

Becoming a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Driver in Wirral

Who can become a licensed Private Hire or Hackney Carriage Driver?

If you have held a full driving licence for more than twelve months, you can apply to become a licensed driver. There is no age limit, but you will need to pass a medical examination.

You must satisfy the Council that you are a fit and proper person to hold a licence and you will undergo a number of checks and assessments to assist the Council to determine whether you are a fit and proper person.

What do I need to do to get a Private Hire or Hackney Carriage Driver Licence?

You will need the following before a licence can be granted:

- Vocationally Related Qualification (VRQ) Level 2 Certificate in Introduction to the role of the Professional Taxi and Private Hire Driver
- Safeguarding Training
- English Proficiency Skills test pass (oral and written)
- Satisfactory DVLA Driving Licence
- Satisfactory Enhanced Certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) relating to the role 'Other Workforce-Taxi Driver'- **dated no more than two months before your licence is issued**
- Confirm registration to the DBS Update Service (**must be completed within 30 days of your Enhanced DBS Certificate being issued**)
<https://www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service>
- Satisfactory DVLA Group 2 Medical (See below) – **dated no more than two months before your licence is issued**
- MiDAS qualification - required in place of the VRQ if your licence is to be restricted to only carrying out work that is subject to a contract issued by Wirral Council
- Licence fee

How long will my application take?

The time period will be influenced by the length of time taken for the return of the DBS certificate, when you undertake the necessary qualifications and when you are able to provide a medical assessment report.

What forms and documentation are required?

To begin the application process applicants must submit a completed application form, relevant ID, fee and DBS application (further details of the DBS application process is contained within the 'Becoming a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Driver in Wirral' document below).

When an applicant is ready to apply, they should contact Licensing to request an appointment by email to taxilicensing@wirral.gov.uk.

During the appointment the following documentation will be required.

- Completed application form
DVLA Driving Licence in your current address
- DVLA Driving Licence check code
- Proof of Right to Work in the UK
- 1 x other form of ID e.g. Utility Bill, Bank Statement, Birth Certificate
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-identity-checking-guidelines>
- Application fee of **£125** (credit/debit card)
- DBS (criminal record check) fee **£53.50** (credit/debit card)

Do I need a medical?

You will be provided with a medical assessment form which must be taken to your GP surgery or another Doctor who has **full** access to your medical records. The Doctor will examine you and complete the medical assessment form.

The completed medical assessment form cannot be accepted if it is more than two months old when you are issued with your licence.

[DVLA Group 2 Medical Standards](#) are applied, so if you are in any doubt about your health, you should contact your GP prior to making an application.

Do I need to declare “spent” criminal convictions?

When applying for a hackney carriage or private hire driver licence all convictions may be taken into account, and you should therefore declare all convictions, even if they were a very long time ago and you do not know the exact dates.

Failure to declare convictions which are later identified (i.e. via DBS check) may indicate dishonesty which could be taken into account when considering if an applicant is a fit and proper person.

Do I need to declare cautions and fixed penalties?

You must declare any police cautions and fixed penalties that you have received.

What is Safeguarding Training?

Safeguarding is the action taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. The training is designed to provide information about the types of exploitation children can face, the signs to look out for, and what licence holders can do if they suspect a child is being exploited.

When you submit your application, you will be booked onto one of the Safeguarding training sessions delivered by Wirral Council. The training is delivered online via Microsoft Teams and lasts approximately 2 hours.

What is the Vocationally Related Qualification (VRQ)?

All applicants must obtain a Level 2 Certificate in Introduction to the role of the Professional Taxi and Private Hire Driver.

The VRQ course is provided by a number of organisations which can be found online.

Why have applicants got to pass an English Proficiency Skills Test?

It is important that licensed drivers can read and understand policies and guidance. Oral proficiency is of relevance in the identification of potential exploitation through communicating with passengers and their interaction with others.

