

GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE – 7 SEPTEMBER 2012**REVIEW OF TAXI LICENSING POLICY – ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATION FOR DRIVERS OF WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES****1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider a proposal for an additional condition to the current taxi licensing policy. The proposal was made by the New Forest Taxi Association.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As from 1 April 2006 New Forest District Council introduced a policy whereby it would only issue new hackney carriage licences to wheelchair accessible vehicles. Since that date the number of hackney carriage vehicles has increased from 88 to 122. Vehicles licensed prior to 1 April 2006 retained grandfather rights, so there was no requirement that existing operators had to upgrade their vehicles/fleets to wheelchair accessible vehicles.
- 2.2 The Council's Licensing Services section has no record of receiving any complaints about customer service care towards passengers who are wheelchair users.

3 NEW FOREST TAXI ASSOCIATION

- 3.1 On the 10 June 2011 this Committee approved the undertaking of a review of the current taxi licensing policy. In response to a consultation undertaken as part of the review process, the Taxi Association proposed the follow recommendation: 'There should be a mandatory policy condition to require that all licensed drivers in charge of a wheel chair accessible vehicle should have a suitable qualification or competency certificate'.

4 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 In January 2012 a newsletter was sent to all private hire vehicle operators and hackney carriage proprietors. This contained the following question for consultation: -

"As part of the recent review of the taxi licensing policy it was proposed by the New Forest Taxi Association that an additional condition should be considered so that only licensed drivers with a recognised and appropriate qualification should be permitted to drive a wheel chair accessible vehicle." Respondents were asked to tick a box to confirm whether they agreed or disagreed with this proposal. They were also asked to tick boxes to confirm whether they considered that this requirement should be applied to the drivers of hackney carriages, private hire vehicles, or both. The results of the consultation are detailed in the table below:

Consultations sent out to the trade =	132 (100%)
Consultations returned =	61 (46%)
Disagree with proposal =	22 (16% of total consultees/36% of respondents)
Agree with proposal =	39 (30% of total consultees/63% of respondents)
Agree to proposal for both PHV & HCV =	32
Agree to proposal for HCV only =	6
Agree to proposal for PHV only =	1

5 POLICIES OF NEIGHBOURING COUNCILS

- 5.1 Bournemouth and Southampton City Councils both require that all private hire and hackney carriage drivers have an NVQ. The NVQ qualification covers, amongst other things, providing a service to passengers who require assistance. It is understood that this includes training/information about the loading and carrying of passengers who use wheelchairs. As far as Licensing Services are aware, no neighbouring councils have policies which include a specific requirement that the drivers of wheelchair accessible vehicles should have a relevant qualification.

6 LEGISLATION

- 6.1 Section 165 of the Equality Act 2010 places the following duties on drivers of designated wheelchair accessible hackney carriage and private hire vehicles:
- To carry the passenger while in the wheelchair;
 - Not to make any additional charge for doing so;
 - If the passenger chooses to sit in a passenger seat, to carry the wheelchair;
 - To take such steps as are necessary to ensure that the passenger is carried in safety and reasonable comfort; and
 - To give the passenger such mobility assistance as is reasonable required.
- 6.2 “Mobility assistance” is defined as assistance:—
- (a) to enable the passenger to get into or out of the vehicle;
 - (b) if the passenger wishes to remain in the wheelchair, to enable the passenger to get into and out of the vehicle while in the wheelchair;
 - (c) to load the passenger's luggage into or out of the vehicle;
 - (d) if the passenger does not wish to remain in the wheelchair, to load the wheelchair into or out of the vehicle.

7 POLICY GUIDANCE

- # 7.1 The relevant sections from the Department for Transport (DfT) Best Practice Guidance for taxi licensing are attached as **Appendix 1**.

8 TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

- 8.1 A considerable number of the well-established taxi proprietors and/or private hire operators in the New Forest District area have already obtained a suitable qualification, and many also ensure that their drivers received similar training.
- # 8.2 A selection of suitable courses that cover the passenger transport of wheelchair users, as provided locally, is detailed in **Appendix 2**.

9 PROPOSAL

- 9.1 Should the Committee consider that a policy should be adopted to require the drivers of all wheelchair accessible vehicles to undertake relevant training, it is proposed that the current taxi licensing policy be amended to contain the following additional condition:

“The driver of any vehicle licensed by the Council as a wheelchair accessible vehicle must have obtained, and presented to the Licensing Officer for verification, one of the following qualifications/competency certificates:

- BTEC Level 2 Certificate (professional taxi & private hire driver);
- NVQ Level 2 Certificate (road passenger vehicle driving);
- Principles of safe wheelchair handling certificate;
- Any other relevant qualification/competency certificate which evidences that the driver has received training regarding the provision of a taxi service to wheelchair users, with prior approval from the Licensing Officer.”

