

**Bridgend County Borough Council**

Proposal to consult on changes to the age policy guidelines and testing regime for hackney carriage and private hire vehicles

Consultation document

**Date of issue**:

**Action required:** Responses by

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**www.bridgend.gov.uk**

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## Overview

This consultation is to invite views on proposals to change the age policy guidelines and hackney carriage and private hire vehicle testing regime. It also seeks views on the provision for disabled taxi services in Bridgend.

## How to respond

This consultation period will begin on the 18 December 2017 and will close 31 January 2018.

You can respond or ask further questions in the following ways;

Tel:(01656) 643 643

Email: licensing@bridgend.gov.uk

Online: Click here

Post:

Licensing

Bridgend County Borough Council

Civic Offices

Angel Street

Bridgend. CF31 4WB

Alternative formats are also available upon request.

## Data protection

How we use the views and information you share with us

All responses received by Bridgend County Borough Council will be seen in full by its staff members involved in the consultation process. The information may also be seen by other departments within the council or local service board members to help improve upon the services provided.

The Council may also use the information gathered to publish subsequent documents both directly and indirectly linked to this consultation, however the Council will never disclose any personal information such as names or addresses that could identify an individual.

If you do not wish for your opinions to be publicised, please state so in your response.

## Related documents

For more information on consultations in Bridgend County Borough or how to join our Citizens’ panel.

Visit: [www.bridgend.gov.uk/consultation](http://www.bridgend.gov.uk/consultation)

## Background and information

* The current age policy requires all hackney carriage and private hire vehicles to be new when first licensed. There are some exceptions currently which relate to private hire vehicles, wheelchair accessible vehicles or specialist vehicles.
* The Council currently issues MOT exemption certificates following each test.

## The proposal

This proposal will primarily affect applicants for new hackney carriage and private hire vehicle licences. The Council is proposing that the existing age policy be changed as follows:

Two classes of vehicles will be introduced, Class 1 being a standard saloon, multi-purpose vehicle (MPV) or wheelchair accessible vehicle not fitted with an automated wheelchair lift, and Class 2 being a wheelchair accessible vehicle that has been fitted with an automated wheelchair lift.

It is proposed to amend the current age policy for both hackney carriage and private hire vehicles so that Class 1 vehicles, when presented for their first licence, will be under 5 years old and Class 2 vehicles, when presented for their first licence, will be under 10 years old.

In addition it is proposed to change the frequency of testing as follows:

It is proposed to amend the policy so that vehicles up to 10 years old will be tested twice per year and vehicles 10 years or older will be tested 3 times per year.

In addition it is proposed that the current testing regime be revised so that:

hackney carriage and private hire vehicles will be tested in accordance with the MOT regime administered by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA). Alongside the MOT test, it is also proposed that vehicles will be required to undertake an additional compliance test, in accordance with the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles National Inspection Standards, produced by the Freight Transport Association, that includes items that would not be covered by an MOT test (such as a taxi roof-light).

## Why has this proposal been brought forward?

* The licensed trade has told us that the current age policy guidelines are a barrier to purchasing replacement vehicles.
* To introduce a robust system of hackney carriage and private hire vehicle testing that is also digitally accessible.
* We need to find out more about the experience of wheelchair passengers

## What are the advantages if the proposal goes ahead?

* New applicants will be able to afford to purchase a vehicle at lesser cost. It has been commented that the proposed policy would allow proprietors to replace their vehicles more frequently, and when they do replace their vehicle, they will be able to purchase a higher quality vehicle for their budget which would improve the overall standard of vehicles licensed in the County Borough. We are also asking for the views of disability access groups to inform this policy proposal.

## What are the potential disadvantages if the proposal goes ahead?

* None

## Impact of the proposals

* An initial equality screening has indicated that there will be minimal Impact on equalities but this will be reviewed following assessment of the consultation responses.

## Risks

* There is a risk of appeal against decisions made by the Council, but this is mitigated by the independent right of appeal to the Magistrates’ Court available to any applicant.

## Alternatives

* The alternative of “doing nothing” by not adopting a policy was discounted on the grounds that the proposals offer a relaxation of existing age restrictions in response to representations made by local businesses which are broadly in line with other local authority policies.

## The consultation process

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Activity | Date |
| Response deadline | 31 Jan 2018 |
| Final report published available at www.bridgend.gov.uk/consultation and on the licensing section of the BCBC website |  |
| Potential implementation |  |

### How to make your views known?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Post: Licensing and Registration Section Bridgend County Borough Council  Civic Offices  Angel Street  Bridgend  CF31 4WB | Email:  Online: [www.bridgend.gov.uk/consultation](http://www.bridgend.gov.uk/consultation) or [click here](https://www.snapsurveys.com/wh/s.asp?k=145864536360)  Tel:(029) 2087 1022 |
|  |  |

Alternative formats are also available upon request.

All views must be received by no later than **31 January 2018.**