

## Written Submissions

**From:**  
**Sent:** 03 March 2021 14:34  
**To:** Ball, Danielle <[Danielle.Ball@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:Danielle.Ball@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)>  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** TAXI CONSULTATION

Good afternoon Danielle,

Some points we need to raise re this consultation please.

CCTV,

All of our drivers are restricted private hire only, we do no taxi type work at all.

We only supply Special needs school transport with the same groups of children each day, 195 days a year, we have been doing this for 30 years.

Same driver, carer and minibus, with the same children, going to the same school, giving continuity.

Given the fact that there are 2 members of employed staff onboard before the same group of children are picked up each morning and afternoon, I feel that cameras are not needed.

This would then be the same as Executive and VIP work private hire vehicles, our children are VIP'S too.

3 YEAR LICENCES,

With the nature of our school contracts needing the driver and carer to typically work 2 hours a.m. & p.m. , we attract staff in their 60s, & 70s.

3 years is a big commitment for drivers to make , we would not find the staff.

Not being able to book holidays in school time is bad enough, this puts off many potential new staff as it is.

Also if you just go over year 1 or year 2, you lose 1 years money because you have just gone into another year.

To help with recruitment I would like to keep the 1 year licence please, things happen in peoples life's where things can change, it's been a horrible year for that.

DRIVER PROFICIENCY TEST,

We are using a DSA & ADI trained driver proficiency examiner for many years now.

She is also working for the police carrying out National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme (NDORS) Trainer licence number: 150450

And has further qualifications in Diversity and Inclusion also Unconscious Bias.

I would like to carry on with the same DSA examiner please.

DBS,

We have for many years been getting our drivers and carers DBS'S with West Sussex County Council.

All 137 drivers, carers, admin staff and managers have live West Sussex DBS'S.

I would like this to continue please.

ENGLISH TEST,

A driver that has been born and educated in the United Kingdom should not be asked to take an English test.

Others that have a difficulty in the application process with communication, should have an English test.

TRAINING,

We use West Sussex and Brighton & Hove for all our training. Safeguarding, Disability Awareness, etc..

I do not think it is necessary to double up on this training, could the training we have done already be accepted please.

Maybe Lewes could adopt the same training program, that would be a very efficient way forward.

*Kind regards,  
Many thanks*

Details redacted – Private Hire Operator

Solely Dedicated to Special Needs School Transport

**From:**

**Sent:** 24 February 2021 08:56

**To:** Ball, Danielle <[Danielle.Ball@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:Danielle.Ball@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)>

**Subject:** Lewes CCTV

Good afternoon,

I hope you are safe and well in the current times.

I have just seen the proposed additions regarding CCTV to the Lewes Hackney and Private Hire guidelines.

Apologies if not but I assumed you would be the best person to consult, we spoke previously regarding the temporary safety screens. If you are not could you please forward this on to the relevant person.

We actually consulted with Brighton & Hove and Adur / Worthing councils when they made such amendments and mandated CCTV.

As the primary data processor and Taxi / PH CCTV installer in the area I just wanted to offer our assistance with anything you may need in terms of implementation.

I just had some initial comments on a few points that may raise issues as below.

"10. The CCTV system will remain at all times the property of the proprietor of the vehicle who will be responsible for the maintenance of the system and will ensure that it is checked regularly and maintained in working order at all times."

This point's wording raises concern, only in the fact that a large percentage of the drivers in other areas and even in Lewes actually hire their CCTV systems from us, so we include the maintenance of the system and any data retrieval cost within the hire. This is a very popular choice especially when CCTV is first mandated, because of the initial cost implications of purchasing a system. With this option they don't actually "own" the equipment. This usually leads to the driver keeping the system better maintained because it doesn't cost any extra. Obviously to fix or maintain the system they would need to visit the installer to have it repaired / checked.

"4. The system must be approved by the Council which will maintain a list of such CCTV systems and approved providers on a list available on its website. For those vehicles that have a CCTV system installed before the implementation of compulsory CCTV those systems may be allowed at the discretion of an Authorised Officer."

In the past other areas have had large problems when CCTV is mandated with installers from outside the local area coming in and supplying and installing there systems in several cars, making some quick money and installing to an unsatisfactory standard, then either liquidating or no longer coming back to serve the area. Which led to drivers having to buy another CCTV system. Both Brighton & Hove and Adur & Worthing list approved installers / data processors rather than systems for this reason, although listing both would work. In Worthing they had a

driver with no experience who started to sell and install systems into his own and many other vehicles. The electrical installation work was dangerous and it was clear he had no such experience in the trade, hence why the chances were made to list approved installers / processors and again those that had purchased systems from him had to buy a new system!

"15. The CCTV system shall not be used to record conversations between members of the public, since that is highly intrusive, and if any system is equipped with a sound recording facility then that functionality shall be disabled"

This is down to your own choice obviously, but I believe in general audio is usually allowed via a panic button according to the ICO guidelines, our systems can have such a button, that enables audio for a set period if the driver feels they are in danger, it then reverts to no audio after the set time.