10 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no direct financial implications for the Council; the costs of any additional training requirement would be met by the applicant or licence holder.
- 10.2 Aggrieved applicants or licence holders would have the right to mount a legal challenge to the amended policy, and to any decisions taken by the licensing authority in accordance with the policy.

11 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

12 CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 There are no crime and disorder issues arising from this report.

13 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 There are no additional equality and diversity implications directly arising from this report other than the duties stated in Section 6.

14 CONCLUSION

- 14.1 The aim of local authority licensing of the taxi trade is to protect the public. Licensing requirements which are unduly stringent will tend unreasonably to restrict the supply of taxi services by putting up the costs or restricting entry to the trade. The Committee should be sure that any licensing requirement it proposes is in proportion to the risk it aims to address.
- 14.2 There will be a number of licensed drivers who currently drive wheelchair accessible hackney carriages/private hire vehicles in the district, but who do not have a formal qualification regarding the transportation of wheelchair users. If the Committee is minded to approve the proposal as detailed in Paragraph 9.1 of this report, consideration regarding a future implementation date should be agreed. This would need to provide a sufficient time period for existing licence holders to obtain the relevant qualification.

15 RECOMMENDATION

- 15.1 The Committee is asked to consider the contents of this report and decide if the current taxi licensing policy requires amendment.

Further information:

Paul Weston
Licensing Services
Tel: 023 8028 5505
Email: licensing@nfdc.gov.uk

Background Papers:

NFDC Taxi Licensing Policy
DfT Best Practice Guidance

Department for Transport

TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE LICENSING

BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

March 2010 (as amended)

ACCESSIBILITY

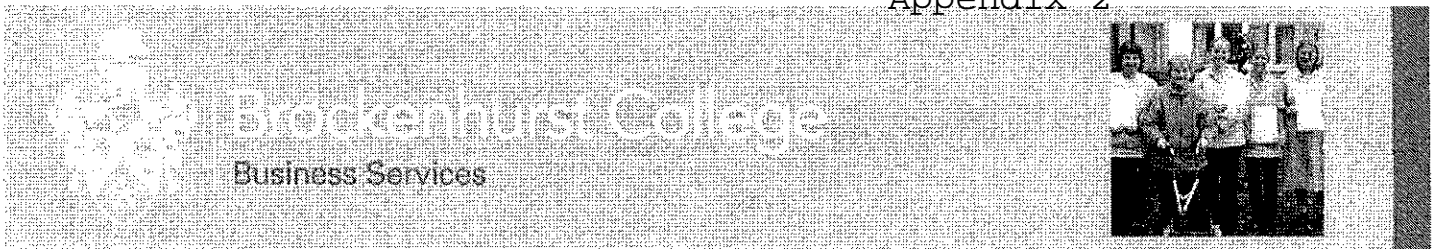
15. The Department is aware that, in some cases, taxi drivers are reluctant to pick up disabled people. This may be because drivers are unsure about how to deal with disabled people, they believe it will take longer for disabled people to get in and out of the taxi and so they may lose other fares, or they are unsure about insurance arrangements if anything goes wrong. It should be remembered that this is no excuse for refusing to pick up disabled people and that the taxi industry has a duty to provide a service to disabled people in the same way as it provides a service to any other passenger. Licensing authorities should do what they can to work with operators, drivers and trade bodies in their area to improve drivers' awareness of the needs of disabled people, encourage them to overcome any reluctance or bad practice, and to improve their abilities and confidence. Local licensing authorities should also encourage their drivers to undertake disability awareness training, perhaps as part of the course mentioned in the training section of this guidance that is available through Go-Skills.

Duties under the Equality Act 2010

24. Local Authorities may wish to consider how to use available courses to reinforce the duties drivers are required to discharge under section 165 of the Act, and also to promote customer service standards for example through GoSkills.

Other training

72. Whilst the Department has no plans to make training courses or qualifications mandatory, there may well be advantage in encouraging drivers to obtain one of the nationally-recognised vocational qualifications for the taxi and PHV trades. These will cover customer care, including how best to meet the needs of people with disabilities. More information about these qualifications can be obtained from *GoSkills*, the Sector Skills Council for Passenger Transport. *GoSkills* is working on a project funded by the Department to raise standards in the industry and *GoSkills* whilst not a direct training provider, can guide and support licensing authorities through its regional network of Regional Managers.



