

Taxi and private hire

October 2023 update



Tamworth
Borough Council

Welcome to the first of regular updates to all taxi and private hire drivers, vehicle proprietors and private hire operators in Tamworth. In these updates, we'll highlight current issues and information to help support your work. If there is something you'd like us to include in a future update, please contact us at taxi-licensing@tamworth.gov.uk.

Meet the team

● Wendy Smith, Head of Environmental Health

I've been a practising Environmental Health Officer for 24 years. I have worked for local government since qualifying in 1999, being employed by Tamworth Borough Council, North Warwickshire Borough Council, Cannock Chase Council and Coventry City Council. I have been Head of Environmental Health here at Tamworth since February 2022.



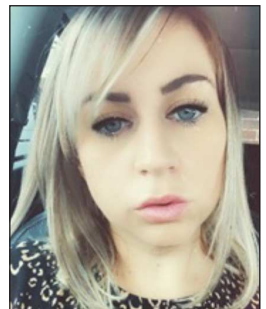
● Sarah Gear, Senior Licensing Officer

I've been working in the world of licensing since 2002. I have worked for a couple of local authorities including Lichfield, East Staffordshire & Stoke on Trent. I've been the Senior Licensing Officer at Tamworth Borough Council since July 2022. I enjoy the varied topics that we cover and there's always something new that comes along!! In my spare time I enjoy reading, travelling and spending time with my two girls.



● Jodie Small, Licensing Officer

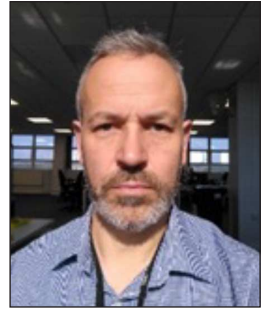
I've worked for Tamworth Borough Council for five years and lived in the borough all my life, however I am relatively new to the world of licensing, I joined the team in 2021, prior to that I worked in Democratic Services at the council. I am learning something new every day, no day is ever the same that's why I love this role!



During my time off I enjoy cinema visits and indulging in a beverage or two. I'm also kept busy with my two children and my dog.

● **Giles Dean, Licensing & Enforcement Officer**

I've been with the licensing department since May 2022. I was previously a police officer for 30 years in the West Midlands. I enjoy travelling and have visited nearly 40 countries. I hope to break the 40 barrier in 2024. In my spare time, I enjoy painting and am currently having lessons to improve.



I want to improve accessibility to taxi and private hire travel for disabled people in Tamworth. I have heard some stories of unacceptable practices when it comes to transporting disabled people and poor excuses for refusing to convey passengers in wheelchairs. I aim to help drivers become more aware of their legal obligations to prevent any unlawful discrimination.

● **Paul Holmes, Public Health Officer**

I've been a practising Licensing Officer for over 20 years now. I've worked for a few local authorities including Stafford, Derby & Elmbridge, and I've been a Public Health Officer at Tamworth Borough Council since August 2015.



Your main points of contact will be Jodie and Giles.

**To contact the team,
email: taxi-licensing@tamworth.gov.uk
so we are able to deal with your enquiry promptly.**

Taxi & Private Hire Licensing Policy

Tamworth Borough Council's taxi & private hire policy became effective from April 2023. We recommend you take time to read the policy as there have been a few changes to practices. If you have any queries in relation to the policy please email: ***taxi-licensing@tamworth.gov.uk***. We'll review the policy after it has been active for 12 months, so welcome any feedback you have.

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy (tamworth.gov.uk).

New dash badges

We recently contacted you to collect your new dash badge from Marmion House. The dash badge should be placed on the dash of your vehicle using the sticky tabs provided. It displays the information that is also on your driver badge. If the vehicle is used by several drivers, the dash badge of the driver using the vehicle at that time must be displayed. If you drive a Hackney Carriage you may display it on the glass partition so that it is more visible to your passengers. Failure to do so may result in penalty points being issued.

Hackney Carriages - carrying pushchairs

For information about when a child can travel without a car seat see ***www.gov.uk/child-car-seats-the-rules/when-a-child-can-travel-without-a-car-seat***.

A child's pushchair should never be treated as a wheelchair and never be loaded into a taxi containing a child. The parent/guardian of the child needs to take the child out of the pushchair and, depending on their age, be transported in the most appropriate travel seat. A child's pushchair should never be secured in a similar way to a wheelchair.

Our advice is that parents of children over the age of three can secure their child in a taxi seat using the seat belt. Under no circumstances must you allow children to sit on their parent's lap and share a seat belt, or be carried on board in a pushchair.

