





Licensing of black cabs



1. Should Norwich City Council place a limit on the number of black cab licences it issues?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes 	65.6%	63
No 	34.4%	33
	answered question	96
	skipped question	1

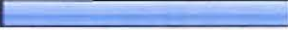

2. If the city council limits the number of black cab licences (a process which would be subject to consultation and would cost money) who should pay for this?

	Response Percent	Response Count
The taxi trade 	38.7%	36
The city council 	61.3%	57
	answered question	93
	skipped question	4

3. Should the city council place an upper age limit on black cabs when they are licensed for the first time?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes 	56.3%	49
No 	43.7%	38
If you have answered yes to the above question what should the age limit be?		45
	answered question	87
	skipped question	10

4. Should there be an upper age limit for black cabs to operate when they are already licensed?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes (please go to question 5) 	48.3%	42
No (please go to question 6) 	51.7%	45
	answered question	87
	skipped question	10



5. If you have answered yes to the above question what should the age limit be?

	Response Count
	40
	answered question 40
	skipped question 57

6. If you answered no, should any other criteria be applied in respect of the age of vehicles (eg more regular testing)?

	Response Count
	40
	answered question 40
	skipped question 57



7. Should the city council introduce a higher standard of exhaust emissions from black cabs?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		64.4%	56
No		35.6%	31
answered question			87
skipped question			10

8. If a higher standard is adopted what period of time should be given for existing licensed black cabs to meet the standard?

		Response Count
		64
answered question		64
skipped question		33

9. Do you think there is any other element of a knowledge test that should also be applied for black cab drivers?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		45.2%	38
No		54.8%	46
If you answered yes, please specify			40
answered question			84
skipped question			13

10. Are there any other requirements that a black cab drivers should satisfy before being granted a licence (eg language or numerical test)?

Response
Count

62

answered question 62

skipped question 35

11. Do you think anything else should be added to this black cab 'MOT'?

Response
Percent Response
Count

Yes  15.9% 13

No  84.1% 69

If you answered yes, please specify 10

answered question 82

skipped question 15

12. Use the below space to provide any additional and relevant information that you feel might be helpful for this consultation.

Response
Count

36

answered question 36

skipped question 61

Norwich Hackney Trade Association

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Ian Streeter
Senior Licensing Officer
Norwich City Council
BY EMAIL

30th April 2012

Dear Mr Streeter

Hackney Licensing Review

I write to give my Association's collective response to your survey now taking place. Our recommendations were formed at a general meeting of our members called earlier this month.

The hackney trade, by its character, has always been highly susceptible to national economic conditions. Earlier recessions have always hit the trade badly; but it has previously always rebounded when national factors improve. Everybody in our trade is agreed that this downturn, starting for us early in 2009, has been the deepest and longest in anybody's memory, and shows no signs of abating. The nature of recessions on the hackney trade is peculiar. Not only does demand reduce significantly, but at the same time supply increases also significantly. This partly comes about because everybody in the trade is self-employed. To try to maintain income drivers work more hours, in a trade where long working hours are traditional. Some drivers thinking of retiring shelve their plans. In addition there is always a bank of former drivers, who've left the trade in the past but have maintained their licences, who return because of pressures elsewhere in the economy. The transfer of drivers to hackneys from the private hire trade always increases in such times. To that can be added unemployed people made redundant from other businesses or whose incomes are under pressure and who see an easy opportunity in our trade.

The direct implications are that the city's rank spaces are now completely inadequate and there is much consequential traffic obstruction. In addition owners are often not replacing older vehicles with newer ones, as has been the normal practice. Incomes are drastically reduced for longer working hours.

We have three recommendations, in priority order.

1. To prevent the situation deteriorating further the council should place a temporary cap on hackney vehicle licenses at the present number. Several councils have now taken this approach, including most recently Watford. Measures should be taken to avoid a black-market in licenses forming, with owners leaving the trade being required to return their licenses to the council,

but allowing existing owners to transfer their license if changing to a different vehicle. The council could set a date, say two or three years on, when this policy should be reviewed. As a temporary policy brought about by exceptional economic conditions, any unmet need survey would not need to be as robust as for a permanent policy, and as such the costs might well be lower. Such costs as there are could be partially recouped by a levy on hackney vehicle license fees.

