

Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening



As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provides a record of both the **process** and **decision**. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.
- whether or not equality, diversity, cohesion and integration is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an impact assessment.

Directorate: Resources	Service area: Licensing & Registration
Lead person: Kate Coldwell	Contact number: 2143057

1. Title: Standard conditions attached to a private hire drivers licence

Is this a:

☒

Strategy / Policy

☐

Service / Function

☐

Other

If other, please specify

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening

Leeds city council took responsibility for all Hackney carriage and private hire licensing matters in 1978 when it adopted Part II of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1976. The then responsible Licensing Committee created a set of conditions which it thought appropriate to place on private hire drivers at that time.

Since 1978, changes have been made to the conditions based on recommendations by Elected Members, changes in legislation and minor administrative, enforcement or public service issues.

In 2011, the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Section undertook a review of all its conditions and policies. It is the recently reviewed private hire driver conditions which are now being screened.

3. Relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

All the council's strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – city wide or more local. These will also have a greater/lesser relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, carers, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and any other relevant characteristics (for example socio-economic status, social class, income, unemployment, residential location or family background and education or skills levels).

Questions	Yes	No
Is there an existing or likely differential impact for the different equality characteristics?	√	
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?		√
Could the proposal affect how our services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?		√
Could the proposal affect our workforce or employment practices?		√
Does the proposal involve or will it have an impact on <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eliminating unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment• Advancing equality of opportunity• Fostering good relations		√

If you have answered **no** to the questions above please complete **sections 6 and 7**

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above and;

- Believe you have already considered the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration within your proposal please go to **section 4**.
- Are not already considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration within your proposal please go to **section 5**.

4. Considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

If you can demonstrate you have considered how your proposals impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration you have carried out an impact assessment.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below (use the prompts for guidance).

- **How have you considered equality, diversity, cohesion and integration?**

All licences in connection with the driving and operation of Private Hire vehicles are issued by the Council in accordance with the provisions Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1976.

Drivers and Operators should be familiar with this Act, the provisions of the Town Police Clauses Act and the Equality Act affecting Private Hire licences.

The purpose of conditions attached to licences is to make sure that the Taxi and Private Hire trade in Leeds is operated in a professional manner and that the correct standards of public safety are met by drivers and Operators and that all vehicles are safe and meet a reasonable standard of comfort. The Council is committed to providing a quality transport service within the Taxi and Private Hire trade and our overriding principle is the safety of the travelling public. In addition, we are alert to public expectations of passenger care and comfort.

Councillors have considered carefully the conditions attached to private hire driver licences and emphasise that they are essential requirements of the role.

Failure to observe and adhere to the conditions may lead to immediate suspension of the driver licence and consideration of licence revocation and prosecution.

A copy of the standard conditions attached to a private hire driver licence are included within all 'Welcome Packs' which are handed out to potential new applicants. The conditions set out the requirements placed upon applicants before any fee is taken. To progress an application, a one hour appointment is given with a Licensing Officer to submit the application form and complete and submit the Criminal Records Bureau form. At this appointment, Officers explain the application process in more detail, making the applicant aware of, and checking their understanding of, each stage of the process. This includes an overview of the conditions that they will be expected to adhere to. We also place our conditions on the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing web page.

An English comprehension test was introduced to the application process for obtaining a taxi or private hire licence as a result of concerns raised by both the public and the trade, that some licence applicants have difficulty speaking, reading or writing English where it is not their first language. Once all applicants have passed this test, they are invited to attend a private hire seminar which covers the conditions attached to the grant of a licence in more detail and which the applicants are tested on at the end of the session. Applicants are provided with guidance notes to ensure they are fully aware of what is expected of them on the day and advised to study the conditions prior to attending the seminar. Applicants are given support through the process by a Service Development Officer who explains each area of the seminar and test.

The private hire knowledge test has a 90% pass mark. If applicants fail the module covering legislation and conditions, they will be required to re-sit the seminar and be re-tested on that particular module. Licences will not be granted until applicants have successfully passed the private hire knowledge test. Failure of the re-test results in applicants waiting for a period of three months, to allow them the time to study their training material.

