

PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE

6 OCTOBER 2020

Present: County Councillor Mackie(Chairperson)
County Councillors Sattar, Asghar Ali, Derbyshire, Goddard,
Hudson, Jacobsen, Lancaster, Dianne Rees, Robson and Wood

7 Apologies for Absence

None received.

8 Declarations of Interest

None received.

9 Minutes

The minutes of the previous meetings listed below, were approved.

Public Protection Sub Committee – 3/3/2020

Public Protection Committee – 15/7/2020

Public Protection Sub Committee – 1/9/2020

10 Replacement of BTEC with SQA Level 2 Certificate

Members were advised that at its meeting of 3 November 2009 the Committee first agreed to introduce a requirement that all applicants for the grant of a Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Driver's Licence, who have not previously held a licence in the past twelve months, be required to produce evidence of having successfully completed a BTEC qualification in 'Transporting Passengers by Taxi and Private Hire'.

On 8 February 2011 the Public Protection Committee agreed to replace the BTEC qualification with a new BTEC accredited qualification in the 'Introduction to the Role of the Professional Taxi or Private Hire Driver'.

The current provider of the BTEC qualification; Pearson have advised that they are withdrawing the qualification. The last test date will be 31 January 2021 and the last certification date will be 28 February 2021. As a result of the withdrawal of the BTEC qualification the Licensing Authority has been researching alternative qualifications.

The qualification found to most suit the needs of the Licensing Authority is provided by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and is a Level 2 Certificate in 'Introduction to the Role of the Professional Taxi and Private Hire Driver'

SQA describe the qualification as providing *"learners with an understanding of current legislation and good customer service. It develops and enhances the range of skills and techniques required to deliver high-quality services to the travelling public"*.

To obtain the qualification, learners would have to achieve the following modules:

- Workplace Health and Safety
- Safety Transport Passengers
- Professional Customer Service
- Maintain the Safety of the Licensed Vehicle
- Mobility and Wheelchair Assistance
- Plan Routes and Fares
- Transport Luggage and Parcels
- Safely Transport School Age Children
- The Licensing Regulations

This SQA qualification will not only continue to contain key elements necessary for training applicants for the grant of a licence but has the added benefit of including safeguarding as part of the 'Safely Transport School Age Children Module'. This includes:

- Know the types of illegal activity that perpetrators use for personal satisfaction or monetary gain:
 - sexual gratification
 - use of drug mules
- Identify the common feature of perpetrator behaviour and grooming
- Describe the impact of exploitation on a school age child
- Understand the importance of Codes of Conduct and values that underpin the rights of school age children
- Describe how contact or referrals can be made if school age child requires support for contact or non-contact abuse

Although this qualification has been available since 2011, the content was refreshed in 2018. This encompassed changes to the Equality Act, uplifts to fines and penalties, cloud-based dispatch systems and an increased emphasis around the safeguarding of school age children.

The Licensing Authority has consulted with known local training providers along with Cardiff Hackney Carriage Association on the proposal to adopt the SQA Level 2 Certificate in 'Introduction to the Role of the Professional Taxi and Private Hire Driver'.

Three responses were received in relation to the consultation all of which were in favour of the proposed SQA qualification.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members;

Members asked questions around the assessment, and whether each module needed to be passed, if there were multiple choice questions, resitting etc. Members were advised that drivers are taken through each unit one by one, 1 day a week over 3 weeks, then

they sit an online exam. There are 4 choices of answer for each question. They are able to re-sit the exam 3 times. Prior to the exam, after each unit has been taught they are assessed and they are given a revision booklet, if they do their homework they should pass the exam. However if Mr Russell feels they need more help, he will discuss this with them.

Members asked if drivers' records are checked before they sit the course. Officers advised that a driver will make an application in principle, submit all relevant documentation, if there is anything of concern then it would go to Committee, then they sit the qualification.

Members asked where the assessment is undertaken and were advised that the qualification is sat at the assessment centre with an invigilator present. Officers added that SQA apply an enhanced process whereby they are notified in advance of when the assessments are taking place and they can pay an unannounced visit.

Members asked if the transport of animals was covered in the qualification and were advised that this is covered in one of the modules. Members were also advised that if a driver has an allergy then he needs to advise of this by means of a Doctor's note and would be exempt from certain jobs.

Members referred to the module on safely transporting school age children and sought clarity on whether it was brought in 2018 and whether there had been a review. Members were advised that it was brought in 2018 and as it is relatively new, no review had been undertaken as yet.

Members asked about the pass rate and were advised that it was 60% and this needed to be achieved on each module.

Steven Russell – Head of training and Independent Taxi Training Company (ITTCO) addressed Committee and explained that he has looked at each Module in depth and they covered everything the BTEC did but also had the addition of Safeguarding, County Lines and Child Exploitation, which he considered extremely important. The qualification has been updated for the 21st century and Mr Russell invited Committee Members to sit the course and see how it is delivered.

RESOLVED: That the for the purposes of applying for the grant of a Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver's Licence, the production of the SQA Level 2 Certificate in 'Introduction to the Role of the Professional Taxi and Private Hire Driver' be accepted as satisfactory evidence of the applicant having undertaken a suitable training course.

11 Urgent Items (if any)

None received.

The meeting terminated at 10.30 am