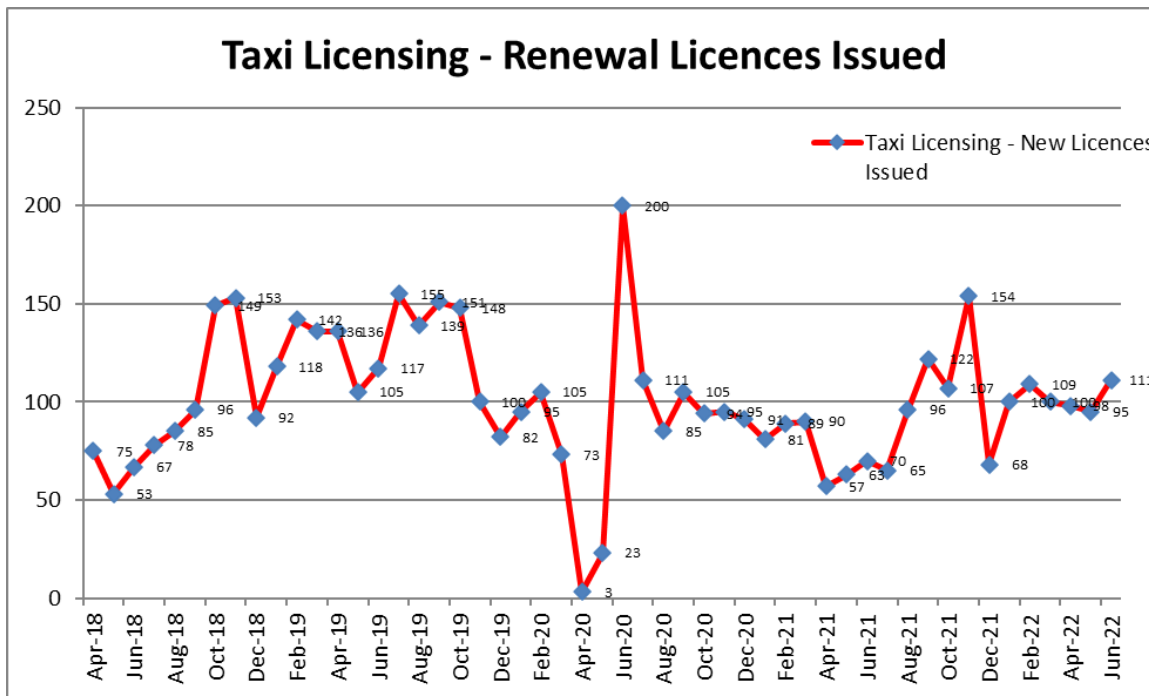


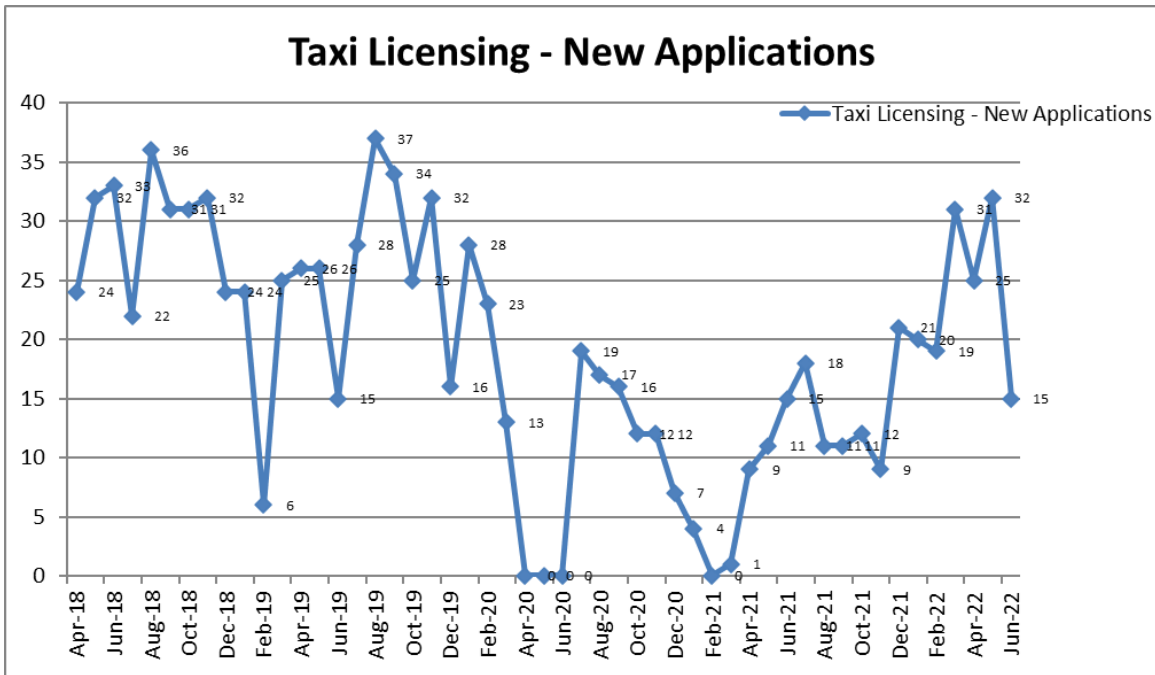
# Monthly Taxi Licensing Report – June 2022