Police confirmed that having children in pushchairs during transportation is an offence under the Road Traffic Act 1988 if the number of passengers and the manner they are carried is likely to cause danger, and if convicted, could result in the loss of a driver's licence.

Certificate of compliance reminders

Certificate of compliance for your vehicles are now required every 12 months for vehicles under four years and every six months for vehicles over four years. There have been a few occasions where we have altered the date of your compliance test date to meet new requirements. Please remember; it is your responsibility to make sure that compliance tests are completed in time. It is also your responsibility to make sure that appointments with Motor Vehicle Services are attended. If you fail to attend an appointment you will be charged.

Exceptional age inspections

Private hire vehicles will be licensed up to 10 years of age and Hackney Carriages up to 12 years of age. We will accept applications from vehicles older than this providing they pass an officer inspection. We will write to you before your licence is due for renewal and invite you to book an appointment with an officer for an inspection. Please allow plenty of time before your renewal date in so that we have time to look at your vehicle and to process your application.

Conduct and public image

All licensed drivers that have been issued badges have been deemed as fit and proper.

You must remain fit and proper in order to hold a driver's badge. We expect all drivers to act with honesty and integrity and have a high standard of general conduct towards other drivers and members of the public. Public safety remains at the heart of what we do. We want the public to feel safe and we will investigate any reports we receive that are contrary to this. At the same time, we expect the public to treat our drivers with the same respect.

Suspensions and professional responsibility to keep on top of medicals, DBS checks and renewals

As a licence holder, it is your responsibility to be aware of when certain checks and renewals of licences are due. We will remind you and send you your renewal paperwork, but we are finding renewals are left very late and checks do go past their due dates.

Driver checks you need to be aware of are:

- 12 month driving licence check,
- Six monthly DBS check,
- Medical check (dependent on age)
- CSE & DDA training every three years.

Vehicle Licence Checks are:

- Six or 12 month compliance checks. You may be suspended if the required checks are not completed.

Unattended Hackney Carriage Vehicles

All hackney carriage owners need to be aware that it is an offence to leave your vehicle unattended for any reason for any length of time whilst on a rank. There have been occasions where officers have observed unattended vehicles. Should we witness any further vehicles left unattended we will issue penalty points.

Taxi Rank etiquette

We would like to remind drivers of the etiquette when using hackney carriage taxi ranks:

- Only taxis are allowed to wait on a rank.
- Taxis can only wait on a rank during permitted hours.
- No taxi (or any other type of vehicle) is allowed to park (and be left unattended) on a rank at any time.

- When a taxi is on a rank, the driver must always stay with the vehicle. The only exemption is if the police or a parking attendant give permission to leave vehicles on the ranks. (Road traffic orders do allow emergency service vehicles to wait on ranks for as long as necessary while attending an emergency).
- When arriving at a rank, the taxi should be positioned behind the vehicle(s) already on the rank so all vehicles are pointing the same direction.
- When a taxi moves forward on the rank, the taxis behind must also move forward to allow another taxi to join the end of the rank.
- Driver's must not encourage anyone to hire their vehicle while they are waiting on the taxi rank.

Drivers may only refuse a fare:

- Taxi journeys that start and end in the area where that driver is licensed (controlled district) cannot be refused without reasonable excuse.
- Taxi journeys that start in the controlled district but end outside of that area can be refused as there is no statutory duty on the driver to accept a booking outside of the controlled district.

Reporting Accidents

We all have accidents in our vehicles whether they are minor accidents that just leave a scratch or major accidents that require you to have a replacement vehicle.

Whatever the extent of your accident you are required to report this to us within 72 hours. We require you to complete an accident report form and we may ask to inspect the vehicle. If we decide that that vehicle is still operable you will have 28 days to get the vehicle repaired. If the damage to the vehicle renders it undrivable we will suspend the vehicle licence. There will then be an option for you to licence a hire vehicle for a period of eight weeks.

Change of Ownership

It is important to inform us of a change of owner/transfer in relation to your licensed vehicles. If we are unaware of who is legally responsible for the vehicle this could result in serious repercussions. A change of owner/transfer is easy to do. All we require is a completed application and sight of your insurance together with the relevant fee. You are required to inform us of a change of ownership/transfer within seven days of the sale.

Smoking in Vehicles

Under no circumstance must you smoke tobacco or like substance (including e-cigarettes) in your licensed vehicles. This will result in you being awarded penalty points and possibly a fixed penalty notice.

Contact us

For further information, advice, or to make a complaint, please contact:

Tamworth Borough Council

Marmion House, Lichfield Street, Tamworth, Staffordshire, B79 7BZ

Tel: 01827 709709

Email: enquiries@tamworth.gov.uk

www.tamworth.gov.uk

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please phone: 01827 709709