

# Outline proposal for conducting AVDC Taxi Driver Assessments. As of 13<sup>th</sup> August 2013

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### Background

Transport for Buckinghamshire's (TfB) Road Safety Team provide a range of driver training and education programmes across Buckinghamshire to help reduce casualties. June Howlett is a former DSA driving examiner and currently holds a DSA Fleet badge. All our courses come under an umbrella brand called **Be a Better Driver** which runs in conjunction with the nationally recognised Be a Better Biker scheme. [www.buckscc.gov.uk/beabetterdriver](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/beabetterdriver).

### **Driving Instructors**

All our instructors are DSA approved driving instructors who have attended Cognitive Behaviour workshops provided by us on how to use coaching skills to help drivers self evaluate their own driving. In order to deliver one of our courses, instructors must apply and be selected for interview. Successful applicants then receive specific training on how to deliver the course syllabus.

Earlier this year, the Road Safety team were approached by AVDC Taxi Licensing team to form a driver training programme that encompassed new and existing drivers with the intention of raising the standard of AVDC taxi drivers.

Two meetings have now taken place and from the options presented, a 3 phase assessment programme has been devised.

The current test is the DSA Taxi Test which can take up to 3 months for a potential driver to be tested. One of the fundamental provisions of the new scheme will be to meet demand in a timely and efficient manner and to provide an enhanced test involving a practical and classroom based workshop which will have flexibility for the AVDC team to tailor as and when training needs arise.

### Online training database

The Road Safety Team is due to roll out a one stop web based training database whereby all its training courses will be available to be booked and paid for online. AVDC Licensing team will have access to the database to view taxi driver reports. The database will also keep a log of training against each driver via a unique reference number. The desire is for a smooth transition from the practical and theory element of the scheme through to AVDC for their requirements.

**Phase 1** – New Applicants. This would be for New Taxi Drivers,

**Phase 2** – Remedial Training. This would be for existing Taxi Drivers who have had a complaint made against them.

**Phase 3** – Existing Licensees. This would be for all existing Taxi Drivers that have not been through any form of assessment of their driving since taking the

DSA assessment. This would be a phased approach until all existing drivers have been assessed.

### **Phase 1 New applicants**

To fulfil the licensing authority's duty of care, drivers must be able to demonstrate an ability to drive safely, and possess a good knowledge and understanding of road traffic law and licensing regulations.

**Format:** The course would consist of 2 separate sessions carried out on different days.

#### **Session 1 Theory presentation**

This would consist of a 2 hour theory session based around a presentation. This will include key road safety topics; e.g. mobile phones, drink driving, seatbelt compliance, fatigue, speeding, and vehicle maintenance and safety and can include the following:

- Fitness to drive
- Disabilities and safeguarding issues
- Conduct, dress and customer service
- Accident and Emergency procedures
- Requirements for passing the course
- Knowledge and understanding test

A written test at the end of the session will be used to establish the participants' level of knowledge and understanding of relevant issues. The test questions will be changed on a regular basis. All drivers will be issued with a Highway Code. AVDC will deliver all Cabology training and will be welcome to have input into the Road Safety course syllabus and attend the presentations.

#### **Session 2 Practical assessment**

This will consist of a 2 hour practical driving session including a test of driving ability. Drivers would go out on a shared basis with one of our approved instructors, and following an eyesight test would then be taken on a set test route lasting approximately 35-40 minutes each driver. The test will include a manoeuvre to turn the vehicle round in the opposite direction.

**Cost:** The cost for this course would be £95 per driver (based on two drivers for the assessment) for the workshop and driving assessment. These courses would be delivered in potentially groups of 10.

Both the theory and practical aspects of Phase 1 will be able to function as separate entities as directed by AVDC.

This does not include re-assessment costs for those that fail

The main reasons for a shared assessment is a) drivers can learn from each other and b) will be more cost effective.