## 1.0 Licensed Drivers

Driver and vehicle numbers have stabilised over 2022 following both showing month on month declines between 2020 and 2021. Drivers are reporting higher levels of business now the economy is beginning to recover. The fall in drivers and vehicles is being seen at a national level as drivers move into the more stable delivery industry.

New driver and vehicle applications have fallen since the start of the pandemic however the team are starting to see a recovery in numbers of new applicants and levels are back to those seen pre pandemic. The team processed 15 new licence applications and 111 renewals during June 2022. It should be noted that a reducing number of licence applicants and holders would reduce the Council's income from taxi licensing in the short term, however the team do expect this to bounce back as part of the wider economic recovery. The new driver numbers are down following an issue with the Council's DBS team, the issue has now been resolved but resulted in fewer new driver licences being processed during June.





The chart below shows the total number of licences produced each month. Driver licences are issued for one or three years, most drivers opt for a three year licence. 2019 saw a large number of drivers renew and is behind the increased numbers for 2019. 2020 numbers were below those seen historically, however numbers have climbed steadily during 2021 and 2022 levels are expected to be high. The number of new applications has risen over the last 3 months to a level seen prior to the pandemic, it is hoped new applications will continue to increase as business picks up and the economy recovers. Whilst new applications are up overall driver levels remain flat as older drivers leave the industry.