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COURSE INFORMATION SHEET – 2012

Tel: 01590 625223

Email: cworsem@brock.ac.uk

Course Title: Edexcel BTEC Level 2 Certificate in Introduction to the Role of the Professional Taxi and Private Hire Driver

Venue: Brockenhurst College, Solent Business Centre, Southampton.

Course Length: 2 days Full time – (9.30am – 4.30pm) plus online assessments

Tuition Fees: Currently free to eligible candidates – see note below (£250 if not eligible *)

What is a BTEC Level 2 Award?

A BTEC Level 2 Award is a short programme of study designed to develop, support and enhance the knowledge of prospective or existing drivers who wish to begin or develop a career in transporting passengers.

What does the course cover?

The course covers nine core units, these consist of:

- Unit 1 Health and safety in the taxi and private hire work environment
- Unit 2 Road safety when driving passengers in a taxi and private hire vehicle
- Unit 3 Professional customer service in the taxi and private hire industry
- Unit 4 Taxi and private hire vehicle maintenance and safety inspections
- Unit 5 The regulatory framework of the taxi and private hire industry
- Unit 6 Taxi and private hire services for passengers who require assistance
- Unit 7 Routes and fares in the taxi and private hire vehicle industries
- Unit 8 Transporting of parcels, luggage and other items in the taxi and private hire industries
- Unit 9 Transporting of children and young persons by taxi or private hire vehicle

How will the courses be taught?

The course will be delivered to small groups of learners at various locations; Brockenhurst College, Brock House, Solent Business Centre and other venues within the locality (other locations are available on request outside of the locality).

How will the courses be assessed?

Units 1-5, (part of Unit 6 will be tested by the set multiple choice tests, part will be accessed via a wheelchair observation during the two day course) and Units 7-9 are assessed through externally set and marked – onscreen multiple choice tests. Results are provided immediately after tests have been completed.

What can I progress to from this course?

It will provide career opportunities for:

- Persons seeking a career in driving a passenger transport vehicle
- Employed passenger transport drivers who will undertake this qualification as part of their continuing professional development
- Existing passenger transport drivers who wish to return to the industry after an absence and require their qualifications to be updated

***Funding** - Please speak to tutor or Carolyn direct for further details about candidates who are eligible for free funding.

Additional support

This will be discussed at the enrolment and induction process. Please let our staff know if you need any additional support or reasonable adjustments – we will do all we can to help. We can also tailor learning materials to suit particular needs.

Additional training

We strongly recommend our short courses on Emergency First Aid at Work, Health and Safety and Wheelchair Handling and Awareness. For further information on costs and dates ring:

Jan Turner on 01590 625589

How can I get further Information, Advice or Guidance?

Experienced and competent staff can help you decide on your course and progression options. Practical help and advice is also provided to assist students with any kind of disability or individual need, including people for whom English is not their first language.

For further details and enrolment, contact:

Carolyn Worsam
Course Co-ordinator
Brockenhurst College
Lyndhurst Road
Brockenhurst
Hants
SO42 7ZE
Tel: 01590 625223 Email: cworsam@brock.ac.uk
MOBILE - 07500928405

Brockenhurst College is committed to equality of opportunity and meeting the diverse needs of our students. All our main centres are fully accessible to people with disabilities

www.brock.ac.uk





COURSE INFORMATION SHEET – 2012

Course Title:	NVQ Certificate (EDEXCEL Level 2) in Road Passenger Vehicle Driving
Venue:	Brock House, Brockenhurst College.
Course Length:	2 Day Workshop (9.30am – 4.30pm on both days) followed up by in car assessments and completion of a workbook.
Tuition Fee:	Currently Free for eligible candidates (see tutor for further details)

Who is the course for?

This qualification is for Hackney Carriage Drivers and Private Hire Drivers. The course aims to improve skills, knowledge and overall performance of individuals who are employed to provide a passenger transport service by road.

What does the course cover?

The course covers **eight** mandatory units plus at least **three** optional units. Unit choices are tailored to the specific employment area in which the candidate works.

Mandatory Units (All eight to be undertaken):

- Ensure health and safety of the taxi and private hire driver and passengers
- Drive a taxi or private hire vehicle in a professional manner
- Provide professional customer service in the taxi and private hire industries
- Provide a safe and legal vehicle for transporting passengers by taxi and /or private hire
- Provide a transport service in the taxi and private hire vehicle industries for customers who require assistance
- Provide a service to customers using a wheelchair in an assessable taxi or private hire vehicle
- Transport parcels, luggage and other items in the taxi and private hire industries
- Transport children and young persons by taxi, private hire or chauffeuring.