2. Various measures should be improved or introduced to make new hackney drivers' licenses harder to obtain. Accounts abound of some recent new drivers having an appalling lack of knowledge of the city and its surrounds and of lacking basic knowledge of how their wheelchair ramps work. The knowledge test should be made harder and should be fully computerised along the lines of the driving license theory test, with any additional costs falling on applicants. New entrants should be required to have passed the NVQ B-Tech qualification, which includes taxi and private hire knowledge and how to assist disabled people. Individuals with existing private hire drivers' licenses should be made to take the full hackney driving assessment and wheelchair test, as well as the knowledge one.
3. The term "exceptional condition" in the specifications should be replaced by a specific set of words with some actual meaning. We have accounts of testers saying that, in their opinion, any vehicle which passes the mechanical test is in this exceptional condition. This must be nonsense or else why would the words have been added in the first place? Whatever words are chosen must ensure that the vehicle condition must be something over and above the mechanical test.

My Association would welcome the chance to work with council officers to discuss these ideas in further depth in order to achieve effective, smooth and rapid implementation.

The reality is that much damage has already been done, but these measures should prevent the situation getting worse. If I can help further please let me know.

Yours sincerely

JOHN BOULTER

Diamond Knowledge Test System – Update 2

1 Introduction

The Diamond Knowledge Test System is an easy-to-use computerised system designed to test the knowledge of prospective taxi drivers, giving them a random test (or, rather, a test with random questions), automatically marking the test, and then optionally informing the candidate of their result.

The system can be loaded onto laptops or onto a network, which will allow several drivers to take a test simultaneously. If the system is loaded onto the Council network, the test could be taken on any PC in the Council. So, for example, if your Council has a One-Stop-Shop, a reception area (or similar), the test could be taken there.

As with all of our applications, the Knowledge Test System is tailored to the individual user's requirements. At present several users make use of this low-cost system, with no two systems being exactly the same.

2 Overview

In brief, the system will :

- Allow the user to add, amend and delete questions, the correct answer and a number of incorrect answers.
- Randomly select questions (making each test different) and pose them to the candidate in the form of a multiple-choice test.
- Calculate the score and display the result, optionally printing a pass (or fail) certificate.
- Automatically log the questions posed and answers given, in case of any query.
- Produce reports and analyses of results.
- Allow the user to set a pass rate for the different categories of questions.
- Offer answers in random order, so candidates cannot pass a list of numbered answers to others.

3 Incorporating a Suitability Test

Some users give all applicants a test as they initially apply for a driver licence, before they go through the various CRB and Medical processes.

This test will typically examine their understanding of the language, numeracy, usage of an A-Z etc., and, once this is passed, then they can continue the application process.

When the candidate takes the Knowledge Test, the system will ensure that a Suitability Test has been taken and passed before allowing the test to continue.

Examples of the types of questions posed for this are :

John Smith

Question 8/10 : Two passengers get into your vehicle and the fare is £9.40. When you arrive at their destination they each hand you a £5 note and ask if they can split the fare equally between them. What change would you hand to each passenger?

Your answer (click anywhere in the answer box)

- £0.40
- £0.60
- £0.50
- £0.30

Time Left = 8:28

Next Question >>

<< Previous Question

Finished

John Smith

Question 3/7 : You see the following notice in your office. "If you wish to get your car washed please use one of the following companies. Use "Super Clean" or "Quick Wash" in the week days. For interior cleaning use "Auto Vac" At weekends only use "Dave's Car Wash for both wash and interior cleaning". It is Saturday morning, where would you take your car for the interior to be cleaned?

Your answer (click anywhere in the answer box)

- Super Clean
- Dave's Car Wash
- Auto Vac
- Quick Wash

Time Left = 8:54

Next Question >>

<< Previous Question

Finished

John Smith

Question 2/7 : If someone asked you to pick them up from the airport at 15:25 hours and you knew the journey took 3 hours and 40 minutes, what time would you need to start your journey?

