



TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE NEWSLETTER DEC 2024



Happy Holidays from the Licensing Team!!



Stroud District Council will close on Tuesday 24th December 2024 at 1pm and will re-open on Thursday 2nd January 2025.

If you have any renewals or vehicle changes that need to be processed before Christmas and New Year, then please make sure you get your forms, documents and payments to us in plenty of time.



Stroud Goodwill Evening Friday 6th December 2024

Friday 6th December is Goodwill Evening in Stroud. Roads in the town centre will be closed to traffic between 5pm and 9pm. This year the road closure will be a bit different; London Road and Russell Street will remain open to all traffic.

King Street by the taxi rank will be closed as usual, and taxis using the rank should come up Rowcroft Retreat from Merrywalks and wait at the top of Rowcroft Retreat for customers. Then you can turn right and exit out through the road closure at the top of Rowcroft. Please don't turn left out of Rowcroft Retreat, to park on the normal taxi rank spaces, as there will be lots of pedestrians about making it unsafe to turn around in the road.

Kendrick Street will also be closed on Friday so taxis will not be able to use the taxi only bays there between 5pm and 9pm but the train station will be fully accessible.

If you drive along London Road or Russell Street during the Goodwill evening, please take care and watch out for pedestrians.

This year the Stroud Goodwill festivities are planned to continue into Saturday 7th December 2024 and there will stalls and activities during Saturday daytime and evening in King Street at the front of Five Valleys, and in Fawkes Place, up to 9pm. All normal routes through Stroud town will be open on Saturday and the taxi ranks will not be affected.

Temporary Closure Of Rowcroft Retreat In Stroud – Starting 20th Jan 2025



Gloucestershire Highways have notified us that there is an intended road closure for Rowcroft Retreat for the placement of scaffolding to repair the roof of Lloyds Bank. The dates of the closure are proposed as 20th January 2025 up to 18th April 2025. The taxi bays in King Street will not be affected but taxis will not be able access through Rowcroft Retreat. We have asked that the loading bays on the other side of the road in King Street are temporarily made taxis only throughout this period and that appropriate signage is in place.

Uber

We know that many of you have concerns about the impact Uber bookings are having on local trade. Uber hold private hire operator licences with our neighbouring authorities, South Gloucestershire Council and Gloucester City Council. This means that Uber are taking on many more drivers and vehicles from Gloucestershire and surrounding areas.

The Law

Taxi and private hire the legislation allows private hire operators, such as Uber, to take bookings for journeys anywhere in the country. There are no requirements for them to stay within the district where the Operator licence is held or for them to return to base after a journey. This means that an Uber vehicle can legally be in our district waiting for a pre-booking to come through the app



Private hires, such as Uber, are not allowed under taxi legislation to 'ply for hire'. This means they cannot take an immediate hire. For example, they cannot take a fare from someone waiting at a taxi rank, or they cannot wait outside a train station for a chance hiring that is not through the app. They should not be parking, dropping off or picking up from any of our taxi only bays in the district. Also, as private hire vehicles, they should not be attempting to drive through the taxi only section of Rowcroft Retreat which leads up to the rank on King Street in Stroud.

We have been in discussions with Gloucester City Council and South Gloucestershire Council about this. We have asked Uber to 'geofence' our taxi ranks, this means that if an Uber customer attempts to book a trip within the geofenced area, the app will direct them to a designated pickup point away from the rank. We have also asked the other Councils to share a message, from us, to all their private hire drivers, explaining that private hires cannot access Rowcroft Retreat leading up to the taxi rank in Stroud and also that they should not be stopping in any of our taxi only ranks and bays.

How to make complaints

If you want to report a complaint about a specific Uber vehicle, you can contact the relevant Council for them to investigate. Gloucester City and South Gloucestershire have policies where they issue penalty points to the driver for proven breaches of laws or conditions, such as parking offences or for not displaying plates correctly. If the driver gets over a certain number of points the driver is put before a review panel. To report a complaint the licensing teams at the other Councils need time, date, and location of the incident, registration number, plate number and details about what happened. Ideally, they want some photos as evidence, but only if you can take a photo without putting yourself at risk. If you are unsure about which authority the vehicle is licensed with then please contact us and we can help. It is always useful if we can be copied into any complaints so that we can monitor the problem in our area.

Here are the contact emails:

Gloucester City Council's licensing team – licensing@gloucester.gov.uk

South Gloucestershire's licensing team – licensing@southglos.gov.uk

Working for Uber

We have been asked if Stroud licenced drivers can work for Uber. To do this you would need to get a private hire driver licence and a private hire vehicle licence through either Gloucester City Council or South Gloucestershire Council. You cannot work for Uber using Stroud issued private hire driver and vehicle licences. This is because under private hire law the operator, vehicle and driver licence must all be issued by the same Council. As a driver you can be dual licensed with more than one authority, however, a vehicle can only be licensed with one authority at a time and cannot be dual licenced.