Optional Units (At least three to be undertaken from the list below):

- Carry fare paying passengers within the framework of the private hire industry
- Carry fare paying passengers within the regulatory framework of the taxi industry
- Process fares and charges for private hire passengers
- Process fares and charges for taxi passengers

- Plan routes in the taxi and private hire industries
- Develop and maintain work skills and knowledge in the chauffeur, taxi and private hire industries
- Manage and administer small businesses in the taxi or private hire industries
- Process telephone bookings in the road passenger transport industry

How will the course be taught?

- Initially you will be required to take part in a group Workshop with other drivers in the industry
- You will then be allocated a fully qualified assessor who will work with you, and will undertake a practical in car assessment and will guide you through your NVQ folder.
- Learning materials specifically designed for the course will be supplied to work through on your own and with the support/guidance of your assessor.
- You will receive feedback on work produced
- We will be flexible and fit in with the needs of your business and job requirement
- Your work will be sampled on an ongoing basis by a qualified verifier
- Certificates will be issued after a mandatory 10/12 weeks from completion, and will be despatched to your home address.

How can I progress on from this course?

Candidates will have the option to acquire the BTEC Level 2 Certificate in Introduction to the Role of the Professional Taxi & private hire driver by taking on line multiple choice tests, which are held on a regular basis at Brockenhurst College. (an additional charge will be made for this)
NVQ Level 3 and Level 4 Specific qualifications for the Transport sector.

Additional courses are also available that you might be interested in:

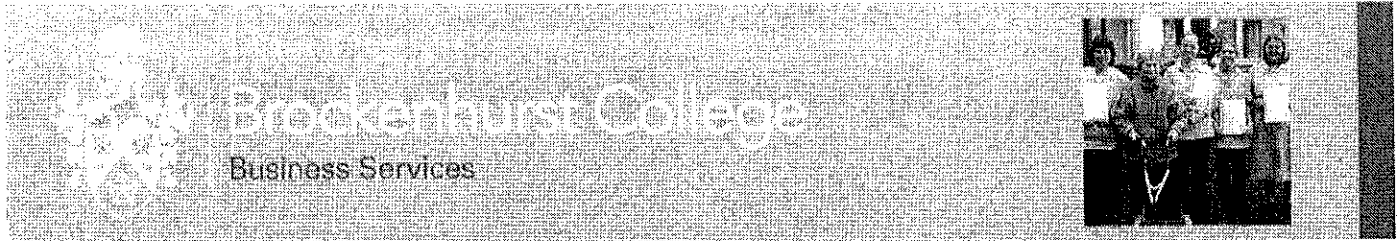
MIDDAS training course
Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) Training
Wheelchair Loading/Unloading
Defensive Driving

Additional Support

Please let our staff know if you need any additional support or reasonable adjustments – we will do all we can to help. We can also tailor learning materials to suit particular needs.

For Further Details and to Enrol, please contact:

Carolyn Worstem
Course Coordinator, on 01590 625223 or via email – cworsem@brock.ac.uk or - Jan Turner,
Employment Liaison Officer on 01590 625589



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COURSE INFORMATION SHEET – 2012

Tel: 01590 625307 **Email:** cworsem@brock.ac.uk

Course Title: **Principles of Safe Wheelchair Handling**

Venue: **Courses take place at regular intervals throughout the year at the College or they can be delivered on-site**

Course Length: **3 Hours**

Tuition Fees: **£45**

This programme is designed to equip you with the knowledge and skills that are essential for safety and practice in loading wheelchair passengers into a variety of vehicles.

Who is the course for?

The programme is open to all vehicle drivers that have to load/unload wheelchairs into vehicles. This course is not suitable for minibus users. It is more important that participants are well-motivated and eager to benefit from the course and participate.

What does the course cover?

The course covers the following subjects:-

- **Disability Awareness**
- **Types of Wheelchairs**
- **Vehicle Restraint techniques for wheelchairs**
- **Practical session**



How will the course be taught and assessed?

- Our tutors have over 70 years combined experience in passenger transport and have been working with Wheelchair passengers for the same period of time. All our tutors are qualified NVQ assessors and have worked as taxi drivers, traffic police officers, driving instructors, bus drivers and inspectors and all are MIDAS trained
- The programme involves a combination of a tutor led workshop and a hands on practical session in a variety of vehicles.
- The course is designed to fit with individual participant's needs and employer requirements.
- Students who complete the programme will be awarded a college certificate.

For further details and enrolment, contact:

Carolyne Worssem

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Email: cworssem@brock.ac.uk

Updated on 06/07/09 by DSt

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