

WIRRAL COUNCIL

LICENSING HEALTH AND SAFETY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

23 MAY 2012

SUBJECT:	FUNDING FOR PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY CARRIAGE DRIVER TRAINING
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF LAW HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COMMITTEE CHAIR
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members in respect of the current situation regarding funding for Private Hire and Hackney Carriage training

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 At a meeting of this Committee on 19 March 2012, Members resolved that a further report be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee detailing funding available for training.

2.2 In February 2010, Members resolved that all new applicants for Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Driver Licences must obtain a Vocationally Related Qualification in Road Passenger Transport (VRQ) prior to being granted a licence and then achieve the Level 2 National Vocational Qualification in Road Passenger Vehicle Transport (NVQ) within 12 months of being issued with a licence. The principle being that prior to the issue of a licence a driver should undertake "theoretical" training and then once operating as a licensed driver the "practical" skills should be tested.

2.3 Both of these qualifications conform to the new Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) as full "level 2" qualifications, and these qualify for government funding for most applicants, although this is normally only for the first full level 2 qualification.

2.4 The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) is a partner organisation of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills whose role is to fund and regulate adult further education and skills training in England. They allocate funding to colleges and other skills and training organisations who have discretion over expenditure to meet the local training needs.

2.5 The SFA have produced a document which sets out the Funding Rules, providing mandatory requirements for Training Providers in order that their use of public funding

is safeguarded in a proportionate way. The Funding Rules document can be accessed at <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/fundingrules/>

- 2.6 The Funding Rules explain the levels of government contribution that are made towards the cost of a learner's programme and the rules that training providers must adhere to. In some cases, the SFA will fully fund the cost of a learner's programme. In other cases, the SFA state that they will work in partnership with employers and individuals who are expected to contribute towards the costs of learning.
- 2.7 Attached at Appendix A is a table summary from the Funding Rules document showing Government contributions for learners aged 19 years and older for the current academic year. The table shows in column D that full funding is available for individuals aged over 25 to obtain a classroom based level 2 qualification if they do not currently hold a level 2 qualification but indicates this will change for the 2012/2013 funding period. The VRQ is a classroom based qualification and therefore this supports the current position for applicants who wish to become Hackney Carriage or Private Hire drivers, in that they do not currently incur the cost of obtaining this qualification.
- 2.8 Column E of the table refers to workplace learning. This form of learning is undertaken to obtain the NVQ level 2 National Vocational Qualification in Road Passenger Vehicle Transport and indicates that this course is currently fully funded for individuals who do not have a level 2 qualification. Thus a driver that is currently funded to obtain the first part of the Council's requirement, (i.e. the VRQ, a level 2 qualification), may not then receive separate funding for the second requirement (i.e. the NVQ also a level 2 qualification). In some cases some training providers have combined the "theoretical" (VRQ) element and the "practical" (NVQ) elements into a single level 2 course and thereby have funded both of the Council's requirements.
- 2.9 The table attached at Appendix B shows Government contributions for learners aged 19 years and older commencing August 2012 and indicates that from this date level 2 qualifications will be co-funded irrespective of whether an individual has already obtained a level 2 qualification.
- 3.0 It is important to note that both tables indicate that in circumstances where individuals are unemployed the level 2 qualification is fully funded.
- 3.1 Under the Funding Rules training providers must only claim funding for learners assessed as eligible for funding as stated in the Rules. It is for training providers to interview individual applicants to assess whether funding is available to deliver the training requested by the applicant.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 The safety of passengers could be at risk due to the lack of training undertaken by drivers.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 There is no provision for other options to be considered.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 This is not a matter which requires consultation.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 There are no specific implications arising from this report.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 There are no specific implications arising from this report.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 A decision of the Committee may be subject to Appeal

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of the proposal been reviewed with regard to equality?

No because there is no change to policy regarding the training requirement as a result of this report. However should there be a proposed change in policy an Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no specific implications arising out of this report.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no planning implications arising out of this report.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 Members are asked to note the updated details regarding funding provisions for qualifications required to become a private hire or hackney carriage driver and be aware of the potential financial impact on applicants.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 It is a responsibility of this Committee to determine the appropriate action to be taken.

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