



## **Statement of Policy and Guidelines relating to the Relevance of Convictions when considering applications for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licences**

This policy has been produced in accordance with the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (as amended). The purpose of this policy is to explain how the Council will carry out its licensing functions in relation to applications for Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Driver Licences in circumstances where the applicant has a criminal record.

### **Decision making**

The powers of the Council will be exercised in accordance with the Council's Constitution. Each application for a licence will be considered on their merits, and the Council will provide reasons for all decisions made when an application is refused.

**October 2016**



## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Licences for drivers of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles may only be granted where the Council is satisfied that the applicant is a fit and proper person to hold such a licence.
- 1.2 This document is intended to give guidance on one aspect of whether a person is or is not a fit and proper person namely the situation where a person has committed a criminal offence.
- 1.3 This document aims to provide guidance to any person with an interest in public hire and private hire licensing. In particular, but not exclusively:
  - Applicants for Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Driver Licences
  - Licensing Officers
  - Members of the Licensing Panel
  - Magistrates hearing appeals against local authority decisions
- 1.4 This guidance will be used for the determination of new applications in relation to Hackney Carriage Drivers and Private Hire Drivers.
- 1.5 Where Licensing Officers have delegated powers to grant licences they will utilise these guidelines when making a decision to grant a licence. In all other cases applications for licences will be referred to the Licensing Panel (the Panel). Whilst Officers and the Panel will have regard to the guidelines contained in the policy, each case will be considered on its individual merits and, where the circumstances demand, the Panel may depart from the guidelines. Offences not specifically identified in these guidelines may also be considered depending on the circumstances.
- 1.6 In exercising its powers the Council must ensure:
  - That a person is a fit and proper person.
  - That a person does not pose a threat to the public.
  - That the public are safeguarded from dishonest persons.
  - The safeguarding of children, young and vulnerable persons.

## **2 DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS) CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK**

- 2.1 The Council can consider all convictions, including spent convictions as appropriate, in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (Amendment) Order 2002.
- 2.2 The information given will be treated in confidence and will only be taken into account in relation to the relevant application to assist the Council in determining whether the applicant is a fit and proper person to hold a Driver Licence for the purposes of sections 51 and 59 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
- 2.3 Information received from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) will be kept in strict confidence while the licensing process takes its course and will be retained no later than is necessary and in any event will be destroyed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and in accordance with good practice after the application is determined or any appeal against such determination is decided.
- 2.4 The disclosure of a criminal record or other information relating to criminal matters will not necessarily debar an applicant from obtaining a Driver Licence. The Council will however

consider all information on an enhanced DBS and will take a serious view of any special Police warnings contained therein. Whether or not an applicant will be granted a licence will depend upon whether or not they can satisfy the Council that they are a fit and proper person to hold such a licence.

- 2.5 The Council may not be satisfied that an applicant is a fit and proper person to hold a Driver Licence for any good reason. If adequate evidence that a person is a fit and proper person is not adduced or if there is good reason to question or doubt the evidence provided, then that could amount to good reason to refuse a licence.
- 2.6 In considering evidence of an applicant's good character and fitness to hold a Driver Licence, where previous offences or other information relating to criminal matters is disclosed, the Council will consider the nature of the offence, the date of offence, the applicant's age when the offence was committed, the penalty imposed and any other factors which might be relevant.

### **3 FAILURE TO DISCLOSE A CONVICTION**

- 3.1 When completing an application form for a Private Hire or Hackney Carriage Driver Licence it is an absolute requirement:
- To disclose **ALL** offences, including driving offences and all spent convictions, cautions, Police warnings and reprimands, and fixed penalties in the relevant box on the application form.
  - To inform the Council if you are under investigation in respect of any criminal offence, if you are on police bail pending the outcome of a police investigation or whether any criminal proceedings in the Magistrates, Crown Court or other Tribunal/Court have been commenced against you.
  - To inform the Council if you have had any anti-social behaviour orders (or other orders/injunctions made by a court) issued against you, including details of any sentences upon breach relating to anti social behaviour.
- 3.2 Failure to fully disclose any of these matters may lead to an application being refused and to a prosecution.
- 3.3 The Council has a responsibility to protect the public and, in this regard, may use information provided to prevent and detect fraud, to enforce legislation and to comply with statutory obligations, and may share the information, for the same purposes, with other organisations.

