

TAXI DRIVING

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH

GUIDANCE TO APPLICANTS

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I want to become a Taxi Driver. What do I need to do?

Application packs are available from the Licensing Section of Bridgend County Borough Council. The packs contain:

- Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Vehicle driver's licence application form.
- Medical form.
- Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Assessment test application form.
- Explanatory CRB "Green Form". This lists the documents you need to confirm your identity.

Please read page 3 of the driver's licence application form "guidance notes for new applicants" before applying.

Special arrangements apply if you are not resident in the United Kingdom at the time of application – please see below.

Please note you must have held a Driving Licence (not being a provisional) for the 12 months immediately prior to the date of application, your licence must be up to date and in good condition. The Council accepts EU/EEA licences providing you meet this criteria.

You will be required to satisfy the Council that you are entitled to reside and work in the United Kingdom.

I have read the booklets and wish to apply. What do I need to do?

Please make an appointment with the Licensing Section. Complete as much of the application form as you can and bring all the documentation with you. Please bring the valid identity documents as listed in the CRB "Green Form". We cannot deal with your application without these documents.

You will be required to complete a short test at the appointment.

How much does it cost? Do I have to pay the full fee?

Please refer to fees list on the website or telephone the Licensing Section on 01656 643103/09). The cost is subject to annual review but includes the cost of the Criminal Records Bureau disclosure and Driver Awareness Course. It is your responsibility to pay for the Driving Standard Agency (DSA) test fee separately.

How long will it take to get a licence?

Approximately 8 – 10 weeks or longer depending on the availability of DSA tests and medical appointments. You need to be able to provide all the documents referred to above before your licence is issued, but it is for you to decide whether or not to book and pay for the DSA test or medical at the beginning of the process – before you make a commitment you should be aware that the grant of a licence is dependent on satisfying all four of the pre-licensing criteria and any statutory requirements:

- Satisfactory medical at DVLA Group 2 Standard
- DSA hackney carriage/private hire assessment certificate
- Driver Awareness Course Certificate/Receipts test
- Assessment of Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure/Motoring convictions record.

What is a Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure (CRB)? Why do I need one?

Disclosure is an information service provided by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) an executive agency of the Home Office. It is an impartial and confidential document that details an individual's criminal record and, where appropriate, details of those who are banned from working with children. The Licensing Authority is empowered by law to check with the Criminal Records Bureau for the existence and content of any criminal record held in the name of an applicant. Bridgend County Borough Council are pre-registered with the CRB and are obliged to treat your disclosure in the strictest of confidence. We must comply with a Code of practice, which contains obligations about the fair use and safe handling of Disclosure information and can be viewed on the CRB website (www.disclosure.gov.uk).

How long will it be valid for?

Bridgend County Borough Council requires a CRB Disclosure every 3 years.

What if I already have a disclosure?

The CRB does not endorse the re-use of disclosures due to the risks involved.

I have a criminal record and/or points on my Driving Licence. Will it affect my application?

The disclosure of a criminal record or other information will not necessarily prohibit you from gaining a licence unless the Authority considers that the

conviction renders you unsuitable. In making this decision the Authority will consider the nature of the offence, how long ago it took place and what age you were when it was committed and any other factors which may be relevant. Any applicant refused a driver's licence on the grounds that he/she is not a fit and proper person to hold such a licence has a right of appeal to the Magistrates' Court.

If you would like to discuss what affect a conviction might have on your application you may telephone the Licensing Section in confidence on 01656 643109/643103 or take independent legal advice.

How do I book my Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Assessment Test with the Driving Standards Agency? When should I book?

Please read the Private Hire – Hackney Carriage Assessment booklet enclosed. Please contact the Driving Standards Agency directly to book your test appointment.

Tests may take up to 6 weeks to become available, you may book as soon as your application has been assessed and accepted.

*Please note that passing your DSA test will not automatically guarantee that you will be granted a licence.

How do I obtain a Medical Certificate?

Book an appointment with your Doctor at your local surgery where you are registered as a patient. Please take the medical form included in your application pack with you for the Doctor to complete. The Doctor carrying out the examination must have full access to your medical records during the examination.

I have a health problem. Will it affect my application?

If you have doubts about your ability to meet the medical standards, consult your doctor **BEFORE** making an application and **BEFORE** you arrange for the medical certificate form to be completed. Bridgend County Borough Council requires applicants to meet DVLA Group 2 medical standards. If you have a medical condition which may cause problems for road safety and taxi driving you should discuss this with your doctor. This may include neurological disorders such as epilepsy/seizure or loss of consciousness or disabling giddiness; cardiovascular disorders; insulin treated diabetes or diabetic complications; psychiatric disorders; drugs and alcohol misuse and dependency; visual disorders; renal disorders; respiratory and sleep disorders; difficulty communicating by telephone in an emergency. Your doctor should be aware of the medical standards required for a Group 2 vehicle licence holder.

Do you have a medical condition which is aggravated by exposure to assistance dogs?

