

Dear members of the Surrey Heath Licensed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trade,

As you are aware, the Covid-19 situation is rapidly evolving, and the government has now advised people to stay at home with a few exceptions, such as travelling to work, where that work cannot be done at home.

You are advised to keep checking the GOV.UK website to see the latest guidance, at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others>

For the licensed trade, we have been looking at a number of contingencies depending on how the situation evolves. Apologies for the length of this message, but please read it carefully to see if it answers your queries before contacting us. Whilst we are working to ensure that we have staff to run the licensing service, it may be that staff are diverted to other essential duties at short notice.

Driver Renewal Applications:

As I set out in my letter dated 20 March 2020 please post your DBS application and supporting documents with your renewal application please telephone 01276 707100 to pay the fee by either debit or credit card.

A medical declaration will be required for those drivers who are due a medical (please email and a form will be sent) this will temporarily replace the DVLA group 2 medical for a period of 6 months, with the expectation that you will get a medical done as soon as possible once your surgery is in a position to start doing them again. The licence and badge will be posted to you without a lanyard.

Vehicle Renewals:

Please make vehicle renewal application by email preferably or post if you do not have access to email and telephone 01276 707100 to pay the fee by credit or debit card.

The decision has been taken to temporarily withdraw the requirement for a vehicle inspection at Motoright for a period of 3 months. We will accept vehicle applications without the vehicle test and MOT, provided all other documents are submitted. You will also have to complete an additional declaration confirming that the vehicle has been regularly serviced and is fit to be used as a licensed vehicle. We will then process the application as above, with the expectation that you will get the vehicle test completed as soon as practically possible when Motoright resumes service. If the vehicle is inspected and found to be unfit for use as a licensed vehicle, further action is likely to be taken against the driver and/or proprietor.

Currently, due to the restrictions, for both drivers and vehicles, once the temporary licence has been renewed, you will be issued the paper licence, window disc and vehicle plate by post. May I remind you that it is a legal requirement to affix the plate securely, this is not optional, we are placing great trust in your professionalism as a licensed driver.

Delaying a renewal

Due to current circumstances, you may be self-isolating or have taken the decision not to work, and understandably you do not want to spend extra money on a licence renewal where you are not able to use the licence.

We have therefore taken the decision to allow the trade to delay a renewal application for a period of up to 3 months. This means that licences can expire and provided we would have granted the renewal application when the licence expired, we will then accept a late renewal application, for a period of up to three months. Please be aware this is only for those drivers who will not be working, drivers who are working and are caught without a licence will be subject to enforcement action.

However, please note that if you wish to do this, you would still need to apply in good time to allow the application to be processed before you wished to resume using the licence and obviously if a licence has expired it cannot be used again until it is renewed.

We will review the situation again in June. If your licence renewal is approaching and you choose to use this three-month grace period please contact us by email to inform us that this is your intention.

New driver applications:

No new applications will be accepted for a period of 3 months.

Driver Knowledge Tests:

All knowledge tests are suspended until further notice.

To conclude

Hopefully this will address a lot of the more common scenarios and concerns affecting the trade. We cannot accept applications without the advertised fee. We are also unable to extend licences without an application.

The health and wellbeing of licensees is important to us and we are conscious of the challenging and unsettling nature of the current situation in light of the Coronavirus pandemic. We would also remind the trade that the government is regularly updating the support for individuals and businesses and we would

recommend that you check the GOV.UK site regularly for updates as to what assistance is available:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-employees-employers-and-businesses>

Other sources of advice include the Money Advice Trust, a national charity helping people across the UK to tackle their debts and manage their money with confidence. It offers free, independent and confidential advice on personal debt and Business Debtline, the UK's only free dedicated debt advice service for people who are self-employed and other small business owners.

Please see: www.moneyadvicetrust.org

We appreciate that these are unprecedented extreme circumstances but wish the licensed trade well during this difficult time.

Kind regards,

Paula Barnshaw

Please follow this link for extension for MOT's for cars, vans and motorcycles
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-mots-for-cars-vans-and-motorcycles-due-from-30-march-2020>