Please contact us on telephone number **0151 691 8043** if you would like to discuss your application in confidence.

### **4 LICENSING PANEL**

- 4.1 In circumstances where an applicant has convictions which are outside of the timeframes referred to in this guidance and/or if there are any concerns about an applicant being 'fit and proper', the application will be referred to the Licensing Panel who will consider the application. Applicants will be advised of the procedure which will enable their attendance before the Licensing Panel and they will be able to attend the Panel to put their case forward. Any person refused a licence has a right of appeal to the Magistrates Court against the Council's decision within 21 days of being notified of the Council's decision.
- 4.2 Each applicant referred to the Licensing Panel will be considered on their individual merits. In those circumstances the Licensing Panel will decide whether the applicant is a fit and proper person to hold a licence. In certain cases, the Panel may consider it appropriate to grant a

licence before the relevant period has elapsed, for instance where an offence is isolated and the circumstances of its commission are such that the Panel consider it is not relevant to the applicant's suitability as a Private Hire/Hackney Carriage Driver. Alternatively, the Panel may consider that, notwithstanding the applicant being free of offences for the relevant period, it would not be appropriate to grant a licence.

- 4.3 The overriding consideration of the Panel will always be to protect the public. Applicants should be aware that the grant of a licence places a significant responsibility on the holder which by the nature of close contact with members of the public requires the holder to be a person proven to be capable of fulfilling the trust placed in them by the hirers of vehicles
- 4.4. Being a licensed Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Driver is a responsible position and the Panel takes its public protection role very seriously. The Panel will only issue a licence if satisfied that a person is 'fit and proper'. If in doubt then a licence will not be issued.
- 4.5 The Panel can consider all criminal offences, including spent convictions and will also take in to consideration cautions, police warnings and reprimands, fixed penalties and any anti-social order (or other order) issued by a court. The Panel will also consider factors such as whether someone is on police bail pending the outcome of an investigation or whether any criminal proceedings in a court have commenced.
- 4.6 Whilst an applicant may have a number of offences that, individually, meet the Council's policy guidelines, the overall offending history will be considered when assessing suitability for a licence. The Panel may depart from these guidelines at its discretion subject to the circumstances. The policy guidelines provide a general guide to new applicants on various types of offences.

## **5 GUIDELINES ON THE RELEVANCE OF PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS**

- 5.1 The Council has adopted the following guidelines relating to the relevance of convictions to which it refers in determining applications for Driver Licences.
- 5.2 The guidelines do not deal with every type of offence, and do not prevent the Council from taking into account offences not specifically addressed in the guidelines, or other conduct, which may be relevant to an individual's application.
- 5.3 If an applicant has a conviction for an offence not covered by the guidelines regard will be had to the nature of the offence, the date of offence, the applicant's age when the offence was committed, the penalty imposed and any other factors which might be relevant when deciding whether to grant an application. Offences described in the guidelines and similar offences, though differently entitled in any statutory provision, modification or re-enactment, will be taken into account in accordance with the guidelines.
- 5.4 An applicant with a current criminal conviction will not be permanently barred from obtaining a licence, but an applicant will generally be expected to be free from convictions for a number of years, depending on the nature of their particular offences, before a licence will be issued. Each case will be decided on its own merits.
- 5.5 Multiple offences or a series of offences over a period of time are likely to give greater cause for concern and may demonstrate a pattern of inappropriate behaviour, which may be taken into account despite being outside the timeframes referred to in these guidelines. Such cases will generally be referred to the Licensing Panel.