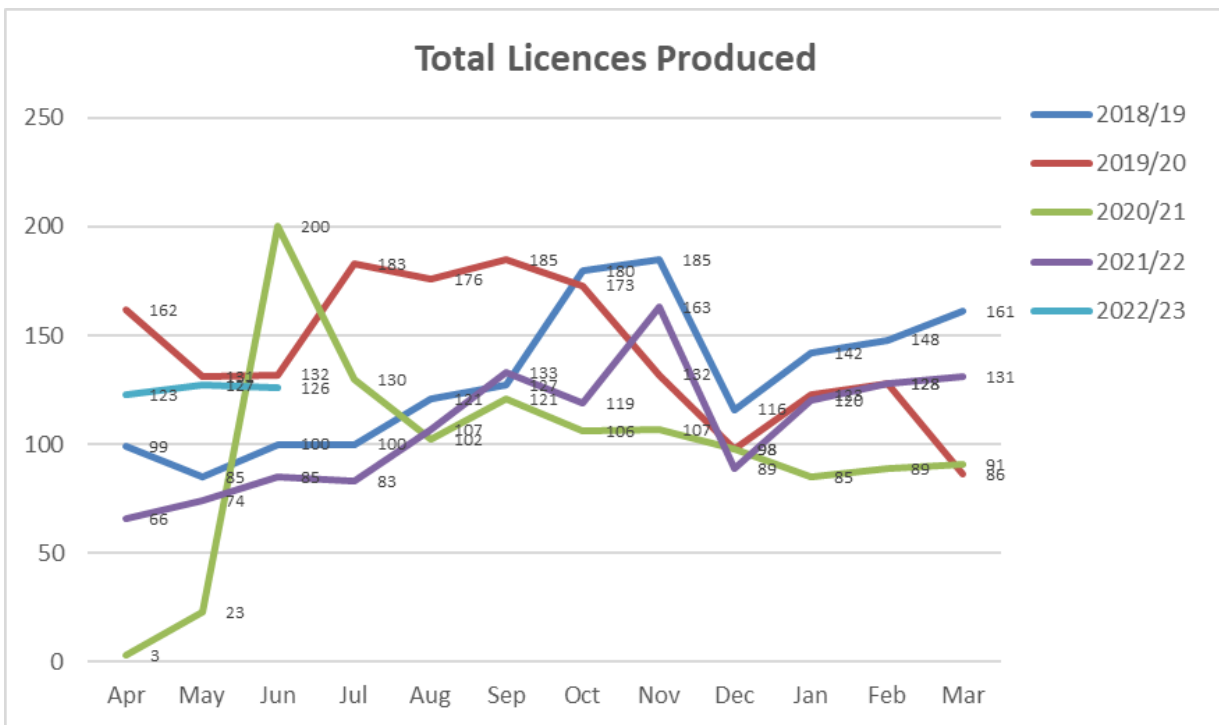


Figure 2 below shows the total number of licensed hackney carriage drivers in Wiltshire and their location.

The total number of licensed hackney carriage drivers at the end of June 2022 was 674, a decrease of 7 on the previous month. 143 were licensed in the North area, 75 in the East, 277 in the South and 179 in the West. Over the year April 2019 to April 2020 the number of hackney carriage drivers fell 44, for the same period in 2020 to 2021 driver numbers fell 89 demonstrating the effect of the pandemic. The number of private hire drivers rose by 12 over the same period, April 19 to April 20 giving an overall fall in driver numbers of 32 for 2019-20. For the period April 2020 to 2021 private hire driver numbers fell by 35 giving an overall for of 124 between April 2020 and April 21. Numbers of hackney carriage drivers fell by 79 for the period April 21 to April 22 as the pandemic still effected the industry. Over the same period private hire drivers fell by one giving an overall fall between April 21 and April 22 of 80. This is far better than the 124 fall during the same period the previous year but the fall in drivers continues to put pressure on PTU. Coronavirus and lockdown restrictions have seen a reduction in hackney carriage drivers of 187 over the period March 2020 to June 2022, representing a fall of 22%, this appears to be in line with the national average. It is noted that driver numbers have stabilised over the last 3 months.