Applicants must pass both a written and oral test. The English Proficiency Test (written and oral) will be completed at your first appointment.

What is MiDAS?

The Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MiDAS) is a nationally recognised standard for the assessment and training of minibus drivers. If you are applying for a licence to enable you to *only* undertake work that is subject to a contract issued by the Council, you will be required to complete this course in place of the VRQ.

Do I need to do an NVQ?

No. Once granted a licence applicants will have the option of completing the Level 2 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in Road Passenger Vehicle Driving on a voluntary basis. This is currently not a mandatory requirement of the licence; however, drivers are encouraged to obtain this invaluable qualification.

What is an Enhanced DBS check and why do I need one?

An Enhanced DBS check provides details of an individual's convictions, cautions, reprimands, or warnings recorded on Police central records and in the case of hackney and private hire drivers includes both "spent" and "unspent" convictions. It also provides information held locally by Police which is considered relevant to your application. It will form part of the assessment of whether you are a fit and proper person to hold a licence. Further information on how to submit your DBS application is contained within the 'Becoming a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Driver in Wirral' document.

I have lived abroad. Do I need a criminal record check from that country?

You will be required to obtain a criminal record check (Certificate of Good Conduct) from any country you have lived in for more than three months. Details of how to obtain these can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants>

How do I obtain a DVLA driving licence check code?

Go to www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence You will be required to enter your driving licence number, National Insurance number and post code.

How long will it take to get a licence?

The criminal record check can take up to 8 weeks. You cannot be granted a licence until after you have presented your DBS check to Licensing. If there is a record of criminal convictions, you may be referred to the Licensing Panel which usually meets once a month.

The DBS is usually the longest part of the process, but you will also have to pass the VRQ and a Medical before a licence can be granted.

However, you should be aware that it can take longer than this for your licence to be issued, particularly if your application is delayed due to convictions disclosed.

How long will my licence be valid for?

Driver licences are normally valid for three years, however in some circumstances a licence may be issued for a shorter period.

How will I get my Licence?

Once you have obtained all the necessary documents, obtained the VRQ qualification and you if you have no convictions, you can make an appointment with Licensing to complete the application process and obtain your licence.

Will I be granted a licence if I have penalty points on my driving licence?

If you have penalty points on your licence you may be referred to the Licensing Panel for your application to be considered. See the Council's Statement of Policy and Guidelines relating to the Relevance of Convictions when considering applications for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licences.

Will I be granted a licence if I have a criminal record?

If you have any criminal convictions your application may be referred to the Licensing Panel. See the Council's Statement of Policy and Guidelines relating to the Relevance of Convictions when considering applications for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licences.

What is the Licensing Panel?

The Licensing Panel consists of a number of Councillors who consider applications for licences where Officers do not have the Delegated Authority to do so. See the Council's Statement of Policy and Guidelines relating the Relevance of Convictions when considering applications for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licences.

How much will it cost to obtain a Licence from the Licensing Authority?

There are a number of fees payable to the Licensing Authority. There is an application fee of **£125** which is non-refundable should a licence not be granted for any reason. The DBS criminal record check costs **£53.50** which is payable at the same time as the application fee.

If a licence is granted the licence fee of **£187** is payable.

How do I pay the fees?

Payment is accepted by debit card or credit card during your appointment.

What other costs are involved in becoming a licensed driver?

There are various costs involved in becoming a driver. The main ones are as follows:

- DVLA Group 2 Medical
- VRQ – currently funding is available in certain circumstances. You should check with the training providers who will advise you regarding this.

If an applicant also wishes to licence a vehicle as a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle the costs are currently

- Vehicle licence - £192 for a 12-month licence
- Vehicle MOT/Compliance test - approximately £50
- Vehicle insurance can be up to £2500 a year, and sometimes more.

Who can I contact for Further Information?

For further information about Hackney and Private Hire Licensing, you can contact the Licensing Authority by email taxilicensing@wirral.gov.uk.