## **ADMIN PROCESS – Outline.**

- A link on the AVDC website will direct Taxi drivers to the TfB online training database to book their assessment and vice versa.
- AVDC will also have an online licensing application. Majority of drivers belong to an operator who will complete these on drivers' behalf.
- AVDC currently accepts an IAM test but will review this.
- Assessors will provide dates per month which will be populated into the online calendar for taxi drivers to book a place on. Also ad hoc assessments may be required by AVDC. A need to ensure quicker response than current DSA test of 3 months. Dates and times take account of the needs of existing and new taxi driver commitments. .
- Taxi driver books on day and month via database. Email is generated to Taxi Driver to confirm time and place and that payment has been made.
- T&C's are on database and agreement is via a tick box on the database.
- Drivers can phone a 24 hr answerphone to cancel assessment but 3 working days must be given. Answerphone message to state that caller must leave ID number and name.
- Driver forfeits fee if they fail to arrive without providing notification of at least 3 working days as we will be charged by our assessors.
- Taxi drivers must provide original of driving licence and one other proof of identify ie passport or utility bill at both theory and practical.
- Practical driving assessment takes place from the Oculus as the venue and the assessor meets driver at main reception. Venue for theory workshop to be agreed pending any charges for hire.
- Prior to the assessment the drivers will have to read a number plate at 20 metres. Failure to do so will result in the assessment being aborted and the driver will lose their assessment fee.
- Assessments are conducted during normal weekday working hours, but may be arranged at weekends or out of hours at a weekend rate – fees to be established.
- Assessor emails completed report to TfB, reports are then quality checked and signed off by Road Safety Officer then forwarded to client – Taxi driver will follow link from TfB website to AVDC to commence licensing approval by quoting unique ID number. RS team to provide AVDC with full report of driver.

Scoring system:

Final wording to be agreed upon.

Drivers will be scored a High, Medium or Low risk

High risk means they fail, Medium means they need to undertake further lessons at their own expense before reapplying for an assessment, low risk is a pass.

### **Evaluation**

TfB have an online evaluation system and will request feedback from AVDC which will be based primarily on their satisfaction as our client. AVDC will be

able to report on whether they think the assessments are meeting their remit and to provide any comments good/bad that they receive from the drivers. Potentially they could measure if the number of reports/complaints received changes, hopefully reducing over time.

## **Appendix 1**

### *Theory test:*

*To demonstrate a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the licensing conditions, Highway Code, and road safety issues, drivers will need to score a minimum of 10 out of 15 on the theory element of the test. If a potential driver fails the theory test, a different paper from the one they took will be administered but will still include questions that have been covered in the classroom session. The theory re-test will be carried out at a mutually agreeable date and time. A potential driver cannot proceed onto the practical assessment until they have passed the theory test. There will be a fee for re-taking the theory test, and while there is no maximum number of attempts, the Road safety team will refer potential drivers who fail 3 times back to the Licensing authority for further consideration.*

### *Practical test:*

*Drivers will be marked on the following:*

- *Vehicle sympathy and passenger comfort*
- *Effective rear observation*
- *Awareness and planning*
- *Response to signs and signals*
- *Interaction with others*
- *Speed limits : observation and compliance*
- *Appropriate use of speed*
- *Positioning*
- *Attitudes towards other road users*
- *Reversing : control and observation*

*A maximum of 6 driving faults can be committed during the test element. A driving fault is defined as per the DSA Standard Operating Procedures for Examiners:*

*“A driving fault is one, which in itself is not potentially dangerous. However, a candidate who habitually commits a driving fault in one aspect of driving throughout the test, demonstrating an inability to deal with certain situations, cannot be regarded as competent to pass the test, as that fault alone must be seen as potentially dangerous.”*

*However, if a driver commits a fault which causes potential or actual danger to themselves, the trainer, other road users, or property this will result in an immediate fail.*

*To be clear: more than 6 general driving faults, consistent driving faults in one particular aspect of driving, or one potentially dangerous fault will all result in a fail. A driver MUST be able to demonstrate a consistent, safe approach to driving throughout the assessment.*

*If a driver fails a first attempt, they will be given a written report with recommendations. They can either work on the areas of weakness themselves or contact the Road Safety team for advice regarding our registered trainers who may be able to assist them. The driver would be liable for all expenses relating to receiving professional tuition, and they should ensure they **only** contact the Road Safety team for a re-assessment when improvements have been made. The re-assessment does not include a coaching element so any identified weaknesses will need to have been rectified prior to the re-assessment. This will last approximately 45 mins/1 hour (a brief introduction/warm up, followed immediately by the re-test). There will be a cost to the potential driver for the second assessment, approximately £45/£50*

*A second failure will result in the Road Safety team advising the Licensing Authority to suspend the application process for a period of 3 months in order for the potential driver to seek professional training. The driver would be liable for all expenses relating to receiving professional tuition.*

*The Road Safety team would only conduct a third assessment when the trainer provides written evidence stating there has been sufficient improvement to warrant another attempt. The re-assessment would be charged to the driver at a rate of £45/ £50.*

*Is there are any likelihood of this? In order to protect the interest of Buckinghamshire County Council (TfB), the names of the drivers who do not reach a satisfactory standard will also be passed onto Passenger Transport, to try and reduce the likelihood of the driver delivering services on behalf of Buckinghamshire County Council.*