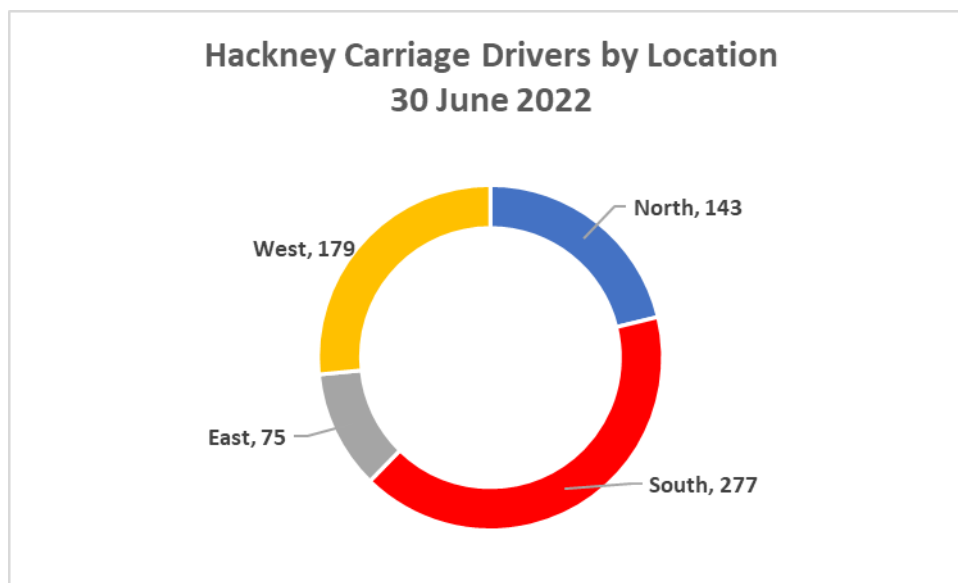
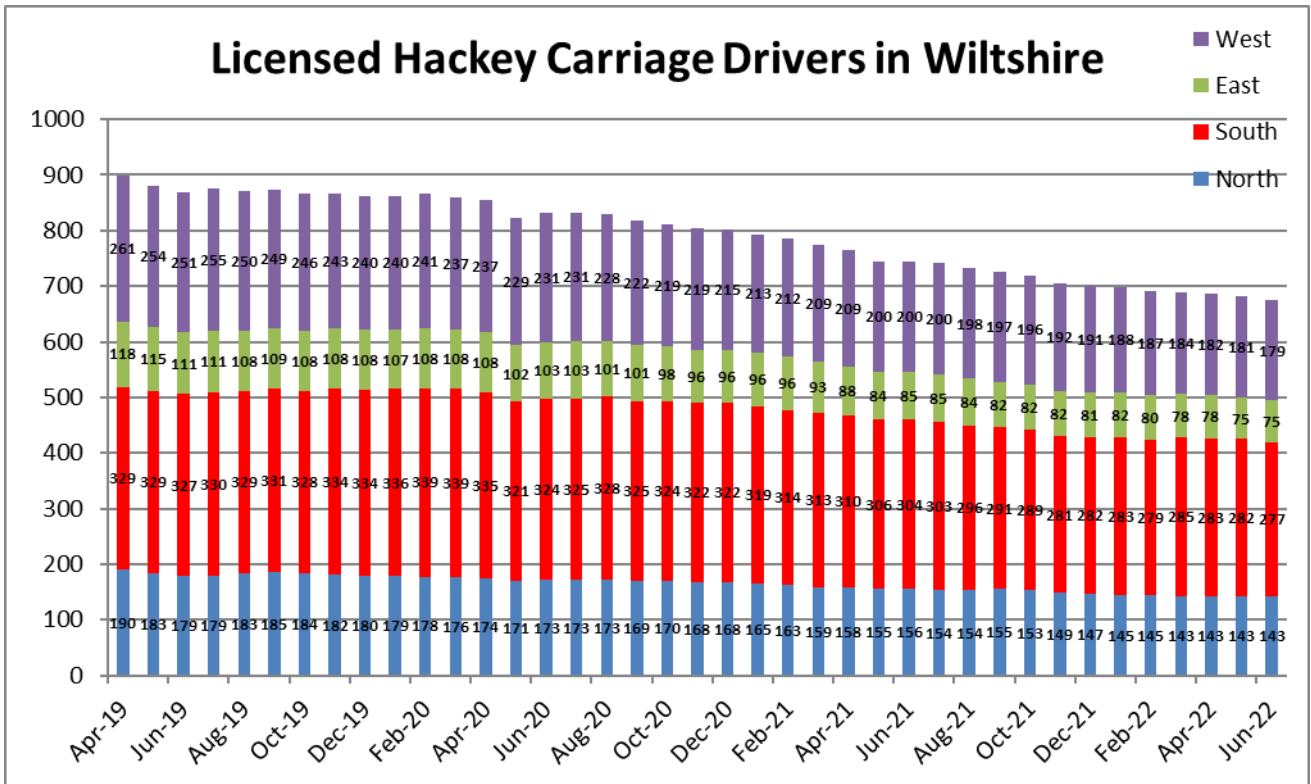