We have been told that Uber will take on hackney drivers and vehicles licensed outside of the area where Uber hold the operator licence. This is because hackneys are not required by law to work under an operator licence. However, Uber will not give the hackney drivers Uber app bookings within the district that issued them their hackney licences. This is because the Uber charging system may conflict with the hackney fares set by the local council. If you want to find out more, you should contact Uber direct.

A Reminder About Taxi Fares

The [hackney fare card](#) shows the rates set by Stroud District Council. These are the maximum rates that hackneys, licensed through us, can charge for any journeys within the district. They are the rates that the meters in hackney vehicles are set at. Drivers of hackney carriage vehicles commit an offence if they charge more than the Council set rates. A hackney driver can agree with a customer, before the journey commences, to not use the meter, and to charge an agreed fare instead, but that agreed fare must not exceed what the fare would have been if the meter was running. Hackney drivers, when working in our district, cannot charge the customer any extras not included on the fare card. For example, they cannot add extra to the fare to cover empty return journeys.

Additionally, hackneys cannot start the meter running until the journey commences and they should turn off the meter once the trip has ended. Extras cannot be added to cover time loading or unloading.

Private hire fares are not controlled by the Council and the private hire operator can set their own rates. They should agree the fare with the customer when the journey is booked. Private hires can have a meter but when the customer makes the booking it must be made clear if a meter is being used.

Reminder About Our Vehicle Age And Emissions Policy

Our vehicle policy has changed over the last year so here is a reminder of the new rules.

On first licensing a vehicle, or changing the vehicle on your licence; we will licence vehicles that are:

- Full electric vehicles, no age limit
- Plug in hybrid electric vehicles (ultra-low emission vehicles), no age limit
- Wheelchair accessible vehicles, no age limit but must be Euro 6 compliant
- All other vehicles, must be less than 7 years old from date of registration



On renewal, or transferring ownership of the licence, we will re-licence vehicles that are:

- Full electric vehicles, no age limit
- Plug in hybrid electric vehicles (ultra-low emission vehicles), no age limit
- Wheelchair accessible vehicles, no age limit – existing WAVs that are not Euro 6 can renew as long as they are still in good condition
- Euro 6 vehicles, no age limit
- Euro 5 vehicles, must be less than 10 years old, from 1 April 2025 Euro 5 vehicles will not be permitted to renew irrespective of age

Assistance Dogs – Guidance From Guide Dogs UK

Guide Dogs UK have asked us to share the guidance below.

Taxis and the door-to-door service they provide are an important mode of transport for people with disabilities. It is important that disabled people who use guide and other assistance dogs have confidence that they can hire a taxi, which will carry them and their dog at no extra charge.

Your legal obligations

Since 2001, drivers of licensed taxis and private hire vehicles have a duty to carry any guide or other assistance dog travelling with a disabled person, at no additional cost.

In 2006, further duties were introduced to make it unlawful for taxi providers to refuse or offer a lower standard of service to a disabled person, for a reason relating to their disability. For example, a taxi operator making a guide or other assistance dog owner wait longer for a vehicle than a passenger without a disability, because some drivers prefer not to carry an assistance dog.

The Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) Act 2022 amends the Equality Act 2010 to place duties on taxi and PHV drivers/operators. Any disabled person has specific rights and protections to be transported and receive assistance when using a taxi or PHV, without being charged extra. This requires drivers to provide reasonable adjustments for passengers with a disability. For more information on providing reasonable adjustments for customers with sight loss, please visit this [link](#).

Breaches of these duties can be reported to local licensing authorities, who can take appropriate action.

Cultural beliefs

Cultural beliefs can raise sensitive issues relating to dogs. However, religious grounds cannot be used to exclude assistance dog owners. The Equality and Human Rights Commission successfully reached agreement on this with several religious groups. Assistance dogs are working animals, not pets. They are trained to provide independence and mobility to their owners. Assistance dog owners are trained to maintain a high grooming standard of their dog, with attention to cleanliness.

Exemptions

The only grounds for any driver to decline to carry an assistance dog is through the approved medical exemption process. Drivers cannot refuse to take a person travelling with their assistance dog, unless they have a valid medical exemption certificate from the appropriate licensing authority, to show that they are unable to carry an assistance dog for health reasons. An exemption notice must be displayed in the vehicle when it is being driven by the exempted driver.

Useful Resources

Please visit the following links for more information:

[Supporting customers with sight loss](#)

[Sighted guide training](#)

[The law: carrying assistance dogs by taxi/PHV](#)

[EHRC guide to welcoming customers with assistance dogs](#)



Contact us:

Email licensing@stroud.gov.uk

Telephone 01453 766321

Web <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/business/licensing-permits/taxis-and-private-hire-licensing/>