



Department
for Transport

Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles

An update from the Department for Transport

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6 February 2023

UNRESTRICTED

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Parliamentary Under Secretary of State



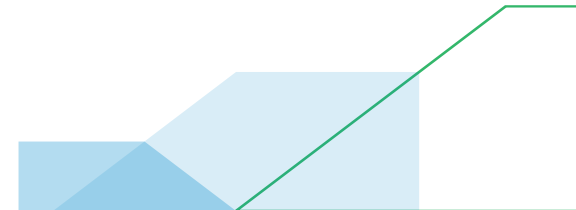
Guy Opperman MP

Biography

Guy Opperman was appointed Minister for Roads and Local Transport at the Department for Transport on 13 November 2023. He was elected as the MP for Hexham in May 2010.

He was previously Minister of State at the Department for Work and Pensions between 2022 and 2023 and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the same department between 14 June 2017 and 8 September 2022.

He served as a Government Whip (Lord Commissioner of HM Treasury) from 12 May 2015 to 14 June 2017.

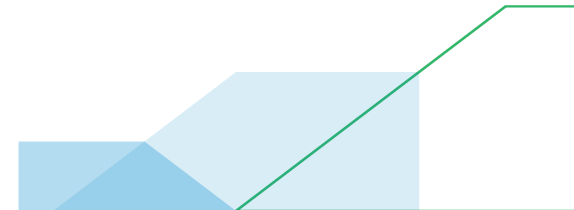


Best practice guidance for licensing authorities in England

Overview

- Since 2006 DfT have issued guidance on taxi and PHV licensing to assist licensing authorities.
- The scope of the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards, published in 2020, is limited to actions to protect children and vulnerable adults.
- Best Practice Guidance, published 17 November 2023, covers a much wider range of issues.
- A summary of responses and the Government's response was published at the same time as the guidance.
- Updated Best Practice Guidance looks to promote high standards whilst challenging the need for some requirements that can act as a barrier to the trade.

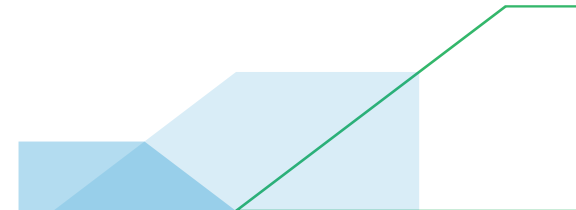
The screenshot shows the GOV.UK website page for the guidance document. The breadcrumb trail is: Home > Regional and local government > Local government > Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing: best practice. The page title is 'Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance for licensing authorities in England', updated 17 November 2023. A table of contents is visible on the left, listing 15 items. The main content area shows the start of '1. Introduction' and '1.1 Background'. The background section text states: 'In 2020 the government issued, for the first time, [Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards](#) to safeguard the most vulnerable in society. The [Policing and Crime Act 2017](#) enabled the Secretary of State to issue these to licensing authorities; though the focus was on the use of their powers to protect children and vulnerable adults over 18 from harm, the measures will increase the safety of all passengers. Licensing authorities must give due regard to the Statutory Standards when setting their taxi and private hire vehicle licensing policies and procedures. This non-statutory best practice guidance complements the statutory standards, covering a range of issues outside the remit of the statutory standards. Individual licensing authorities are still responsible for deciding their own policies and making decisions on individual licensing matters applying the relevant law and any other relevant considerations. This guidance is primarily intended to assist licensing authorities, but it is only guidance and does not intend to give a definitive statement of the law; any decisions made by an authority remain a matter for that authority.'