- 5.6 For the purpose of clarity the timeframes referred to in these guidelines start from the date of the offence, the date of conviction or the end of the term of imprisonment (meaning the date the offender would have been released from custody had they served the full term of imprisonment imposed by the Court whether or not the term of imprisonment was suspended), whichever is later.

## **6 SEXUAL AND INDECENCY OFFENCES**

- 6.1 Licensed drivers often carry unaccompanied and vulnerable passengers. Applicants who have committed an offence at any time for indecent exposure, indecent assault, importuning or any sexual offence, will generally not be granted a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Driver Licence.
- 6.2 Any licence holder who is registered under the sex offenders notification requirements on the Sex Offenders Register will generally not be granted a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Driver Licence.

## **7 VIOLENT OFFENCES**

- 7.1 Licensed drivers have close regular contact with the public and a firm line will be taken with those who have committed a violent offence. An application will generally be refused if an applicant has a conviction for an offence that involved significant harm or loss of life or an act of terrorism. If an applicant has committed more than one violent offence then it is likely that the application will be refused. An applicant who has committed a violent offence will generally not be licensed until a period of at least five years has passed since either the offence or the date of conviction or, if a term of imprisonment was imposed, ten years free of convictions from the end of the term of imprisonment (meaning the date the offender would have been released from custody had they served the full term of imprisonment imposed by the Court) whichever is later. Given the range of offences that involve violence the Council will carefully consider the nature of the offence and the sentence imposed when determining an application.

Offences involving violence include:

- |  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| • Assault occasioning actual bodily harm | • Grievous Bodily Harm |
| • Assault on police                      | • Common assault       |
| • Assault with intent to rob             | • Wounding             |
| • Battery                                | • Wounding with intent |
| • Robbery                                | • Arson                |
| • Violent disorder                       | • Riot                 |

## **8 POSSESSION OF AN OFFENSIVE WEAPON**

- 8.1 An applicant with such an offence on their record will, depending on the circumstances of the offence, generally be refused a licence for a period of at least 5 years after either the offence, the date of conviction or the end of the term of imprisonment (meaning the date the offender would have been released from custody had they served the full term of imprisonment imposed by the Court), whichever is later. An applicant who has committed an offence relating to a firearm will generally be refused.

## **9 PUBLIC ORDER OFFENCES**

- 9.1 Applicants who have committed public order offences will generally be refused a licence for a period of 3 years from the date of the offence, the date of conviction or the end of the term of imprisonment (meaning the date the offender would have been released from custody had they served the full term of imprisonment imposed by the Court), whichever is later. An applicant with more than one such offence in the previous 10 years will be expected to show a period of at least 5 years free of such offences from either the offence, the date of conviction or the end of a term of imprisonment (meaning the date the offender would have been released from custody had they served the full term of imprisonment imposed by the Court), whichever is later.

Public order offences include:

- Affray
- Criminal damage
- Using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour
- Drunk and disorderly
- Disorderly behaviour
- Causing harassment, alarm or distress

## **10 DRUG OFFENCES**

- 10.1 A serious view is taken of any drug related offence, in particular offences involving possession with intent to supply.
- 10.2 Where an applicant has committed an offence relating to the supply of drugs or for the production or cultivation of drugs the application will generally be refused for a period of at least 10 years from either the offence, the date of conviction or the end of a term of imprisonment (meaning the date the offender would have been released from custody had they served the full term of imprisonment imposed by the Court), whichever is later.
- 10.3 Where an applicant has committed an offence relating to the possession of drugs the application will generally be refused for a period of at least 5 years from either the offence, the date of conviction or the end of a term of imprisonment (meaning the date the offender would have been released from custody had they served the full term of imprisonment imposed by the Court), whichever is later.
- 10.4 If there is evidence of persistent drug use or dependency a specialist medical examination or a drugs test may be required at the applicant's expense. If an applicant was an addict then they would generally be required to show evidence of seven years free from drug taking after detoxification treatment.

