



Reference: FOI-564

Request:

The Licensed Private Hire Car Association (LPHCA) is a National Trade Association with hundreds of licensed PHV & taxi operator members who work with, or agency to, tens of thousands of drivers in mainland UK.

Currently, there is a catastrophic shortage of Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) drivers UK-wide, with in some cases allegedly over 40% shortfalls reported in some areas. Recently, the Institute of Licensing (IoL) and licensing authorities have now recognised the seriousness of the problem and the IoL has set up a working group, which the LPHCA is a member of, to discuss the issues of driver shortages & recovery issues.

This group had its first meeting in January and contained primary stakeholders including the Department for Transport (DfT), Safety organisations, Trade Associations, and Licensing Authority representatives.

Of particular interest to local and regional authorities will be the problems with regard to educational, home-to-school (H2S), and special educational needs and disability (SEND) transportation. The first problem to resolve is the inability to obtain enough SEND taxi and PHV drivers, which has safety and safeguarding risks. The second problem to resolve is the extremely high price being paid by authorities, which is a consequence of not having enough drivers to meet demand.

In a letter to the IoL in November Jason Salter Chair of ATCO (The Association of Coordinating Transport Officers for school contracts) said:

"The SEND home to school transport market equates to around £900m of upper tier local authority spending per annum. The demand on the service has increased by 100% in the past 8 years and is set to increase further. The majority of that spend is procured from each local authorities, local hackney and private hire trade, who, under contract, provide a valuable service to some of the most vulnerable members of our society.

Many local authorities are struggling to fulfil their current legal obligations to provide home to school transport and they are very concerned as to how they will meet the increased future demand.

It is recognised that thousands of licensed drivers have left the UK's hackney & private hire trade in the past few years and these numbers are unlikely to increase back to where they were previously.

We are calling on local licensing authorities to seriously consider the introduction of restricted drivers licences, or school only drivers licenses".

The LPHCA is looking to assess the impact on procurement costs for licensing authorities and wishes to conduct a survey to produce evidence and seek solutions like restricted driver's licences, or school-only driver's licenses, which some licensing authorities are now doing with great success.



North Tyneside Council

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To assist with the above, we wish to make the following FOI request.

"I hereby request, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000:

1. Knowledge of whether your authority directly procures taxi & PHV services.
2. If yes please provide the appropriate contact details for us to communicate with them, which would include as a minimum, the name of the Department, and both telephone and email contact details. Ideally, the name of an officer or key point of contact would also be appreciated.
3. If no, we would appreciate the same details of any over-arching authority e.g., the County Council or Local Education Authority (LEA) that is responsible in your area.

Response:

1. The Home to School/College Transport Service directly procures taxi and & PHV services, this is done via NEPO portal.
2. Please use the email address below to contact the home to school transport team.
HomeToSchool.Transport@northtyneside.gov.uk

Providing you with these contact details does not permit you to use this information for direct marketing purposes. I would advise you that if you wish to use the information we have provided to target individuals with direct marketing materials such as email, you need to be mindful of your obligations under the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003. I therefore strongly advise you to obtain the explicit permission of the staff member(s) before sending an unsolicited email:

Organisations can only send unsolicited marketing by electronic mail where the individual has specifically requested it, i.e. they have opted in.

You also need to be mindful that if you sell, give or share any information we have provided in response to your request to third parties, this could constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act 2018.

3. Not applicable