Supporting an Inclusive Service: Rationale

Why inclusivity matters

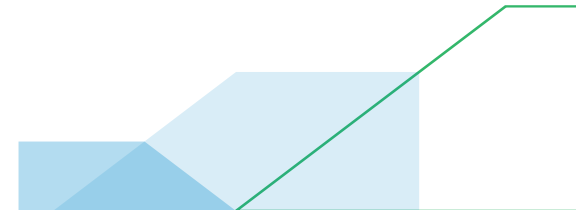
- One in five people in the UK are disabled, and disabled people rely on taxis and PHVs more than most.
- Accessibility consideration is integral to BPG, and should be integral to licensing authority policy-making and delivery.
- Policy should be holistic – accessibility is not just about wheelchair users.
- Policy should be proactive and evidence led.
- Policy should target consistently high standard of service for everyone.



Supporting an Inclusive Service: Recommendations

What prevents a service from being inclusive

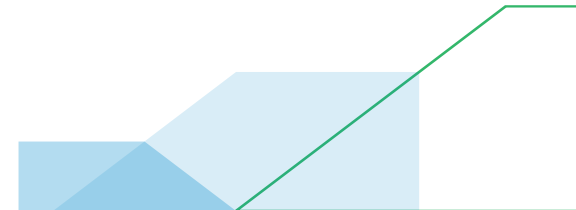
- BPG takes Social Model approach, focusing on barriers that disabled people face and authorities can address.
- Key themes:
 - Understanding impact and committing to change.
 - Consistency of application.
 - Effective enforcement.



Supporting an Inclusive Service: Inclusive Service Plans

How to have inclusive services

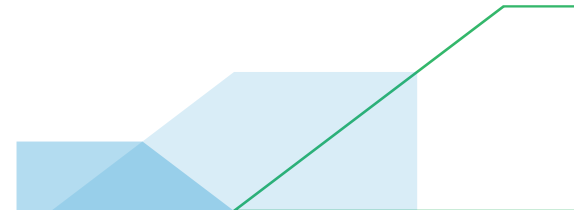
- ISPs will support authorities to review current service and commitment to users.
- Main principles:
 - Evidence led and informed by lived experience.
 - Reflect current situation and include realistic aims.
 - Act as a commitment with disabled passengers on services today and tomorrow.
 - Support authorities to make taxi/PHV licensing policy which is inclusive by design.



Driver Licensing

In addition to the recommendations made in the Statutory Standards, the BPG covers other driver licensing recommendations, including:

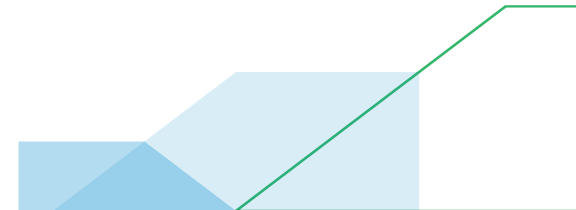
- Training/assessment for drivers on disability awareness.
- Attitudes and behaviours related to road safety.
- Topographical knowledge tests for taxi drivers only.
- Obtaining or holding a vocational qualification should not be a licensing requirement.



Vehicle Licensing

Legislation gives licensing authorities a wide range of discretion over the vehicles they can license which can lead to greater variations across the country, we have tried to take a proportionate approach to vehicle requirements in the BPG:

- Identification and signage requirements attract many opposing views. We recognise the need to show greater differentiation between taxis and PHVs and therefore recommend that 'TAXI' signs are mandated for taxis. Conversely, PHVs should be prohibited from displaying any roof sign. Livery requirements for PHVs can increase the chance of it being mistaken for a taxi.
- Age limits are not necessary where a vehicle is being frequently tested and where daily vehicle condition checks are being conducted.