## **11 DISHONESTY OFFENCES**

- 11.1 Licensed drivers are expected to be honest and trustworthy. Drivers deal with cash transactions and valuable property may be left in their vehicles. Drivers often deliver unaccompanied property which gives an idea of the trust that is placed in licensed drivers. It would also be reasonably easy for a dishonest driver to defraud the public by demanding more than the legal fare. For all these reasons, a serious view is taken of any offence involving dishonesty. An applicant with a dishonesty offence will generally be refused a licence for a period of at least five years since either the offence, the date of conviction or the end of the term of imprisonment (meaning the date the offender would have been released from custody had they served the full term of imprisonment imposed by the Court) whichever is later. Offences involving dishonesty include:

- Theft
- Fraud
- handling or receiving stolen goods
- conspiracy to defraud
- taking a vehicle without consent
- Burglary
- benefit fraud
- forgery
- obtaining money or property by deception

An applicant who has committed the offence of perverting the course of justice will generally be refused a licence for a period of five years

## **12 RACIALLY AGGRAVATED OFFENCES**

- 12.1 Applicants who have committed racially aggravated offences will generally be refused a licence for a period of at least 5 years from either the offence, the date of conviction or the end of a term of imprisonment (meaning the date the offender would have been released from custody had they served the full term of imprisonment imposed by the Court), whichever is later. Offences involving racial aggravation include:

- Racially-aggravated criminal damage (s.30 Crime and Disorder Act 1998)
- Racially-aggravated s.4 Public Order Act 1986 offence (fear of provocation of violence) (s.31(1)(a) Crime and Disorder Act 1998)
- Racially-aggravated s.4A Public Order Act 1986 offence (intentional harassment, alarm or distress (s.31(1)(b) Crime and Disorder Act 1998)
- Racially-aggravated s.5 Public Order Act 1986 offence (harassment, alarm or distress) (s.31(1)(c) Crime and Disorder Act 1998)
- Racially-aggravated s.2 Protection from Harassment Act 1997 offence (harassment) (s.32(1)(a) Crime and Disorder Act 1998)
- Racially-aggravated s.4 Protection from Harassment Act 1997 offence (putting people in fear of violence) (s.32(1)(b) Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

## **13 HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING OFFENCES**

- 13.1 A serious view will be taken of any offences committed by an applicant who has previously been licensed while working as a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Driver, Proprietor or Operator

## **14 MOTORING OFFENCES**

- 14.1 An applicant's driving record will be taken into account and the Council will consider the nature and volume of motoring offences when considering applications. A poor record of driving will raise doubts about an applicant's fitness and indicate disregard for the law. The Council has put motoring offences into four categories ranging from extremely serious offences (category A) to less serious miscellaneous offences (category D). The Council will use its discretion when considering the seriousness of motoring offences. A list of motoring offences together with their likely category is attached at Appendix 1.
- 14.2 Any person with more than 6 penalty points on their DVLA driving record will be referred to the Licensing Panel.
- 14.3 When considering motoring offences the Council will consider the nature and seriousness of the offence(s) and will have regard to the following:



#### **14.4 CATEGORY A TRAFFIC OFFENCES - DRIVING OFFENCES INVOLVING LOSS OF LIFE**

An extremely serious view is taken of a driving offence resulting in the loss of life. Such offences include causing death by dangerous driving, causing death by careless driving whilst under the influence of drink or drugs, or other similar offences. In such circumstances an application would generally be refused.

#### **14.5 CATEGORY B TRAFFIC OFFENCES - DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL OR DRUGS**

A serious view is taken of any motoring offence for driving, attempting to drive, being in charge of a motor vehicle whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and failure to supply a specimen. A person who has been disqualified from driving as a result of such an offence is likely to be refused a licence for a period of at least two years after the restoration of their DVLA driving licence. More than one offence of this type would generally prevent a person from being licensed.