Fig.2

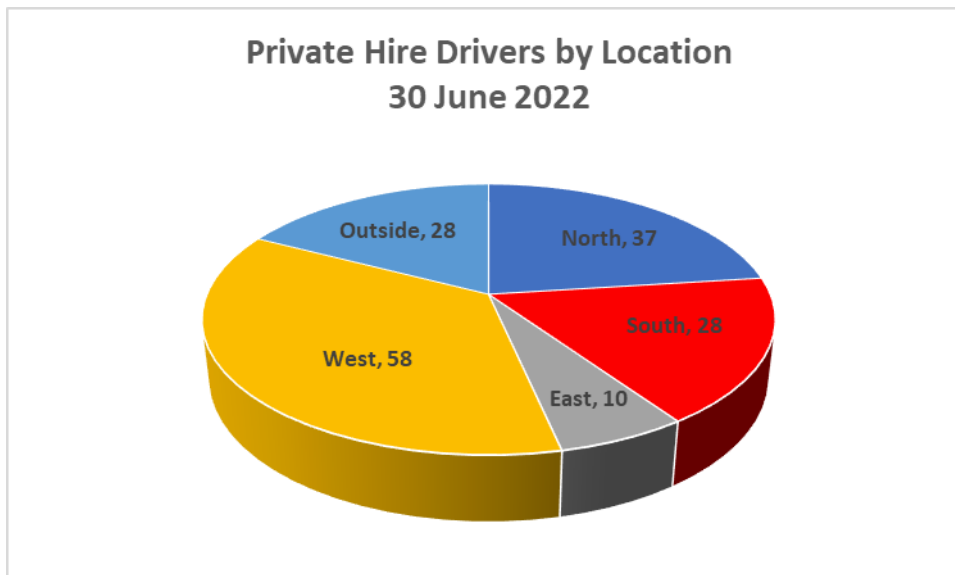
The graph below shows the monthly variation in hackney carriage driver numbers during 2019/20 and 2021/22. During June 2022 numbers fell by 7, numbers in the North and East stayed the same whilst the South fell by 5 and West by 2 when compared to the previous month.

Since April 2019 Hackney Carriage driver numbers have fallen in all areas, down 82 in the West, 47 in the North, 43 in the East and 52 in the South. The West is clearly the worst affected area.

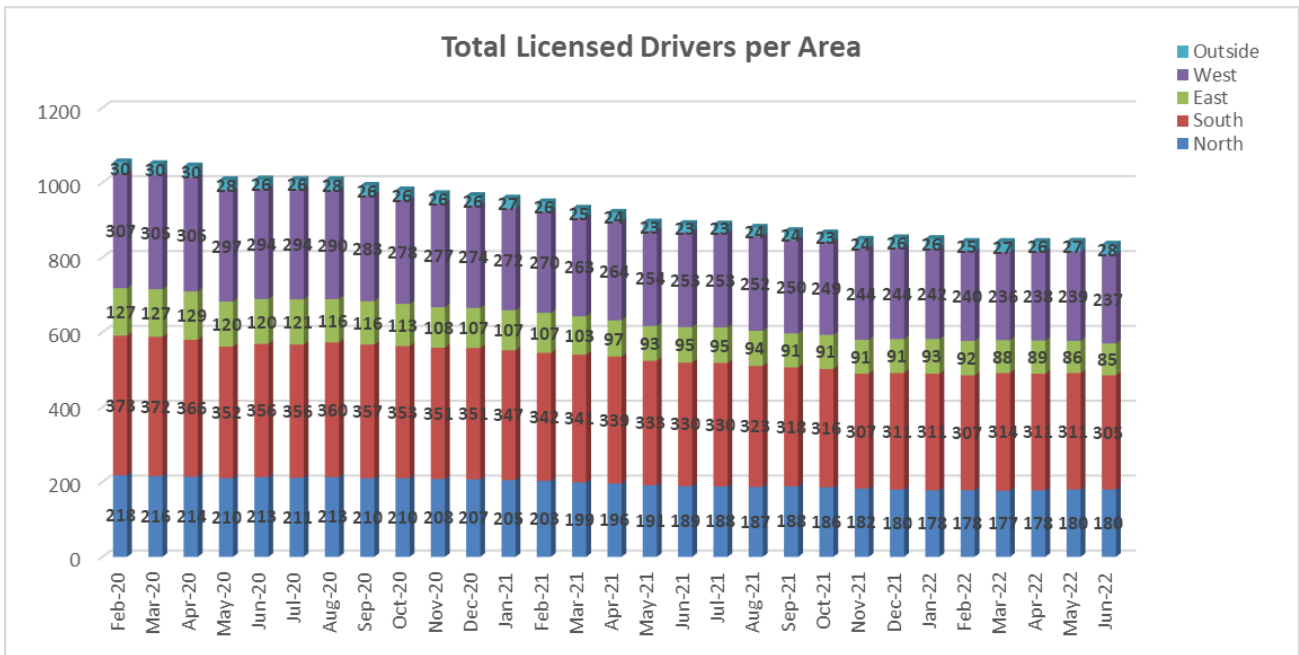


The team also license private hire only drivers, these totalled 161 as at the end of June 2022, a decrease of 1 over the month, bringing the total number of drivers licensed to 835, a decrease of 8 on the previous month.