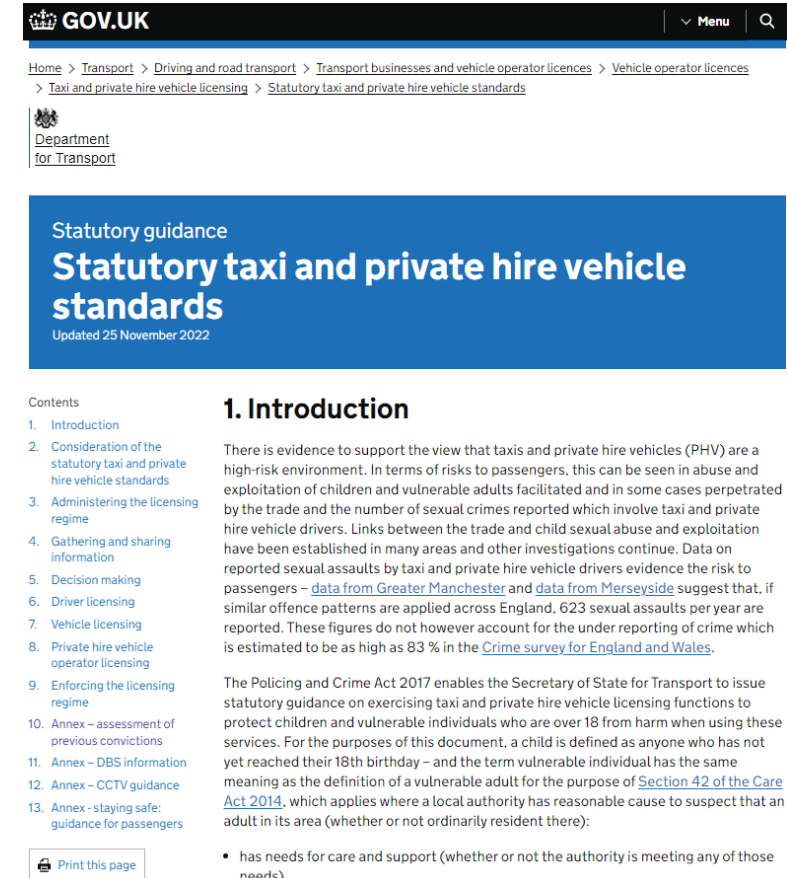


Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards

Update

Since publication in 2020, there has been progress in the safeguarding measures put in place by licensing authorities, including:

- As of 1 April 2023, 100% of licensing authorities in England require taxi and PHV drivers to undergo an enhanced DBS check with a check of both the adult's and children's barred lists.
- 95% of authorities require taxi and PHV drivers to complete child sexual exploitation awareness training, compared to 77% in 2019.
- We continue to monitor compliance with the Statutory Standards through the annual survey.



The screenshot shows the GOV.UK website page for 'Statutory guidance: Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards'. The page is dated 25 November 2022. It features a blue header with the GOV.UK logo and a search bar. The main content area is white with a blue sidebar on the left containing a table of contents. The main text area is white with a blue header for the section '1. Introduction'. The introduction text discusses the high-risk environment for passengers and the need for enhanced safeguarding measures. A 'Print this page' button is visible at the bottom left of the page.

GOV.UK

Home > Transport > Driving and road transport > Transport businesses and vehicle operator licences > Vehicle operator licences > Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing > Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards

Department for Transport

Statutory guidance

Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards

Updated 25 November 2022

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Consideration of the statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards
3. Administering the licensing regime
4. Gathering and sharing information
5. Decision making
6. Driver licensing
7. Vehicle licensing
8. Private hire vehicle operator licensing
9. Enforcing the licensing regime
10. Annex – assessment of previous convictions
11. Annex – DBS information
12. Annex – CCTV guidance
13. Annex – staying safe: guidance for passengers

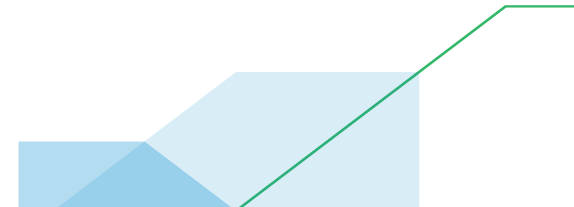
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1. Introduction

There is evidence to support the view that taxis and private hire vehicles (PHV) are a high-risk environment. In terms of risks to passengers, this can be seen in abuse and exploitation of children and vulnerable adults facilitated and in some cases perpetrated by the trade and the number of sexual crimes reported which involve taxi and private hire vehicle drivers. Links between the trade and child sexual abuse and exploitation have been established in many areas and other investigations continue. Data on reported sexual assaults by taxi and private hire vehicle drivers evidence the risk to passengers – [data from Greater Manchester](#) and [data from Merseyside](#) suggest that, if similar offence patterns are applied across England, 623 sexual assaults per year are reported. These figures do not however account for the under reporting of crime which is estimated to be as high as 83 % in the [Crime survey for England and Wales](#).