#### **14.6 CATEGORY C TRAFFIC OFFENCES - OTHER SERIOUS OFFENCES**

Generally, the Council class a serious traffic offence when six or more penalty points have been imposed on a DVLA driving licence in respect of any single offence. However, some offences where less than six penalty points are imposed may, subject to the circumstances, be classed as a serious offence. Offences leading to a driving disqualification (except those offences falling within categories A and B) will be treated as a serious offence. Subject to the circumstances an applicant will generally be refused a licence for a period of at least two years after the most recent conviction, or two years after restoration of the DVLA driving licence in the event of a disqualification. Types of offences classed as a serious offence include driving without insurance, dangerous driving, failure to stop after an accident and a driving disqualification under the 'totting up' procedure.

#### **14.7 CATEGORY D TRAFFIC OFFENCES - MISCELLANEOUS OFFENCES**

Generally individual traffic offences where less than six penalty points are imposed on a DVLA driving licence will not prevent a person from being issued a licence. A person with more than 6 'live' penalty points for such offences must generally show a period of 12 months free from conviction before their application is likely to be considered favourably. A 'totting up' conviction following a number of separate offences will be considered as a serious offence.

If you have any queries regarding your application please contact us on **0151 691 8043** or email [taxilicensing@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:taxilicensing@wirral.gov.uk)

## MOTORING OFFENCES

Code	Offence	Penalty points	Council category
<b>Accident offences</b>			
<b>AC10</b>	Failing to stop after an accident	5 to 10	C
<b>AC20</b>	Failing to give particulars or to report an accident within 24 hours	5 to 10	C
<b>AC30</b>	Undefined accident offences	4 to 9	C
<b>Disqualified driver offences</b>			
<b>BA10</b>	Driving while disqualified by order of court	6	C
<b>BA30</b>	Attempting to drive while disqualified by order of court	6	C
<b>Careless driving offences</b>			
<b>CD10</b>	Driving without due care and attention	3 to 9	C or D*
<b>CD20</b>	Driving without reasonable consideration for other road users	3 to 9	C or D*
<b>CD30</b>	Driving without due care and attention or without reasonable consideration for other road users	3 to 9	C or D*
<b>CD40</b>	Causing death through careless driving when unfit through drink	3 to 11	A
<b>CD50</b>	Causing death by careless driving when unfit through drugs	3 to 11	A
<b>CD60</b>	Causing death by careless driving with alcohol level above the limit	3 to 11	A
<b>CD70</b>	Causing death by careless driving then failing to supply a specimen for analysis	3 to 11	A

**Construction and use offences**

<b>CU10</b>	Using a vehicle with defective brakes	3	D
<b>CU20</b>	Causing or likely to cause danger by reason of use of unsuitable vehicle or using a vehicle with parts or accessories (excluding brakes, steering or tyres) in a dangerous condition	3	D
<b>CU30</b>	Using a vehicle with defective tyre(s)	3	D
<b>CU40</b>	Using a vehicle with defective steering	3	D
<b>CU50</b>	Causing or likely to cause danger by reason of load or passengers	3	D
<b>CU80</b>	Using a mobile phone while driving a motor vehicle	3	D

**Reckless and dangerous driving offences**

<b>DD40</b>	Dangerous driving	3 to 11	B
<b>DD60</b>	Manslaughter or culpable homicide while driving a vehicle	3 to 11	A
<b>DD80</b>	Causing death by dangerous driving	3 to 11	A
<b>DD90</b>	Furious driving	3 to 9	C

**Drink or drugs' offences**

<b>DR10</b>	Driving or attempting to drive with alcohol level above limit		B
<b>DR20</b>	Driving or attempting to drive while unfit through drink		B
<b>DR30</b>	Driving or attempting to drive then failing to supply a specimen for analysis		B
<b>DR40</b>	In charge of a vehicle while alcohol level above limit		B
<b>DR50</b>	In charge of a vehicle while unfit through drink		B
<b>DR60</b>	Failure to provide a specimen for analysis in circumstances other than driving or attempting to drive		B
<b>DR70</b>	Failing to provide specimen for breath test		B
<b>DR80</b>	Driving or attempting to drive when unfit through drugs		B

