

A statement concerning the impact of Covid-19 on Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Trade Policies.

The City Council Licensing Policies regarding the acceptable age limits on vehicles were revised in April 2019 following significant discussion and consultation with the trade and other interested parties.

These policies were agreed almost 12 months ago. The people whose vehicles will exceed the acceptable age limits at the end of their licence will have known this. This is not a new policy.

Whilst we are able to make certain arrangements to minimise the impact of COVID-19 on service delivery and any knock-on effects that will have on the trade, we will not be relaxing our vehicle requirements.

The policy was implemented to ensure we maintain a decent standard of vehicles on the road, which contribute less pollution into the air. The policy was influenced by, but not inextricably linked to the proposals for a Clean Air Zone for the City. The reason was to improve the standard of the licensed fleet, and that has not changed with any possible postponement of the introduction of a Clean Air Zone in the City.

The Covid-19 situation is very serious, but the Licensing team will continue to offer a service despite the many difficulties presented. However, the scope of that service may have to change as the situation develops. We have introduced a series of short application forms for specific transactions, it is intended they should be submitted by email, with supporting documents attached. This is not an ideal situation but is the most practical in the prevailing circumstances.

The law does not allow a vehicle licence to be issued for longer than 12 months, so there can be no blanket extension to licences.

We have agreed to allow those licences which expire as a result of being unable to be renewed during this period of lockdown to be considered as 'late renewals' when an application is able to be completed after this period of 'lockdown'. This would still mean the candidate vehicle /driver would have to comply with the policy requirements in effect including the age policy and an MOT passed in the preceding 10 weeks.

Those licence holders who have applied by email for a renewal (who have supplied all necessary documents) will be contacted as soon as possible for payment and to arrange collection of new plates/badges.

Unfortunately, we are not able to complete transactions for new/replacement vehicles or for new drivers as our offices are not open to allow officers to safely access the equipment to produce the badges and plates.