Leeds City Council sets out its commitment and approach to equality within the Equality and Diversity Policy. All providers of services are required to abide by this policy in how they treat their staff and their customers. Of particular relevance to taxi and private hire is licensed drivers treatment of disabled passengers. All applicants are supplied with a GoSkills disability equality DVD. This is recognised as an extremely useful training item and applicants are advised to take time to watch it, understand all the issues and put them into practice as a driver.

Complaints made against an existing driver or prosecution on any equality related issue are investigated and assessed on a case by case basis. In the event of a substantiated complaint, drivers may have a written warning placed on their file, their licence suspended or revoked or be referred to the Council's preferred training organisation for formal training as applicable.

The Council informs of changes to its conditions and policy by publicising the changes in a variety of ways e.g. via trade forums, email, quarterly newsletter, information screens in Reception. It is the responsibility of the licence holder to be familiar with those changes and seek appropriate advice and guidance if in doubt.

Additional copies of all of our conditions can be obtained, free of charge, by visiting the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing office, downloading from the website or requesting a copy be sent by post. Conditions are attached to every licence granted by the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Section and it is also a condition of the Operators licence that a copy is available for viewing.

Consultation

A comprehensive review of the private hire driver conditions was last undertaken in July 2007. At this time, extensive consultation was undertaken with the taxi and private hire trade. This consultation informed the decision that proposed changes to the conditions were not of a nature that there would be a significant imposition on licensed drivers or carry cost issues. In essence the general tone of the changes related to necessary service improvements for the public and the Council and were considered to be reasonable measures.

As part of a 2011 review of all of the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Sections policies and conditions, a wider consultation project was undertaken whereby the general public, the trade and Elected Members were asked to review the current private hire driver conditions and provide feedback.

- **Key findings**

There is an existing impact for the different equality characteristics as licensed drivers must be able to read, understand and adhere to the conditions attached to the grant of their licence. Both the English comprehension test and the private hire knowledge seminar are in place to ensure that our licence holders are able to do this.

English comprehension is very important because it is essential that drivers can communicate easily with a wide range of people, often in difficult or challenging situations; making emergency phone calls, responding to information or instructions given by radio, reading street signage, using simple maps and street plans. Some spoken communication with passengers is likely to take place while the driver is concentrating on the roads, with little face-to-face interaction. It is essential that drivers have a clear understanding of their responsibilities, the legislation and their responsibilities to the Council and this can only be achieved by good English comprehension skills.

The safe licensing and monitoring of licensed drivers is a statutory responsibility for the Council and contributes significantly to the safety of the travelling public and it is recognised that those who are licensed by the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Section are the biggest providers of transport in the evening and night time economy.

The conditions attached to the grant of a licence are available for potential applicants and existing drivers to digest and enables them to ensure they add favourably to the image of Leeds by emphasising the ambassadorial role of drivers within a key passenger service industry.

The most recent consultation process, Summer 2012, has not resulted in any comments/ feedback being received which indicates that the current conditions continue to be fully supported by the taxi and private hire trade.

- **Actions**

(think about how you will promote positive impact and remove/ reduce negative impact)

Ensure that our publications continue to be written in plain English and that support is offered via Licensing Officers to explain the conditions attached to the grant of a licence.

Ensure that training needs continue to be evaluated at the English comprehension test.

Ensure that training needs continue to be evaluated at the private hire training seminar.

Continue to enforce the conditions attached to the grant of a licence to ensure that the correct standards of safety and comfort are satisfied by licensed drivers.

Continue to investigate complaints made by members of the public against licensed drivers where they are in clear breach of the conditions attached to the grant of their licence.

Ensure that we continue to consult fully regarding any proposed changes to our conditions attached to the grant of a licence.

Ensure any changes to our conditions attached to the grant of a licence are communicated widely and appropriately.

5. If you are **not already considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration you **will need to carry out an impact assessment**.**

Date to scope and plan your impact assessment:

Date to complete your impact assessment

Lead person for your impact assessment
(Include name and job title)

6. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening

Name

Job title

Date

Kate Coldwell

Service Development
Officer

17.08.2012

7. Publishing

This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given. If you are not carrying out an independent impact assessment the screening document will need to be published.

Please send a copy to the Equality Team for publishing

Date screening completed

Date sent to Equality Team

Date published

(To be completed by the Equality Team)