

Taxi Licensing Newsletter

January 2026



Our opening hours are changing - from Monday 2 February 2026 customer services and our Civic Offices will be open from 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday

REMINDERS:

Drivers need to submit renewal paperwork at least 2 weeks prior to licence expiry

Before submitting your Medical form, check that your GP has filled out every section

1. Changes to Local Government - Runnymede Borough Council will cease to exist as a Local Authority

Local Government Reorganisation across the UK, the biggest change to local government in 50 years, is seeking to reduce the number of licensing authorities regulating the trade, with the intention of reducing variation across the current 260+ authorities which currently deliver taxi and private hire licensing functions.

In Surrey, the current county, district, and borough councils will be replaced by two new unitary authorities from April 2027 - East Surrey and West Surrey.

The West Surrey unitary will replace the geographic areas of Runnymede, Guildford, Spelthorne, Surrey Heath, Waverley and Woking councils. The change aims to simplify local government, reduce duplication and lead to more joined up services.

Existing councils will continue to provide services during a transition period, with shadow arrangements beginning from May 2026. Implementation work has begun to prepare for this transition and to make sure that there is no interruption in service delivery during this process.

2. Fees and charges

Annual fees for 2026-27 were approved by the Regulatory Committee and will come into effect from 1st April 2026. Licence fees have changed on a cost recovery basis;

- Hackney Carriage vehicle: 29% decrease
- Private hire vehicle: 7% increase
- Driver licence renewal: 2 – 4% increase
- Private Hire Operators: 2 – 3% increase

3. Automated passenger vehicles (APVs) - driverless taxis

The Automated Vehicles Act 2024 establishes a legal framework for self-driving vehicles on UK roads, with plans to introduce Automated Passenger Service (APS) permits for commercial driverless taxis during 2026.

Licensed APVs will be exempt from local authority taxi and private hire vehicle licensing, however, before any APV may operate as a taxi in a given area, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) must seek consent from the relevant local licensing authority.

This dual approach is designed to balance national standards with local oversight.

Major firms like Waymo and Uber have announced plans to launch driverless taxi services in London during 2026, pending final regulatory approval. By late 2027, a full implementation of the Act, including nationwide commercial rollouts, is expected.

A Government consultation seeks views on several aspects that will inform how the automated vehicles regulatory framework is developed. This call for evidence can be found here: [Developing the automated vehicles regulatory framework - GOV.UK](#)

This consultation closes at **11:59pm on 5 March 2026**.

4. Taxi & PH illegal working guidance updated – August 2025

The Home Office has published updated guidance for licensing authorities to prevent illegal working in the taxi and private hire sector. It is used by licensing authority staff responsible for the issue, renewal, suspension and revocation of licences for all applicants for operator, taxi or private hire drivers licences.

5. FREE Suicide Awareness Training for taxi drivers (on behalf of Surrey County Council)

Taxi drivers play a unique and important role in our community. You meet people at all times of day and night, often when they may be feeling stressed, vulnerable, or alone. Because of this, you're in a position to notice when someone might be struggling — and to help them get the right support.

To help you feel confident in these situations, Surrey County Council are sharing details of free bite-sized suicide awareness training that has been designed specifically for taxi drivers.

What the Training Covers

- Better understand suicide
- Spot the signs that a passenger may be struggling with suicidal thoughts
- Recognise the importance of being direct when asking someone how they are feeling
- How to talk to someone they are concerned about
- Signpost passengers to organisations that can support them.

This is not about becoming an expert — it's about having the knowledge to spot when something isn't right and knowing how to respond calmly and safely.

Why It Matters

A kind word or a moment of connection can make a powerful difference. Many taxi drivers tell us they've had conversations with passengers that stayed with them. This training helps you feel prepared if something similar happens.

How to Take Part

The **FREE** training takes **only 10 minutes** and can be found here:

<https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/suicide-training-taxi>

After Completion

Surrey County Council have mental health crisis cards that they can give you to keep in your taxi. These have details of the local mental health support in Surrey. Once you have taken the course, please email: **publichealthtraining@surreycc.gov.uk** and they will send you the cards.

Your role in the community is invaluable. By taking part in this training, you're helping build a safer, more connected Runnymede for everyone.

6. National Taxi Standards added to Devolution Bill

The House of Commons approved a new clause of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill in November 2025, defining “national minimum standards” and “regulated licences” for taxi and PHV drivers, vehicles and operators.

This amendment will require local licensing authorities in England to comply with uniform national rules, which would see all drivers, vehicles and operators subject to robust checks and requirements on safety and accessibility. National minimum standards will cover driver vetting, safety compliance, vehicle specifications and operator conduct to help ensure consistent protection for passengers, irrespective of where they travel in England.

The proposed new standards come after Baroness Casey's audit into Group-based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. The report made 12 recommendations for government, including addressing inconsistent standards of taxi and PHV driver licensing. These standards will be subject to consultation and will be primarily focused on passenger safety and accessibility.

The government continues to consider wider options for reform, including on 'out of area working'. As part of this, the Department for Transport has launched a consultation on making all local transport authorities responsible for taxi and PHV licensing – reducing the number of licensing authorities from 263 to 70 – to help further increase consistency in standards.

The consultation will run until **11:59pm on 1 April 2026** and can be found here: [Local transport authorities and the licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles - GOV.UK](#)