Private Hire drivers are not restricted by zone and can take bookings for anywhere in the Country. It is interesting to note that we have more private hire drivers living outside of the county than in the east of the county and in similar numbers with the South area. For information, the area in which the private hire drivers are registered is as follows;



The graph below shows total driver numbers since February 2020, the month prior to the pandemic.



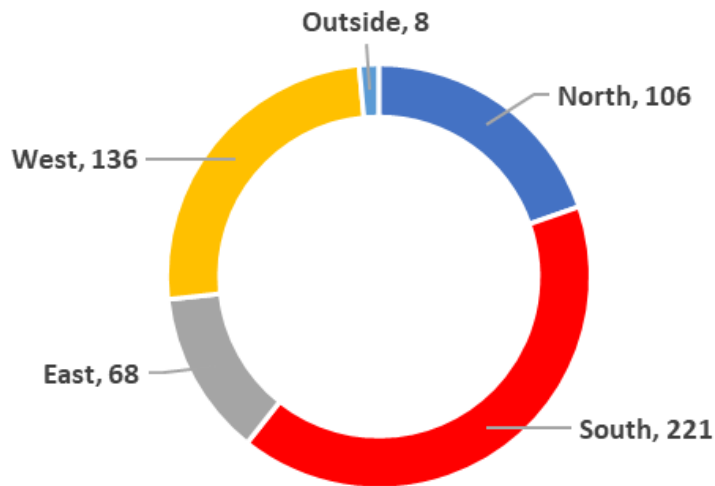
Since April 2019 the number of hackney carriage drivers has fallen by 225 and the number of private hire drivers has fallen by 17, an overall fall of 242 drivers or 23%. However 215, a large percentage of the reduction of 242 drivers has occurred since the first national lockdown in March 2020 as a result of Covid-19.

## 2.0 Licensed Vehicles

At the end of June 2022 the taxi licensing team licensed a total of 769 vehicles, the same number as the previous month. The impact of lockdown and the Covid restrictions had taken effect and vehicle numbers had dropped for 8 consecutive months prior to May 2021, it was hoped numbers would stabilise after restrictions were lifted but this is taking longer than expected although the team feel numbers have stabilised over the last three months and are beginning to rise. The vehicle split is as follows, 539 hackney carriage vehicles and 230 private hire vehicles, hackney carriage numbers rose by 1 and private hire vehicle numbers fell by 1 over the month when compared to the previous month. Of the 769 vehicles licensed 13.7% or 105 vehicles are wheelchair accessible. It should be noted that 30% of licensed private hire vehicles are wheelchair accessible compared to 6% of hackney carriage vehicles, this reflects the type of work each type of vehicle undertakes.

The chart below shows the location split of all hackney carriage vehicles.

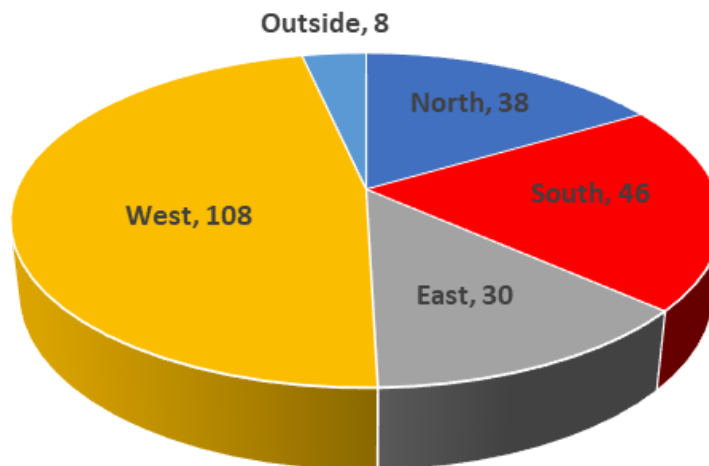
### Hackney Carriage Vehicles by Location 30 June 2022



The team also license private hire only vehicles, as advised above these totalled 230 as at the end of June 2022.