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 enables the Secretary of State for Transport to issue statutory guidance on exercising taxi and private hire vehicle licensing functions to protect children and vulnerable individuals who are over 18 from harm when using these services. For the purposes of this document, a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday – and the term vulnerable individual has the same meaning as the definition of a vulnerable adult for the purpose of [Section 42 of the Care Act 2014](#), which applies where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that an adult in its area (whether or not ordinarily resident there):

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs)
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect
- as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it

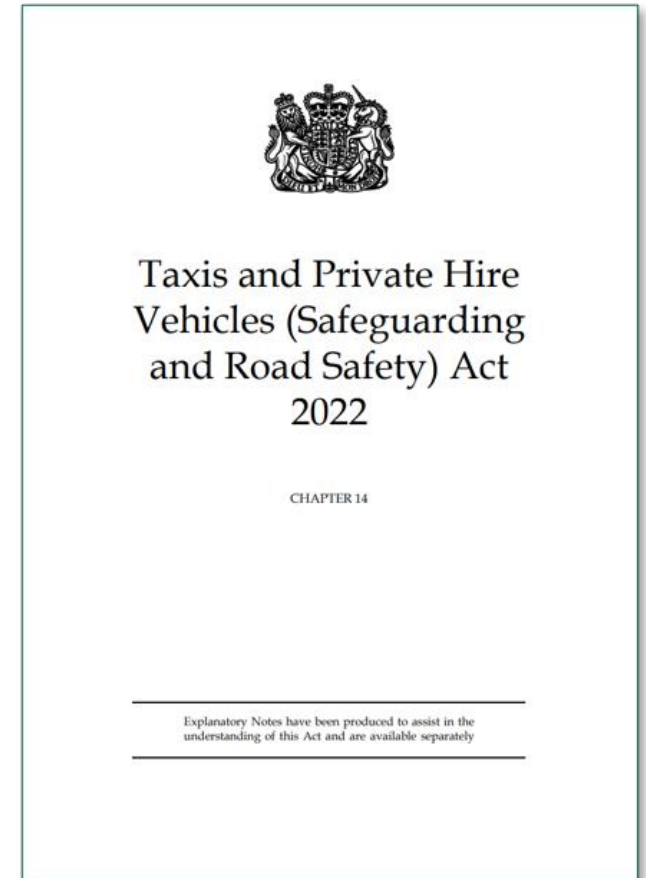


The Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022

Update

The final part of the Act was brought into effect on 27 April 2023, with NR3S being designated as the database for the recording of refusals, suspensions and revocations:

- Now a legal requirement for all licensing authorities in England to use NR3S for the purposes of new driver licence applications and to record instances where a licence has been refused, suspended or revoked.
- Monitoring the use of this database to see how often authorities are entering records and searching it.
- Must also report safeguarding and road safety concerns to the authority that issued the licence.

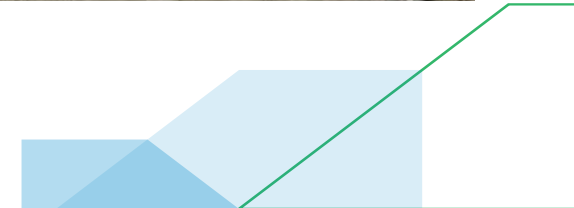


The Future

Medium to Longer Term

In 2024 we are expecting:

- To engage with the sector about the Levelling Up White Paper commitment to explore transferring taxi and private hire vehicle licensing to both combined authorities and upper-tier authorities.
- To publish guidance on Information Sharing between the police and taxi and PHV licensing authorities.
- Commitment in the Autumn Statement to consult on the impacts of the Uber v Sefton High Court Ruling on the VAT treatment of PHVs.
- Publish a Call for Evidence on taxi/PHV accessibility, to understand the barriers faced by disabled people and options for addressing them. Conclusions intended to inform future policy



Questions

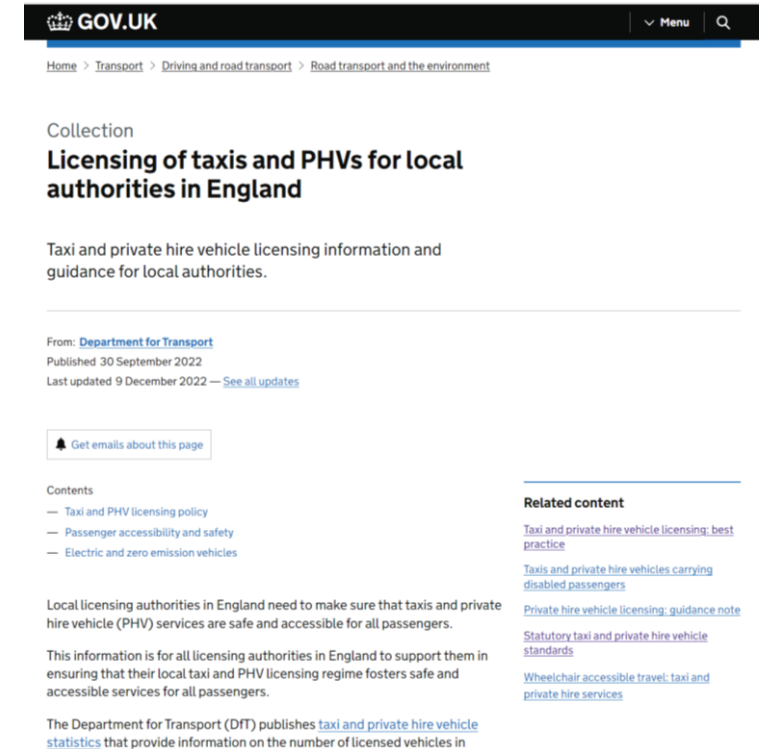
All of the guidance issued by DfT and other useful information can be found on GOV.UK:

[Licensing of taxis and PHVs for local authorities in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/licensing-of-taxis-and-phvs-for-local-authorities-in-england)

Further questions may be sent to:

TaxisandPHVs@dft.gov.uk

InclusiveTransport@dft.gov.uk



The screenshot shows the GOV.UK website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the GOV.UK logo, a menu icon, and a search icon. Below the navigation bar, the breadcrumb trail reads: Home > Transport > Driving and road transport > Road transport and the environment. The main heading is 'Collection Licensing of taxis and PHVs for local authorities in England'. Below this, there is a sub-heading: 'Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing information and guidance for local authorities.' The page is attributed to the Department for Transport, published on 30 September 2022, and last updated on 9 December 2022. There is a button to 'Get emails about this page'. The 'Contents' section lists three items: 'Taxi and PHV licensing policy', 'Passenger accessibility and safety', and 'Electric and zero emission vehicles'. The 'Related content' section lists several links: 'Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing: best practice', 'Taxi and private hire vehicles carrying disabled passengers', 'Private hire vehicle licensing: guidance note', 'Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards', and 'Wheelchair accessible travel: taxi and private hire services'. The main body of text states: 'Local licensing authorities in England need to make sure that taxis and private hire vehicle (PHV) services are safe and accessible for all passengers. This information is for all licensing authorities in England to support them in ensuring that their local taxi and PHV licensing regime fosters safe and accessible services for all passengers. The Department for Transport (DfT) publishes taxi and private hire vehicle statistics that provide information on the number of licensed vehicles in'.

