

APPENDIX A

Baroness Vere of Norbiton
Minister for Roads, Buses and Places
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR
Web site: www.gov.uk/dft

Dear Council Leaders,

TAXI & PHV LICENSING – USE OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENCE REVOCATIONS AND REFUSALS (NR3)

The taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) sector has shown remarkable resolve in this unprecedented time, this would not be possible without those responsible for ensuring that the safety of passengers is maintained. I am aware that in many areas licensing teams are responding to the challenges COVID presents. I would like to extend my gratitude to those who are continuing to process licensing applications which is vital to the long-term sustainability of the sector.

As you will be aware, in July this year the Government published the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards to licensing authorities, aimed at safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. The Statutory Standards set out a range of robust measures to protect taxi and PHV passengers including the use of the National Register of Taxi and Private Hire Licence Revocations and Refusals (NR3) to facilitate information sharing between authorities. Authorities that are not sharing relevant and necessary information risk enabling those dishonest individuals that seek to enter or remain in the sector, by failing to disclose any previous licensing history.

When the Statutory Standards were published the Secretary of State wrote to all Council Leaders requesting an update on their consideration of the Statutory Standards by the end of January 2021. We are particularly keen to see all licensing authorities actively using NR3, as the effectiveness of the database depends on all authorities doing this. My officials have already written to yours, on 29 October (see attachment), highlighting the benefits of NR3 and urging licensing authorities that were not using the service to sign up and start using it as a matter of urgency.

I have been advised that your authority is one of the minority that has not yet activated an account to use NR3. I hope that this is an issue you have already begun to address. It is your statutory duty to ensure that your authority only licences drivers that are 'fit and proper' to be entrusted with safely transporting members of the public. I have heard of instances where a driver in one authority has been refused a licence for safeguarding reasons, only for their application to be accepted by another, in ignorance of a safety concern. Using NR3 will reduce the risk of such instances occurring in future, securing the safety of passengers and the reputations of the drivers who are overwhelmingly honest.

The vast majority of authorities are already members of the National Anti Fraud Network (NAFN), for these there will be no additional cost to use NR3. I understand that membership of NAFN also entitles licensing authorities to access their other data intelligence services, so the advantages of NAFN membership extend far beyond taxi and PHV licensing, supporting you in the delivery of other vital local government services. To discuss membership, you can contact NAFN via email on nafn@gov.uk or call [02030000000](tel:02030000000). I would therefore urge you to act now to ensure your authority is doing all it can to safeguard the users of taxi and PHV services.

Yours

BARONESS VERE OF NORBITON