Your answer (click anywhere in the answer box)

11:35 hours

11:45 hours

11:25 hours

12:10 hours

Time Left = 8:30

Next Question >>

<< Previous Question

Finished

4 Setting up the Questions

There can be any number of categories of question as required, and the system can be tailored to select different numbers of questions from the different categories. Examples of some categories in use are :

Money & Finance

Paperwork

Using an A-Z

Hackney Carriage Policy

Private Hire Policy

General Policy

Local Knowledge

Points of Interest

Law

Council Conditions

Customer Care

Equality

Statutory Provisions

Highway Code

Road Signs

Some questions can optionally be phrased in alternative ways. For example, two examples of a local knowledge question are

John Smith

Question 1/6 : What is the shortest, most direct route from the Council Offices to the Police Station

Your answer (click anywhere in the answer box)

- Turn left onto Ash Tree Avenue, 3rd left into Wallington Road, right at The Green, right at the Bull & Bush Public House, left into High Street
- Turn right onto Ash Tree Avenue, 3rd right into Peters Street, left at the T-junction into Juniper Lane, 2nd left into Cotters Avenue, 1st right into High Street
- Turn right onto Ash Tree Avenue, 2nd right into Gatwick Avenue, 5th left into Richard Street, 2nd right into High Street.
- Turn left onto Ash Tree Avenue, 1st left into Thames Street, 3rd exit at the roundabout, turn left at the Dog & Duck, 2nd right, left into High Street

Time Left = 4:46

Next Question >>

<< Previous Question

Finished

John Smith

Question 6/6 : What would your destination be if you followed these directions - Start at the Council Offices, turn right onto Ash Tree Avenue, 3rd exit at the roundabout, at the T-junction turn left onto

Your answer (click anywhere in the answer box)

- Thames Street
- Oak Avenue
- Newlyn Road
- Rowberry Street

Time Left = 4:24

Next Question >>

<< Previous Question

Finished


Similarly, some Signage questions can also be phrased alternatively. Again two examples are

John Smith

Question 25 : What does this sign mean?

Your answer ..

- Dual carriageway ends
- Cycle route ahead
- Road narrows on both sides
- Road widens ahead



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Next Question >>




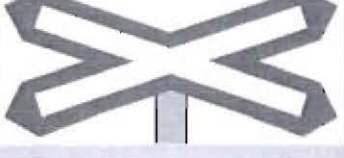
<< Previous Question

Finished

John Smith

Question 22 : Which of the following signs means level crossing with barrier or gate

Your answer...

- 
- 
- 
- 

Time Left = 9:41

Next Question >>

<< Previous Question

Finished


Some users display photographs of points of interest and pose questions relating to these. An example of this is ...

John Smith

Question 3/7 : Where would you find this church ?

Your answer (click anywhere in the answer box)

<input type="checkbox"/>	St. Peters Street
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lower Road
<input type="checkbox"/>	High Street
<input type="checkbox"/>	Roman Road



Time Left = 4:55

Next Question >>

<< Previous Question

Finished

We have several questions/answers available for your own use, if required.

5 Cost

The cost of tailoring a system to your particular requirements (similar to the examples given above) would be a one-off charge of £2,000. In addition, there is an annual 15% licence fee/software maintenance charge which allows you to run the software on any number of machines, and covers bug-fixes and updates as required. Note that all prices quoted exclude VAT.

The initial loading of questions can be made free of charge if the questions are recorded in an Excel spreadsheet (or similar), with the question in Column A, the correct answer in Column B, and the wrong answers in Columns C, D & E.

6 More Information

If this has whetted your appetite, we are happy to arrange a no-obligation demonstration at your offices to show you the system and how some users have tailored the basic system to their own particular requirements.

Alternatively, if you would like an evaluation CD to install at your leisure, please let us know.

You can contact us at :

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Email: licensing@diamondpeople.co.uk

<http://www.diamondpeople.co.uk>