<b>DR90</b>	In charge of a vehicle when unfit through drugs		B
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#### Insurance offences

<b>IN10</b>	Using a vehicle uninsured against third party risks	6 to 8	C
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#### Licence offences

<b>LC20</b>	Driving otherwise than in accordance with a licence	3 to 6	C or D*
<b>LC30</b>	Driving after making a false declaration about fitness when applying for a licence	3 to 6	C or D*
<b>LC40</b>	Driving a vehicle having failed to notify a disability	3 to 6	C or D*
<b>LC50</b>	Driving after a licence has been revoked or refused on medical grounds	3 to 6	C or D*

#### Miscellaneous offences

<b>MS10</b>	Leaving a vehicle in a dangerous position	3	D
<b>MS20</b>	Unlawful pillion riding	3	D
<b>MS30</b>	Play street offences	2	D
<b>MS50</b>	Motor racing on the highway	3 to 11	C or D*
<b>MS60</b>	Offences not covered by other codes	Various	As appropriate*
<b>MS70</b>	Driving with uncorrected defective eyesight	3	D
<b>MS80</b>	Refusing to submit to an eyesight test	3	D
<b>MS90</b>	Failure to give information as to identity of driver etc	6	C

#### Motorway offence

<b>MW10</b>	Contravention of special roads regulations (excluding speed limits)	3	D
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#### Pedestrian crossings' offences

<b>PC10</b>	Undefined contravention of pedestrian crossing regulations	3	D
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<b>PC20</b>	Contravention of pedestrian crossing regulations with moving vehicle	3	D
<b>PC30</b>	Contravention of pedestrian crossing regulations with stationary vehicle	3	D

#### Speed limit offences

<b>SP10</b>	Exceeding goods vehicle speed limits	3 to 6	D
<b>SP20</b>	Exceeding speed limit for type of vehicle (excluding goods or passenger vehicles)	3 to 6	D
<b>SP30</b>	Exceeding statutory speed limit on a public road	3 to 6	D
<b>SP40</b>	Exceeding passenger vehicle speed limit	3 to 6	D
<b>SP50</b>	Exceeding speed limit on a motorway	3 to 6	D

#### Traffic direction and signs

<b>TS10</b>	Failing to comply with traffic light signals	3	D
<b>TS20</b>	Failing to comply with double white lines	3	D
<b>TS30</b>	Failing to comply with 'Stop' sign	3	D
<b>TS40</b>	Failing to comply with direction of a constable/warden	3	D
<b>TS50</b>	Failing to comply with traffic sign (excluding 'stop' signs, traffic lights or double white lines)	3	D
<b>TS60</b>	Failing to comply with a school crossing patrol sign	3	D
<b>TS70</b>	Undefined failure to comply with a traffic direction sign	3	D

#### Special code – 'totting up'

<b>TT99</b>	To signify a disqualification under 'totting-up' procedure. If the total of penalty points reaches 12 or more within three years, the driver is liable to be disqualified		
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#### Theft or unauthorised taking

<b>UT50</b>	Aggravated taking of a vehicle	3-11	C
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### **Aiding, abetting, counselling or procuring**

Offences as coded, but with 0 changed to 2, for example LC10 becomes LC12.

### **Causing or permitting**

Offences as coded, but with 0 changed to , for example LC10 becomes LC14.

### **Inciting**

Offences as coded, but with the end 0 changed to 6, for example DD40 becomes DD46.

Offences remain on a DVLA driving licence for the following periods of time:

CD40, CD50, CD60, CD70, DR10, DR20, DR30 and DR80 - 11 years from date of conviction;

DD40, DD60, DD80 and offences resulting in disqualification - 4 years from date of conviction;

All other offences remain on the licence for 4 years from date of offence.

Source: [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)