The only other thing I see is absent would be how the CCTV is activated, this is usually via the vehicles ignition supply. If the driver wants a kill switch this should be installed in the boot of the vehicle and they must have an indicator in the view of the driver to show if the system is on or off. This is actually currently being review and implemented by Brighton, I have been talking to Alex and Martin at the BH Hackney office about this.

Finally I would strongly advise that you require the drivers to have at least annual inspections of the CCTV system by the data processor, to ensure its functionality. With the large number of systems / drivers we already maintain, we see that very often incidents such as the vehicle may have mechanical repairs and the mechanic inadvertently or sometimes even intentionally disconnects the CCTV systems power to work on the vehicle and this is only picked up on the annual inspection after it hasn't recorded for months.

Hopefully this will help a little in terms of the implementation of these changes.

Please come back to me and let me know what your thoughts are on the above.

Regards

Details redacted – Local Business.

**From:**

**Sent:** 08 February 2021 12:42

**To:** Ball, Danielle <[Danielle.Ball@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:Danielle.Ball@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)>

**Subject:** Electric Taxis

Dear Danielle

I've just had a query about electric taxis and it prompted me to look at the taxi licensing guidance. I can't find anything in the guidance about the licensing of electric vehicles (maybe I just can't find it!).

Presumably there is nothing to stop the licensing of an electric vehicle but we don't seem to encourage it. I vaguely remember some discussion about it but could be wrong. Was it suggested that when vehicles are replaced they should be replaced by electric vehicles but this was not carried through because of the cost issue?

I'm just wondering, if the guidance is currently silent on the issue, whether something can be included about encouraging the use of electric vehicles when replacing vehicles. It will happen naturally anyway in time, with the ban of sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles in 2030, but it would be good to encourage the change sooner.

Regards.

Details Redacted - Lewes District Councillor

**From:** Ball, Danielle <[Danielle.Ball@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:Danielle.Ball@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)>  
**Sent:** 03 February 2021 16:35  
**To:** Ball, Danielle <[Danielle.Ball@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:Danielle.Ball@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:**

Dear Sirs,.

My computer will not let me access your consultation site on grounds of security. However, I would urge you to introduce electric taxis in Lewes as soon as possible, both on grounds of clean air and climate change amelioration.

Cambridge has done  
so. See: [democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/documents/s47353/EV...](https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/documents/s47353/EV...)

They raised money for charging points partly with Electric Blue, in which small investors can buy shares. I understand that the initiative is very popular, and would suit Lewes's green image.

Yours hopefully,

Details Redacted – member of the public

Lewes District Council  
Southover Grange,  
Southover Rd,  
Lewes BN7 1AB

Dear Councilors and Officers of Lewes District

I would like to present my feedback on proposed changes to Lewes Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Guidance. I would like to share my view as a Lewes PH Operator and PH Driver, I am also a member of a Whatsapp chat group which gathers over thirty Lewes PH Drivers and I will share the group opinion as well. I want to share our view on the most significant changes being proposed presented in your online survey. This letter is divided in sections so it could be more easily reviewed.

1. Statutory guidance document, issued by the Department for Transport to all Licensing Authorities in England and Wales
2. Options to increase the number of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles in the Hackney Carriage Fleet in the district.
3. Proposing that all licensed vehicles will be required to have a council-approved CCTV system installed by October 2022
4. Proposing to introduce a Penalty Points scheme on driver's and operator's licence for breach of conditions
5. Proposing to make safeguarding and disability awareness training mandatory for all new and current drivers.
6. Proposing to introduce an English proficiency test, designed to ensure all new applicants are able to communicate effectively with passengers.
7. Proposing to introduce a more robust and comprehensive convictions guidance.

1. Statutory guidance document, issued by the Department for Transport to all Licensing Authorities in England and Wales

I would like to share my and group thoughts on the Department for Transport statutory guidance, the document which lay at the root of your proposals. My first thought after reading this document was that it presents a very simple and naive way of thinking about a complex problem of child and vulnerable people abuse and exploitation. This way of thinking could be encapsulated in following statement: "We acknowledge the fact there is a crime of child and vulnerable people abuse in society. Some of these crimes are committed by

taxi drivers. Let's assume that all taxi drivers are capable to commit this crime, let's present all of them as potential threat to the public and let's stick cameras in their private hire vehicles so we can watch them at all times and let's send them to mandatory trainings assuming none of them knows how to behave properly in society." First of all this lazy approach to the problem is very offensive towards all drivers in the industry. As a father myself I am appalled by this simple thinking, not a single thought was given to the cause of the problem both on the side of the offender and the victim. You cannot solve any criminal problem by watching every aspect of people's lives on camera. If the cause of the problem is not properly identified and addressed all we achieve is shifting the offence outside the eye of CCTV. This is a zero sum game, potential offenders will always find another way to approach their victims. So if the state and local authorities really care about safety of the public it should rather organize information campaigns designated to the parents, legal guardians and carers and offer assistance in educating their loved ones how to be responsible, courageous, not naive and how to react if they encounter a dangerous situation.

