council's Hackney Carriage officer for advice at your earliest opportunity.
4. You will need to provide the council with the names and addresses of two people (not relatives and whom have known you for a minimum of two years) who can provide a character reference.

Please note: drivers under 25 may find it difficult or very expensive to get taxi driver insurance. If you are in that category, it is advisable to speak to one of the taxi operators before going any further with your application.

Knowledge schools and the Knowledge Test

You can learn all the information you need for the Brighton and Hove Knowledge Test by enrolling and attending any knowledge school of your choice.

The Knowledge Test consists of both theoretical and practical testing of your knowledge of Brighton and Hove.

The Theoretical Tests

Before you will be able to undertake your route test the council must be satisfied that you are a fit and proper person and have successfully completed all the required elements to become a licensed Taxi driver including a satisfactory DBS disclosure, passing the medical, obtaining Level 2 BTEC Introduction to the Role of the Professional Taxi and Private Hire Driver Award or the Catstream Drivers Disability Awareness Training, DHAATC training, Uber Access Training or equivalent award (as decided by the Council, passed the DVSA test and have adequate knowledge of both written and spoken English .

The theoretical tests are verbal tests and are split into Brighton and Hove, which require you to learn the locations of the city's roads, geographical areas, and places of

interest. You are also required to understand the conditions that will apply to any Hackney Carriage and private hire licences issued by the council (see section entitled Licence Conditions Affecting Driver of Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Cars).

- The Brighton test: you will be asked 10 questions about the places of interest in Brighton (with nine correct answers to pass). You will then be asked 50 questions about the locations of roads within Brighton (with a minimum of 45 correct answers to pass) - you will be given the name of road and you must answer by giving the names of the roads at each end. There is a 30 minute time limit to complete road test. The examiner will go through the list **once** and then go back to give you the opportunity to answer any roads you have not answered or partially answered.
- The Hove test follows the same formula as the Brighton test but relates to places of interest and roads in Hove. A further 10 questions on licence conditions (nine correct answers to pass), see Section "LICENCE CONDITIONS AFFECTING DRIVERS OF HACKNEY CARRIAGES AND PRIVATE HIRE CARS".

Once you have successfully passed both of the Brighton and Hove theoretical tests, you will be able to book a time to sit the practical test, known as the Route Test.

The Route Test

The Route Test is a practical test where you must drive the examiner to 15 randomly selected destinations using the shortest possible route for each journey. These destinations are taken from both places of interest lists and road lists you have been tested on for Brighton and Hove. For each route two points are awarded for arriving at the destination (not driving passed it) and two points for taking the shortest route. You will also be expected to comply with the speed limits, road regulations, and all traffic signs. Failure to do so means you will fail this part of the test irrespective of how well you reach the destinations. The pass mark for the Route Test is 80% (48 out of 60).

Please note that the geographical boundaries within which you will be tested are those of the city council: in the east, Longridge Avenue in Saltdean; in the west, the city's western boundary which is marked on maps running northwest from St Richards Road, Portslade to include all of Portslade and Mile Oak; and, to the north, everything inside the bypass except the village of Falmer but including the Sussex University campus.

What happens if I fail?

Tests will be stopped if you fail any element of any the test but you can "bank" a pass in any completed element up to that stage. However, you must complete the Route test within 8 weeks of passing the Brighton Test if you do not you will need to retake the Brighton Test.

Making your First Application

You should submit your application to the Taxi Licensing Office, known as making your First Application. In order to do this, you must book an appointment (01273 296655) to come to the Taxi Licensing Office at Hove Town Hall in person.

During the appointment, you will need to bring these completed forms with you:

- Drivers Application form
- Medical form (must be completed and stamped by your own doctor)
- Proof that you have adequate knowledge of both written and spoken English eg. GCSE English Examination Certificate or an ESOL English: Entry Level 2 Certificate from a Language School etc

In addition to these completed forms, you will also need to bring:

- DVLA driver licence
- Passport (If you are a non EU national you must also provide evidence that you are able to live and work in the UK)
- 1 colour passport-sized photograph
- Proof of your national insurance number – i.e. A letter from the Inland Revenue or similar organisation showing that number. Please note that the National Insurance Card is not acceptable as evidence of your NI number.

During your First Application appointment, an officer from the Taxi Licensing Office will check that you have filled out all documents correctly and provided all the necessary personal identification. Please note that an incomplete First Application means you may be sent away and asked to book another appointment causing you a delay.

Authorisation to Work in the UK & Points-Based System. If you do not hold a UK or EEA member state passport you must be able to provide evidence that you are able to live and work in the UK. Your right to live and work in the UK may be checked with the UK Borders and Immigration.

Please note: if you are living in the UK as a holder of a student visa **your application will be refused** as students are unable to work as self employed persons.

Following the appointment, Following your appointment you will receive an email giving instructions on how to obtain an Enhanced DBS check on line. The DBS's reply is called an Enhanced Disclosure and you will need to present it to the Taxi Licensing Office before you will be able to book your first test. You should take into account that the DBS may take several weeks to undertake your criminal records check.

Please note that your DBS disclosure and medical are both valid for one year. This means that if you have not passed all your tests within one year, you will be required to re-submit a new medical and new DBS form.

BTEC Courses

You will need to find a training provider that can deliver the required training and testing for the Level 2 BTEC - Introduction to the Role of the Professional Taxi and Private Hire Driver Award. Please speak to your knowledge school who will be able to advise you on finding a training provider. Please check that the provider can provide

you with proof that you meet the required literacy and numeracy skills as set by the Skills for Life Strategy for the passenger transport industry. The provider must also be accredited by a nationally recognised awarding body. You must have completed the Btec before commencing the knowledge tests.

Fees

The fee for the First Application is £103(Please note this does not cover the cost of a licence). You will be invoiced for this shortly after you have made application. If you do not pay the invoice your application will not proceed and you will not be issued a licence. You will also need to pay for the DBS check when you take your ID documents to be validated at the Post Office. You will be charged £25 per knowledge test and £35 per route test which will be invoiced after each test.

Upon successful completion of all the requirements to be licensed as a driver and the Route Test, You will then need to pay a fee for your hackney carriage and private hire dual or private hire driver licence and badges.

Contact

For further information or to book an appointment, please contact one of officers at the council's Taxi Licensing Office on 01273 296655. The Taxi Licensing Office operates an appointment-only based system and for all appointments please present yourself at the Customer Service Centre reception at Hove Town Hall. The council's Hackney Carriage officer is Martin Seymour and can be contacted on 01273 296655 or via email at: hco@brighton-hove.gov.uk.

Additional information on Brighton and Hove taxis can be found the Brighton and Hove City Council's website: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk
