

HOW TO APPLY FOR A SINGLE STATUS DRIVERS LICENCE (SSD Licence)

To drive a Hackney Carriage Vehicle and/or a Private Hire Vehicle

Taxi licences are administered by the Licensing Section, 4th Floor, Municipal Building, Kingsway, Widnes WA8 7QF.

The public counter is open Monday – Friday between the hours of:
10am-12pm and 2pm-4pm (there is no need to make an appointment).

Before you can submit an application for a Licence you must:

- **Have held a full DVLA driving licence for at least 12 months**
- **Passed a Medical**
- **Passed an Advanced Driving Test**

The Licensing Section will provide you with an application pack which will contain a blank Medical form and details on how you can apply to take the advanced driving test.

INTRODUCTION

Anyone wishing to drive a Halton Borough Council Hackney Carriage vehicle or Private Hire vehicle must first obtain a joint Hackney Carriage/Private Hire driver's licence, called a SSD licence.

The Council's prime consideration is for the safety and protection of the travelling public. It is therefore a requirement for any person wishing to become a licensed driver to satisfy the Council that they are a fit and proper person to undertake the role of a professional driver.

Halton Borough Council has set the following standards to identify who is a fit and proper person:

Fit: An applicant must prove that they are medically fit to the DVLA Group 2 standard.

Proper: In order to determine whether you are a proper person you will be required to do the following:

- Prove you have the right to work in the UK
- Provide evidence of your conduct if you have lived outside of the UK for a period of 3 months or more
- Provide evidence of your driving record
- Obtain a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check
- Provide a valid certificate to confirm you have passed the advanced driving test
- Prove you have a basic knowledge of the role of a professional driver by taking a taxi knowledge test which is a written test arranged by the Licensing Section

IMPORTANT:

You must provide evidence that you have the right to work in the UK.

Following the introduction of the Immigration Act 2016, a SSD Licence will not be issued to any person who is unable to provide evidence that they have the right to work in the UK. If your right to work is time restricted a SSD licence will not be issued beyond the date stated in your evidence.

Prior to applying for a Single Status Drivers Licence applicants whose first language is not English must undertake an assessment of their oral skills in English.

The application pack you receive from the Licensing Section will contain the following:

How to Apply Guidance

Application Form

List of Fees

Medical Form

DBS Form (Police check form)

DBS Update Service information

DVLA driving record authorisation form

Advanced driving test information

System Operator Form

Vehicle Consent Form

Also enclosed please find the following documents which contain important information which you should familiarise yourself with:

Bridge Crossings information

Policy on Professional Standards

Safeguarding Awareness Licensed Drivers Handbook

For your information the link to the privacy notices under the General Data Protection Regulations for Legal Services, Licensing Section is:

<https://www4.halton.gov.uk/Pages/councildemocracy/privacynotices.aspx>

PLEASE NOTE: We will be checking your details against the NR3 Register. For more information please check the Council's Licensing Privacy Policy which can be found on our website.

If you have held a DVLA driving licence for over 12 months and decide you want to proceed with an application for a SSD licence you should arrange to:

- Book an appointment for a Medical
- Book an appointment for an advanced driving test

Please note that the fees for both the medical and advanced driving test are payable by you.

Full details of the above can be found later in this document.

Once you have passed the medical and advanced driving test you should attend the Licensing Section to produce the following:

- Application form
- Fee
- Medical
- DBS application form (Police check form)
- Identification documents
- DVLA driving licence
- DVLA driving record authorisation form
- Advanced driving test certificate
- Certificate of good conduct (if required)
- Passport size photograph
- HMRC Tax check code (if required)
- English Oral Skills Assessment (if required)

PLEASE NOTE AN APPLICATION CANNOT BE ACCEPTED IF ALL OF THE ABOVE ARE NOT PRODUCED AND COMPLETED FULLY.

An explanation of the above follows in this document.

APPLICATION FORM

Please ensure that you answer all questions on the form to avoid any delay in your application being processed.

The form will only be accepted if the declaration is signed and dated.

FEE

Please find enclosed a copy of the List of Fees.

The fees are payable at the time you submit the application. Payment can be made either by debit or credit card and a receipt will be provided to you.

Please note fees may be subject to increase in April of each year.

MEDICAL

The Council will provide you with a blank medical form which the doctor will need to complete. **You need to have passed the medical BEFORE you can submit your application.**

The requirement for all applicants who wish to hold a licence to drive hackney carriage or private hire vehicles to undertake a medical examination is stated in S57(2)(a), Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

Halton Borough Council has adopted the DVLA Group 2 standard for drivers licensed by this Authority.

Should you be aware of any medical conditions and would like further information before booking an appointment for a medical then go to the following website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/assessing-fitness-to-drive-a-guide-for-medicalprofessionals>

If, after reading the notes, you have any doubts about your ability to meet standards, consult your Doctor/Optician for advice before you arrange for the medical form to be completed.

Halton Borough Council only allows the DVLA Group 2 medicals to be obtained from:

1. **Your own registered medical practitioner** (or another registered medical practitioner from the same practice or group practice) who has access to your medical history.
2. **Just Health.** This is a private company that has testing centres across the Northwest of England. Visit their website at www.just-health.co.uk or call 01282 936900 to book an appointment.

If attending a medical examination undertaken by Just Health then you must attend the appointment with the following items otherwise the examination will not go ahead and you may have to pay for a further appointment:

- ★ A recent summary care record which you must obtain from your own medical centre
- ★ Photo identification = Passport or DVLA licence (photo card only)
- ★ Any current medication
- ★ The medical form provided by the Council

The Council will only accept the completed medical form that they have provided to you.

All fees associated with the medical examination are payable by you and are separate to the licensing fees which are paid to the Council. Please note that no refund is payable in respect of any medical assessment should your application for a licence be refused.

DBS FORM (POLICE CHECK)

You are required to complete the Disclosure and Barring Services form (DBS form) to apply for a Police check. The form will be submitted by the Council on your behalf.

You will be required to disclose any convictions or cautions you may have had (however old they may be). For licensing purposes convictions can never become “spent” under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. If you fail to disclose any convictions or cautions on your application form then this will be deemed as you making a false declaration and will result in your application either been withdrawn or referred to the Council’s Taxi Licensing Sub Committee for a decision.

IF CONVICTIONS ARE REVEALED THEN YOUR APPLICATION WILL NEED TO BE CONSIDERED FURTHER AND COULD BE WITHDRAWN AND/OR YOU MAY BE INTERVIEWED BY THE LICENSING SECTION AND YOU MAY BE REQUIRED TO ATTEND BEFORE THE TAXI LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE.

When completing the DBS form you must:

- Use BLACK INK and CAPITAL LETTERS throughout
- Complete all sections marked in YELLOW – if you do not the form will be rejected by the DBS and consequently this will delay the application
- Whatever information you complete in the yellow sections of the form this needs to be supported by the original document – i.e. if you put passport details on the form you need to produce your original passport to us as we complete the evidence section confirming that we have seen all the original relevant documents.
- Write clearly and insert only one character in each box
- Keep your signature within the box provided

THE COUNCIL’S LICENSING SECTION HAS NO CONTROL OVER THE PROCESSING OF THE DBS FORMS. THE MORE IDENTIFICATION

DOCUMENTATION WE CAN PROVIDE TO THE DBS THE MORE CHANCE THERE IS OF A QUICK RESULT.

IMPORTANT:

WHEN YOU RECEIVE THE CERTIFICATE FROM THE DBS YOU NEED TO PROVIDE IT TO THE LICENSING SECTION AS WE DO NOT RECEIVE A COPY. THE DOCUMENT WILL BE INSPECTED FOR LICENSING PURPOSES AND WILL BE RETURNED TO YOU. (IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU KEEP THE CERTIFICATE FOR FUTURE REFERENCE, PLEASE SEE FOLLOWING UNDER DBS UPDATE SERVICE).

IF THE DBS RESULT REVEALS INFORMATION YOU FAILED TO DISCLOSE ON YOUR APPLICATION FORM THEN THIS WILL BE DEEMED AS YOU MAKING A FALSE DECLARATION AND WILL RESULT IN YOUR APPLICATION BEING REFERRED TO THE COUNCIL'S TAXI LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE FOR A DECISION. IF YOU ARE IN ANY DOUBT WHATSOEVER AS TO WHAT INFORMATION YOU NEED TO DECLARE ON THE APPLICATION FORM PLEASE CONTACT THE LICENSING SECTION WHO WILL ASSIST YOU.

DBS UPDATE SERVICE INFORMATION

Halton Borough Council, like other authorities, has adopted a policy requiring all licensed drivers to subscribe to the DBS Update Service.

The update service is an online subscription that allows you to keep your enhanced certificate up-to-date and allows Halton Borough Council to check a certificate online more frequently than every 3 years, for example every 6 months.

Instead of having to apply for a new certificate every 3 years you make a single payment (currently £13) to the DBS Update Service every year.

Details of how to subscribe to the Update Service can be found at the following link:

www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service

When you have received the certificate back from the DBS you will have **30 days from the date of the certificate** to register to the update service.

Once you have joined the service you will receive a confirmation email and a reference number. You **MUST** provide this number to the Licensing Section, only then will your licence be renewed.

If after 30 days you have not provided the confirmation email/reference number to the Licensing Section your SSD licence will be suspended until the information is received.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- You **must** renew your subscription each year - **this is your responsibility**. The Licensing Section will not be sending out reminders
- Keep the original DBS certificate and reference number safe as this is required on each SSD renewal going forward
- If you forget to renew your subscription please contact the Licensing Section immediately
- **Failure to renew your subscription or to notify the DBS Update Service of changes to the payment card they hold on record for the annual fee will result in you being taken off the register**

If this happens a new DBS certificate will need to be applied for and you will not be able to work until you subscribe back onto the DBS Update Service and provide proof of the subscription to the Licensing Section

IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENTS

Identification documents are required to ensure all relevant checks can be conducted on every applicant. The examples of acceptable documents are set by the DVLA, Disclosure & Barring Service and the UK Home Office, under the Immigration Act 2016.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- You MUST submit original documents with your application.
- The documents will be inspected, photocopied and given back to you.
- The documents must show the correct spelling of your full name and show your current address (where applicable).
- Try to produce as many of the required documents as you can.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR THE DVLA

- Current valid UK driving licence

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR THE DBS (Police check)

- Current valid UK passport or EU passport/identity card
- Current valid UK driving licence
- One official document confirming your address - the document must be less than 3 months old – (a Council Tax bill that is dated within 12 months is acceptable)
- A FULL birth certificate or adoption certificate issued in the UK which includes the name(s) of at least one of the holder's parents or adoptive parents, TOGETHER WITH an official document giving your permanent National Insurance Number and your name issued by a Government Agency or previous employer

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR THE HOME OFFICE

- Current valid or expired UK passport or EU passport/identity card
- Birth certificate
- An official document giving your permanent National Insurance Number and your name issued by a Government Agency or previous employer

If you were born outside of the UK and do not hold a current valid passport then please contact us to discuss this matter.

DVLA DRIVING RECORD AUTHORISATION FORM

Since 2015 the DVLA no longer records your driving record on a paper counterpart. This means that your driver record has to be obtained from the DVLA.

Your driving record details can be obtained and verified on your behalf by Halton Borough Council. You will need to provide authorisation for this by completing the enclosed form and submitting it with your application to the Licensing Section.

If your DVLA driving record reveals any information you failed to disclose on your application form then this will be deemed as you making a false declaration and will result in your application being referred to the Council's Regulatory Committee or Sub-Committee for a decision.

ADVANCED DRIVING TEST

An advanced driving test is required to be passed **BEFORE** you submit your application. This is a driving test that needs to be taken in addition to the DVLA driving test. The Council have a designated Company authorized to carry out the test which is

Diamond Advanced Motorists.

The test you need to pass is the STANDARD TAXI TEST.

You can book the test by telephone or on-line follows:

Telephone:

Telephone number: 020 8253 0120

On-line:

www.advancedmotoring.co.uk/taxi-and-private-hire

Diamond Advanced Motorists will charge a fee for the test. This fee is payable by you.

Once you have paid for the Standard Taxi Test your details will be forwarded to a nominated examiner who will be in touch with you within 48 hours

(Monday to Friday) with a view to booking the test within the following 5-10 working days.

The examiner will arrange a mutually convenient date, time and place local to you to conduct the test. You will need a car suitable for the test as Diamond Advanced Motorists do not supply cars. The car must have a current and valid insurance, MOT, road tax and must be roadworthy.

The STANDARD TAXI TEST is a 45 minute test which includes a variety of roads and where possible motorways. You will be asked to do two manoeuvres and an element of independent driving. To pass the test you must make no serious or dangerous faults and no more than 9 driver faults. Upon successful completion of the test you will be issued with a Certificate together with a copy of the test report.

The pass Certificate needs to be produced to the Council at the time you submit your application.

CERTIFICATE OF GOOD CONDUCT

If you have ever lived outside of the UK for a continuous period of 3 months or more (this includes holidays) you must contact the Consulate or the Embassy of that country and obtain a Certificate of Good Conduct.

When the information is received in addition to being in the native language of the country it must also be translated into English and certified as a true copy. The Certificate should be produced to the Licensing Section.

PASSPORT SIZE PHOTOGRAPH

Please note that one passport size photograph is required and must not be more than 3 months old.

Photographs will be rejected if they are not of good quality.

HMRC TAX CHECK CODE ONLY REQUIRED IF YOU HOLD A LICENCE WITH ANOTHER AUTHORITY

The Government has put in place new tax requirements for anyone applying for a licence to drive hackney carriages or private hire vehicles from 4th April 2022. This is supported by a new digital service, developed by HMRC. It helps people who drive hackney carriages and/or private hire vehicles to complete a new tax check.

Most people are registered to pay tax and this is about ensuring everyone pays the tax they should, creating a level playing field for the compliant majority. HMRC are working with industry bodies to make this as straightforward as possible. The check should take a few minutes every few years and is simply to confirm that someone is appropriately registered for tax.

You'll need to complete a tax check when you renew your licence as a driver of a taxi (hackney carriage) and or private hire vehicle.

Please refer to the Tax Check Factsheet at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/licence-application-tax-check-communications-resources/tax-check-factsheet> so you understand what is required as this will apply to all renewals and new applicants. Further information can be found via the Gov.UK website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/changes-for-taxi-private-hire-or-scrap-metal-licence-applications-from-april-2022>.

ENGLISH ORAL SKILLS ASSESSMENT (if required)

If your first language is not English you must undertake an assessment of oral skills in English. The assessment must be undertaken at an appropriate educational institution.

Documentary evidence to show that the applicant has successfully completed the required assessment must be produced at the time you submit the application.

ONCE YOUR APPLICATION HAS BEEN RECEIVED, THE LICENSING SECTION WILL PROCESS THE FOLLOWING:

- You will be given a copy of the Taxi Guide.
- The application will be acknowledged in writing.
- You will be informed in writing of the expiry date of the application.

The date will be 6 months from the date you submitted the application.

If the application is not completed within the 6 month period then the application will be considered as not completed and will expire, meaning it will be withdrawn. Fees paid by you may not be refunded. If you wish to proceed to be a licensed driver after the expiry date you will be required to submit a NEW APPLICATION. This means that further fees will be payable. With regard to what documents are required this will be subject to discussion with/approval from the Licensing Section.

- The DBS application form will be sent off on your behalf.
Once you have received the DBS Certificate please telephone the Licensing Section to inform us and make arrangements to produce the same to us. We will inspect the document for licensing purposes and the Certificate will be given back to you. The Council do not receive a copy of the Certificate from the DBS so it is important that you let us know when you receive the result.
- A check of the NR3 Register will be carried out.
- A check of the HMRC Tax Code will be carried out – **IF REQUIRED**
- A check of your driving licence record will be carried out.
- Your name will be added to the list for the next Knowledge Test

You will be sent written details of the date, time and venue of the Knowledge Test approximately one week before each Test. Usually, the Test takes place on the 3rd Tuesday of each month but please note that this is subject to change.

KNOWLEDGE TEST – this is a written test arranged by the Licensing Section

Applications for a SSD licence will need to be submitted to the Licensing Section at least one week before the date of the test as availability is limited.

- The test paper will be set in two sections. Each section consists of 15 questions. *if you are only taking a part test (for a restricted licence) you will only be required to answer Section 2 which consists of 15 questions.
- The first section will be based on routes, boundaries and local knowledge of the Halton area. This section is not applicable to those taking the part test only (for a restricted licence).
- The second section will be based on legislation and conditions. The Taxi Guide contains information to assist you. This is the only section you will need to complete if you are taking a part knowledge test (for a restricted licence).
- A minimum score of 12 correct answers out of 15 in each section is required for a successful pass. Part knowledge test requirements are the same, ie 12 correct answers out of 15.
- The test usually takes place once a month, on the third Tuesday of each month but this can be subject to change.

- If an applicant should fail to pass he/she may re-sit the test until successful during the 6 month application period and no further fee will be payable for the test.
- The Test needs to be passed within a 6 month application period. If for any reason you do not attend the test the missed test will not be carried over beyond the 6 month completion date.
- The time allowed for the test will be one hour. (30 minutes for part test if you have applied for a restricted licence only).
- Please note that the knowledge test is taken under examination conditions.
- In the case of dispute the decision of the Licensing Section is final.

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS REQUIRED BEFORE A SSD LICENCE CAN BE ISSUED

Before your application is deemed as fully completed the Licensing Section will need to know what vehicle you are going to drive.

Therefore, you need to decide if you are going to drive someone else's vehicle or going to licence a vehicle in your name.

WHICH VEHICLE ARE YOU GOING TO DRIVE?

DRIVING SOMEONE ELSE'S VEHICLE

If you are going to drive someone else's licensed vehicle they will need to provide us with a CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE OR COVER NOTE from the licence holder showing you are insured to drive the vehicle. In addition we will require a completed VEHICLE CONSENT FORM from the licence holder confirming that they give their permission for you to drive the vehicle.

We will also require a completed SYSTEM OPERATOR FORM which you will have to have completed by the Operator from the system you intend to work from.

(The Vehicle Consent Form and System Operator Forms are included in the pack provided by the Council)

LICENSING YOUR OWN VEHICLE

If you intend to license a vehicle in your name you will need to submit a vehicle application.

This is a separate application in addition to the SSD application.

The Council will provide you with an application form and will explain the procedure to you and explain what supporting documents will be required.

A separate fee is payable for a **VEHICLE APPLICATION**.

BEFORE YOU ACQUIRE A VEHICLE YOU SHOULD CHECK THE VEHICLE CONDITIONS TO ENSURE THAT THE VEHICLE COMPLIES WITH THE CRITERIA. THE VEHICLE CONDITIONS PROVIDE FULL DETAILS OF QUALIFYING VEHICLES SO IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU REFER TO THE CONDITIONS. THIS MAY SAVE YOU MAKING AN EXPENSIVE MISTAKE.

PLEASE ALSO REFER TO THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION.

Before you acquire a vehicle you should check the Vehicle Conditions to ensure that the vehicle fully complies with the criteria. The Vehicle Conditions provide full details of qualifying vehicles so it is important that you refer to the Conditions which can be provided to you by the Council and are available on our website. For your information:

THE MINIMUM AGE LIMIT FOR LICENSED VEHICLES IS AS FOLLOWS:

Standard Vehicles (Non fully wheelchair accessible vehicles)	NO MORE THAN 5 years old WHEN FIRST LICENSED
Fully wheelchair accessible vehicles	NO MORE THAN 13 years old WHEN FIRST LICENSED

THE MAXIMUM AGE LIMIT FOR LICENSED VEHICLES IS AS FOLLOWS:

Standard Vehicles (Non fully wheelchair accessible vehicles)	10 years old
Fully wheelchair accessible vehicles	16 years old

Calculation of Age (For the avoidance of doubt)

Vehicle ages shall be calculated using the following principles;

- Ages shall be calculated from the date of first registration of the vehicle.
- The maximum and minimum ages specified in these conditions relate to the date when the first application is made in respect of the vehicle or (as the case may be) the date when the current licence applicable to a vehicle is due to expire.
- Where a vehicle has not reached its maximum age when the first application is made in respect of the vehicle a licence granted in respect of such vehicle shall continue for a period of 12 months notwithstanding that the vehicle shall have exceeded its maximum age by the date of expiry of such licence.
- Where a vehicle has not reached its maximum age when the date when the current licence applicable to such vehicle is due to expire a licence granted in respect of such vehicle shall continue for a period of 12 months notwithstanding that the vehicle shall have exceeded its maximum age by the date of expiry of such licence provided that no renewal licence shall be granted in respect of such vehicle if the vehicle shall not have qualified for renewal by such date of expiry.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the Licensing Section:

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