**2. Options to increase the number of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles in the Hackney Carriage Fleet in the district.**

As PH drivers we will not be affected by this regulation, however it does not seem fair to solve the problem with this specialized transport with drivers' money. I assume that drivers would be financially responsible for converting their vehicles into WAV. If that is the case, How are they going to get their money back? This is a very expensive way to solve this problem, entirely financed with taxi drivers money. How convenient?! The council makes decisions which concern one group and another group is paying for it. And no matter how many of WAV will find demand you want every driver to spend the money to convert their cars.

**3. Proposing that all licensed vehicles will be required to have a council-approved CCTV system installed by October 2022**

This proposal raised the most negative comments among the drivers, but not only drivers. I allowed myself to do a poll among my regular customers and asked them what they think about the idea of compulsory cameras in taxis. Most of the answers I received were very sceptic about the idea of being recorded onboard while going to the airport in one of our PH vehicles. Some of them were worried about the image being recorder with their appearance and then being stored without their control, some raised the point that they do not wish anyone or anything recording their activity. Other voices did not appreciate any intrusion in their lives that is why they choose PRIVATE hire as one of their means of transport. There were some neutral answers that they don't mind being recorded but this was only about 10% of the feedback (5 of 53). This shows that people want to make their own choices whether to choose a taxi with CCTV system onboard or the one without. The most important argument in this proposed change is not the discussion about positive or negative impact of CCTV, is the fact that the council wants to mandate it. It is like The Local Authority wants to say to their residents and



taxi drivers: "You are not responsible enough to make decision about your safety so we will make that decision for you" Why should the council have the right take away the choice of travel? Perhaps some people value their right to remain private more than vague concept of safety. I cannot say I do not share that point of view, the idea of this system operating at all times, even if I take my family shopping or on holidays is very disturbing. Most drivers cannot afford second cars and they use their licensed vehicles for private and family purposes. The reason I am writing all this is not that I do not value CCTV as an additional safety measure, it is probably a good way to have "independent witness" if anything happens. But it should be a passengers' decision whether they want to have their journey recorded or not. Also drivers and operators should make that decision whether to install onboard cameras and have that option in their offer. I am sure that they would do anything to meet their customer demands. So we really would like to kindly ask the council to rethink this proposal and not take away the choice from the public to their privacy. There is also a financial aspect of this decision. By mandating this regulation you put all the cost of installing this system on drivers. I am not sure what is your idea of taxi drivers wealth but I can assure you that the business is very competitive, the industry is struggling at the moment. So please be aware that these kinds of decisions have a huge impact on drivers and their families financial situation. There is also an important question raised after detailed review of your proposal page 9 point 2 "The Council understands that there is a need to balance its responsibilities to protect drivers and the travelling public with the individual's privacy rights." I do not see any balance in this whole idea of mandating CCTV. Where are the individual's privacy rights secured in this proposal? You are basically saying here, there will be no more privacy in taxis anymore! Ok, perhaps the voice recording will be optional but it does not recognize the image privacy issue. If we can suggest anything in this matter is to introduce it to be mandatory for operators and hackney carriage drivers to inform their passengers about onboard CCTV systems operating in their vehicles as well as inform them about lack of its presence. In this case all passengers will be informed before they book their trip (or enter the vehicle) so they can choose someone else if they do not like to be recorded or otherwise and choose someone with CCTV if they wish or do not mind their image to be recorded.

4. Proposing to introduce a Penalty Points scheme on driver's and operator's licence for breach of conditions.

We do not understand this change. The Council has already power to suspend and revoke the licences, so why the additional measure. In our opinion it will only complicate the system which will be more confusing and I imagine will require more work for council officers.

5. Proposing to make safeguarding and disability awareness training mandatory for all new and current drivers.

This is another appalling idea to mandate additional training. Again the council considers that every driver is in need to be trained how to behave responsible and how to recognize danger situations. We are all grown up, independent

individuals. Why don't you offer this training to all drivers and if they feel they are in need to improve their education in this matter they will attend it. But please do not mandate it! This is again treating us like children in school.

6. Proposing to introduce an English proficiency test, designed to ensure all new applicants are able to communicate effectively with passengers.

This proposed change does not raise any issues. It seems reasonable to expect from drivers to communicate freely with passengers and understand their needs, requests or potential issues.

7. Proposing to introduce a more robust and comprehensive convictions guidance. This idea is also understandable.

Providing private transport to the public requires higher standards than any other occupation so it is important to check all applicants background. Also existing licensed drivers are aware to maintain the highest standard of their actions and behaviour to stay in the industry.

Thank you very much for your time and attention and we hope The Honorable Council will take our worries into account and consider, especially the ones about mandating trainings and CCTV.

I also kindly ask to let me know about the date and time of any public meeting or discussion about this matter because I would like to actively participate in it.

Kind Regards - Details redacted – A Lewes District Council Private Hire Operator