

North West Leicestershire District Council

Code of Good Conduct for Hackney
Carriage and Private Hire Driver's

Issue 2

Overview

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers (referred to in this document as drivers) are in a position of trust in respect of the safety and welfare of their passengers.

The Licensing Authority, through its Licensing Team and Committees, have to ensure that all drivers are 'fit and proper' to undertake their work as drivers and that they also act as ambassadors for the district. It is essential that the council and drivers work together in order to ensure members of the public are treated with dignity and respect, including reporting any concerns.

On occasions, drivers may become aware of, or have suspicions that, their passengers may be the victim of abuse, neglect or exploitation either sexual or otherwise, or at risk of becoming a victim. In addition, drivers themselves may be accused of misconduct or inappropriate behaviour through the misinterpretation of the driver's actions or conversation.

Therefore, North West Leicestershire District Council has introduced this **Code of Good Conduct** which is aimed at providing the best possible service by protecting both passengers and drivers. This ensures that concerns, suspicions of abuse, neglect or exploitation can be reported appropriately and minimise the risk of misunderstandings.

Drivers are required to comply with this Code of Good Conduct. Failure to do so may result in the driver being questioned by a Licensing Officer or referred to the Licensing Sub-Committee to explain the circumstances surrounding any incident. In the event of a repeated and/or serious failure to comply, drivers can expect that consideration will be given to the suspension or revocation of their licence.

CODE OF GOOD CONDUCT FOR LICENSED DRIVERS

It should be noted that the Code does not override any obligations that are detailed in legislation, licence conditions or contractual obligations, such as County Council contracts.

Drivers shall:

- a) Act in a professional manner at all times;
- b) Treat passengers and other road users with respect;
- c) Keep relationships and conversation with passengers on an appropriate, professional basis;
- d) Respect all individuals – regardless of age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion/belief, language spoken, race or ethnicity;
- e) Pay attention to personal hygiene and dress so as to present a professional image to the public. This is further defined below;
- f) Be polite, helpful and fair to passengers, particularly disabled passengers whose mobility may be restricted;
- g) Drive with care and due consideration for other road users and pedestrians;
- h) Comply with all Traffic Regulation Orders and directions at all times;
- i) Ensure that there is no smoking in the vehicle at all times;
- j) fulfil their responsibility to ensure compliance with common sense and any legislation regarding the length of working hours;

- k) undertake a vehicle check, i.e. lights, tyres & pressures, engine fluids, prior to starting shifts to ensure roadworthiness;
- l) Undertake suitable training.

And be aware of:

- a. Safety and well-being of passengers must be paramount;
- b. The importance of the use of appropriate language;
- c. Be aware of the vulnerability of children and adults;
- d. Be aware of passengers with special needs;
- e. Any instruction given about the care or first aid requirements of a passenger;
- f. Personal beliefs and standards, including dress and religion;
- g. Passengers misreading situations;
- h. The use of social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. These are public websites and therefore passengers conveyed may access a Driver's site. Ensure you use the appropriate privacy settings to avoid passengers viewing your social media sites.

Drivers should never:

- a) Become over-friendly or unprofessional in any way with passengers or engage in any form of inappropriate relationship;
- b) Inappropriately touch a passenger;
- c) Administer medication unless a specific request has been made by the hirer;
- d) Photograph or video passengers in your care unless used in compliance with data protection legislation and any relevant codes of practice;
- e) Engage with passengers through social networking sites other than for clear and obvious business connections;
- f) Phone or send text messages to passengers other than directly concerning the hiring of your vehicle;
- g) Swear, make personal/humiliating comments, or tell inappropriate jokes;
- h) Offer cigarettes or gifts of any sort;
- i) Stop anywhere other than the specified pick up/drop off points unless requested by the hirer;
- j) Use a hand held mobile phone whilst driving;
- k) Consume alcohol before or at any time whilst driving or being in charge of a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle;
- l) Drive while having used illegal or misused legal drugs;
- m) Act contrary to the advice of a medical practitioner;

Safeguarding:

If a driver has concerns or suspects abuse, neglect or exploitation of a passenger then these should not be ignored. If there are any suspicions or concerns about the way someone is being treated it is important to report this. The safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is everybody's responsibility. Remember that your information could help a vulnerable child or adult.

If a driver is working under a Leicestershire County Council contract then their guidance and procedures should be followed alongside any training received. Otherwise the following procedures should be complied with in reporting any information or suspicions you may have of anyone being subject to abuse, neglect or exploitation:

Action to be taken if you have concerns:

- a. If your concerns are of an urgent matter or you believe that a crime has been committed and there is an immediate risk of danger, telephone the police on **999**.
- b. If you are suspicious or are concerned that a child or an adult is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, including any form of mistreatment, abuse, neglect or exploitation but it is not of an urgent matter, please call Leicestershire Police on 101.

Responsibility to Residents

To avoid nuisance to residents when picking up or waiting for a fare, a driver shall:

- a) not sound the vehicle's horn illegally or repeatedly;
- b) keep the volume of audio and communications equipment to a reasonable level;
- c) switch off the engine if required to wait or on ranks; and
- d) take all reasonable measures to avoid disturbance to residents in the neighbourhood.

At taxi ranks where hackney carriages ply for hire by forming queues, drivers shall, in addition to the requirements above:

- a) queue in an orderly manner and proceed along the rank in order and promptly; and
- b) remain in the vehicle or in close proximity of the vehicle.

At private hire offices a licence holder shall:

- a) not allow their audio or communications equipment to cause disturbance to residents of the neighbourhood; and
- b) take reasonable action to avoid disturbance to residents of the neighbourhood which might arise from the conduct of their business.

Driver Dress Code – Guidance

The Authority is committed to promoting the professional image of the trade and it considers that drivers should conform to a minimum standard of dress, in order to raise and maintain the profile of the licensed trade.

The suitability of a drivers dress will be considered on a case by case basis. The following list of clothing is a guide only and should not be considered to be exhaustive.

The following items of clothing are not considered to present a professional image and therefore must **never** be worn:

- Beach type footwear (e.g. Flip flops)
- Baseball caps or 'hoodies'
- Tracksuits or shell suits or components of
- Swim shorts / clothing

- Sports shorts
- Sports shirts or replica sports shirts
- Unclean or damaged clothing or footwear
- Items of clothing with 'offensive' or 'suggestive' words, logos or graphics
- Any item of clothing resulting in an individual not being able to establish the identity of the driver (referencing the drivers ID card)