Private Hire drivers are not restricted by zone and can take bookings for anywhere in the Country if they wish. For information, the area in which the private hire vehicles are registered is as follows;

### Private Hire Vehicles by Location 30 June 2022



Between April 2019 and June 2022 the number of licensed vehicles, hackney carriages and private hire vehicles decreased by 165, the number has reduced by 164 or 19% since the first Coronavirus lockdown was announced in March 2020, this is in line with national trends.

### 3.0 Enforcement actions

The team continue to proactively enforce the Council’s policies in relation to taxi licensing, ensuring we have a visible presence on the rank, however staff sickness during the period March to June 2022 has seen the level of enforcement reduce over the month. On 30 June 2022 night time enforcement on the ranks was undertaken with Wiltshire Police who communicated with drivers to spread information on their campaign on reducing violence against women and encouraging drivers to report concerning behaviour. The team issued penalty points to on 24 occasions during March 2021, the highest monthly total ever recorded. The enforcement officers also undertook drive by inspections and rank visits within our towns to identify potential issues.

Penalty points were issued 6 occasions during June 2022 for;

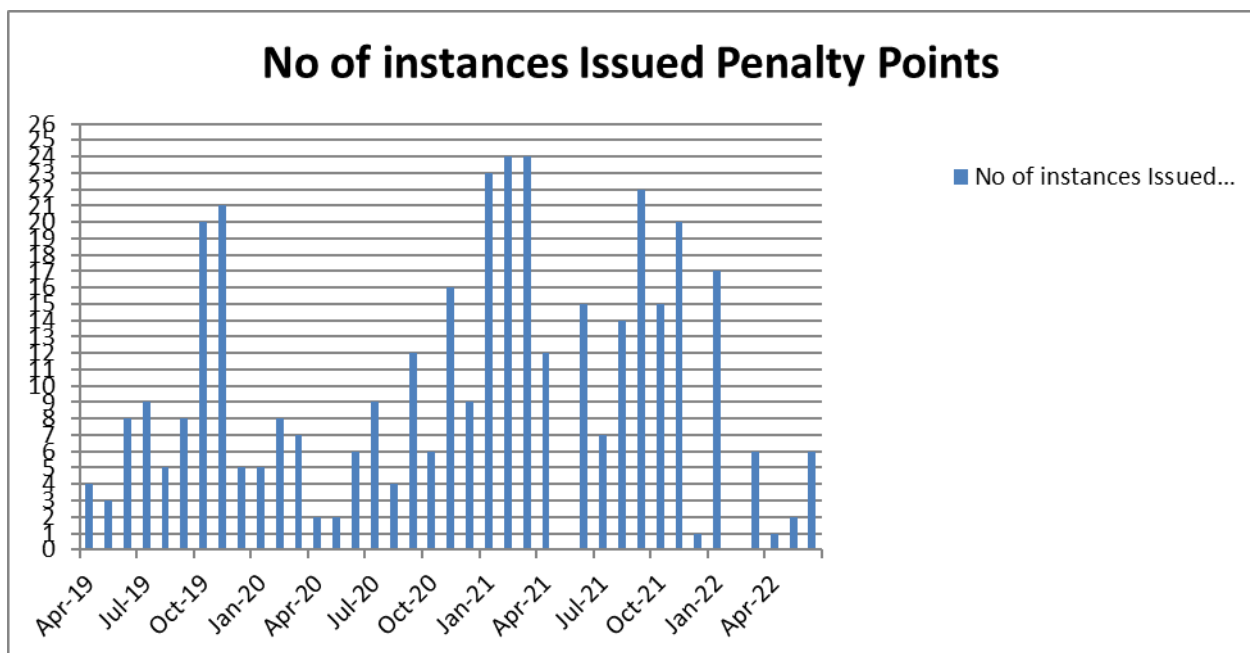
- 5 – Failure to be with the vehicle on a rank
- 1 - smoking in a vehicle.
- 1 – Parking on double yellow lines
- 1 – Failure to wear a drivers badge