If yes, please ask the Licensing Section for appropriate forms for completion by your Doctor. If the condition is so severe the Council may be able to grant an exemption from the carrying of assistance dogs whilst driving hackney carriage and private hire vehicles.

Who will decide whether I will be granted a licence?

When submitting an application you are requested to declare any convictions or cautions you may have, unless they are regarded as “spent” under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. You should be aware that the licensing authority has the power to consider any spent convictions disclosed on the Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure.

Under the Council’s Scheme of Delegation to Officers a hackney carriage/private hire driver’s licence may be granted by licensing officers. This will depend on individual circumstances but generally this method will be used if you satisfy the general licensing requirements and have three or less penalty points only on your driving licence. If there are more than 3 points on your licence, or if you have a criminal conviction or a medical problem, the staff of the Licensing Section will give you advice as to whether your application may have to be placed before the Licensing Sub-Committee for a decision to be made.

What happens at a Sub Committee?

The Licensing Sub-Committee consists of County Borough Councillors who will determine your application based on the criteria of whether you are a fit and proper person to hold a licence. Any medical matters or convictions can be referred to the Sub-Committee. You will be notified of the date of this meeting, and you may be accompanied. You will receive a letter explaining the decision of the Sub-Committee and how to appeal against a decision, if you are dissatisfied with the decision, or any conditions imposed on your licence.

What do I need to do when my application is confirmed?

You will need to make an appointment so that we can check your documentation and issue you with a photo card licence.

Before a licence is issued you must provide (if not provided with the application):

Satisfactory Medical Certificate

**DSA Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Assessment Certificate
Driver Awareness Course Certificate
Photographic proof of identity**

What documents will I receive when I get my licence?

You will receive:

- A photo card, which must be worn at all times whilst driving your Hackney Carriage /Private Hire vehicle.
- A counterpart paper copy of your hackney carriage/private hire driver's licence. Please read this carefully and keep in a safe place.
- A copy of Hackney Carriage Byelaws.
- Inland Revenue documentation. (If you are starting a new business)

What is the Driver Awareness Course and when should I attend?

The Driver Awareness Course sets out the standards expected of licensed taxi drivers.

You must attend the course and obtain the Certificate before your licence is granted. You will be notified of the courses available and it is your responsibility to ensure that you attend.

How long does my Licence last?

Normally for 1 year – but in certain circumstances you may receive a licence for a shorter period. If you wish to carry on driving it is your responsibility to ensure that you apply for the renewal of the licence **BEFORE** the expiry date shown on your badge.

How much does it cost to renew?

Please refer to fees list on the website or telephone the Licensing Section on 01656 643103/09.

Will you send me a reminder to renew my licence?

Yes, a reminder will be sent before your licence expires. It will include an application form and details of any further documentation required. You are strongly advised to make your application at least one month before the expiry date so that your application can be processed before the expiry date. It is an offence to drive without a valid licence and if you fail to apply before the expiry date your licence will expire and you will not be able to drive until your application is determined. Although we send you a

reminder, it is your responsibility to make the application in sufficient time for it to be processed.

What happens if I get penalty points on my licence or convicted of an offence during the year?

You will need to declare this offence when you complete your application to renew your licence. It is particularly important for you to make your application at least one month before you are due to renew your licence, as penalty points and/or a conviction may result in your application being considered by a Licensing Sub-Committee, and your application will take longer to process.

What if I change my address?

You need to notify the Licensing Section in writing or by e-mail immediately. Your records can then be amended so any correspondence can be sent to the correct address. It is a requirement of application that the address on your driving licence is your current address, and the same as the address on your application form. It is a legal requirement to notify DVLA immediately of any changes to your name or permanent address. Failure to do this may result in a fine of up to £1,000.

What should I do if I lose my badge?

Please notify the Licensing Section and Police immediately. You will need to apply for a replacement badge and pay a fee.

What should I do when I have a problem about taxi driving?

Please do not hesitate to contact Bridgend County Borough's Licensing Enforcement Officers or any of the Licensing Section team.

What if I am not resident in the United Kingdom when I make my application?

Applications from persons who are not resident in the UK at the time of application must be accompanied by a Certificate of Good Conduct and an officially certified translation if this is available. You will also be asked to confirm whether you have at any time visited or resided in the UK, and if this is the case, a Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure will be commissioned by the Council. You will have to pay for the Disclosure.

Where can I find out more?

Further information regarding CRB Disclosures can be found at: www.disclosure.gov.uk or the Disclosure information Line: 0870 90 90 881

Information regarding DSA assessment or driving licence queries:
Driving Standards Agency: www.dsa.gov.uk
e-mail Taxitest@dsa.gsi.gov.uk or telephone 0115 901 5894.

For local information or any further information required regarding licensing please contact the Licensing Section or visit www.bridgend.gov.uk

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PLEASE NOTE : This is a summary of detailed legal provisions. The Council has taken reasonable precautions to ensure that the summary is accurate, but you should always contact the Licensing Section to discuss the application process. Please note that we will outline the process, but cannot offer advice on individual applications.