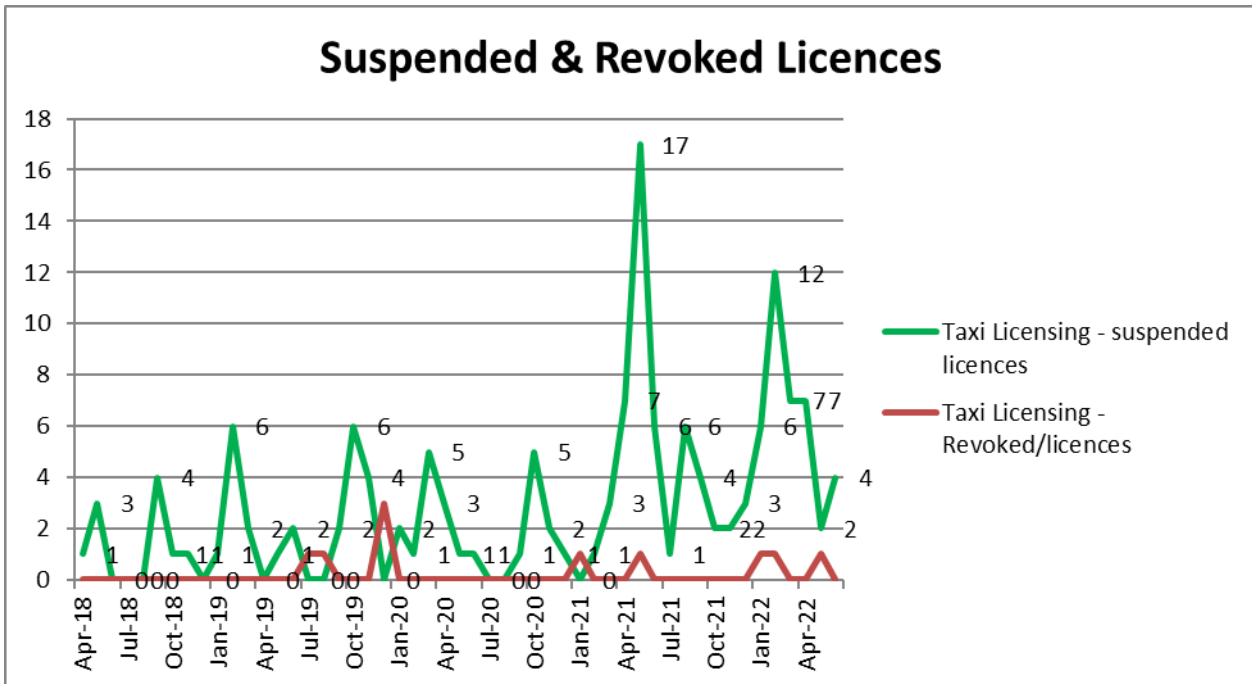
The Council operates an internal penalty points scheme under which a driver will be suspended if they reach 12 points in a rolling 12 month period.

The graph below shows a trend of enforcement as the team effectively manage our driver database.

The Team suspended four drivers and revoked none during June 2022.

An issue had been identified with the latest Government advice on DBS checks and the team worked with the Council’s DBS team on a solution during June which was achieved.





The implementation of a new schedule of fare and tariffs for hackney carriages was completed on 04 January 2022. A report was presented to Licensing Committee on 20 June 2022 recommending a 5% increase to tariff 1 in light of the record fuel prices that are currently being seen. Licensing Committee requested that the Taxi Licensing Team consult with the industry on a 10% rise to Tariff 1. The consultation commenced on 29 June 22 and will finish on 13 July 2022.

The team presented the report after undertaking a fare benchmarking exercise with our neighbouring local authorities as a number of drivers and operators have requested fare increases in lieu of the escalating fuel prices.

The team continue to work on updated driver and vehicle guidelines in line with government advice which will further enhance standards within Wiltshire for the benefit of service users and the industry in general. The team are considering the impact of the proposed 2020 Environment bill which will place requirements on Local Authorities to manage air quality. This may impact taxis and our guidelines around vehicle age and emissions. The Council has also signed an agreement with DEFRA to provide regular licensed vehicle data via a weekly upload to fulfil its obligations under the 2019 Air Quality Regulations. The upload file has been created by IT and the first upload took place in February 2020.

The current Coronavirus pandemic has hit the taxi industry very hard and all local authorities have seen reducing driver numbers. The team believe numbers are stabilising and are working with our colleagues in Passenger Transport Unit on initiatives to encourage recruitment of new drivers in Wiltshire.

Tom Ince  
Principal Compliance Officer  
August 2022