

TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS GUIDE

It is our role to ensure that drivers and operators are “fit and proper” persons to transport members of the public and vehicles are maintained to a high standard.

It is very important if you have any concerns that you report these to the relevant agency as detailed below. Enforcement agencies have data sharing protocols in place which allow them to exchange information about complaints when a social pressing need exists.

Our aim, where sufficient information exists and falls within our scope, is to investigate every complaint in full. You can make anonymous complaints, although we may not be able to investigate or take your complaint further if we do not have sufficient information and are unable to contact the complainant to obtain clarification.

What we investigate

The types of complaints the Licensing Team deal with include:

- Plying for hire*
- Poor standards of driving (whilst being carried as a passenger)
- Overcharging
- Vehicle defects
- Failures to display driver/vehicle identification
- Drivers intentionally prolonging journeys
- Issues against an operator
- Inappropriate behaviour
- Vehicles licensed by other local authorities**

*Important Note: If you get into Private Hire vehicle without pre-booking it (that is- you stop it or find it in the street and have not pre-booked it through a licensed operator) you may not be covered by insurance and more importantly your safety may be compromised.

This is typically known as ‘flagging’ and drivers know they are breaking the law and committing an offence. If you are involved in an accident you will experience difficulty in claiming for any damages or injuries.

Often when customers flag a private hire vehicle they do not take note of the important vehicle and/or driver details and this makes it extremely difficult to investigate complaints and take the necessary enforcement action against the driver.

When you book a journey through a licensed operator, the company has a duty to maintain records and we will be able to obtain the necessary details to investigate the complaint.

**Vehicles licensed from outside our area do not necessarily fall within our scope, however it is important that where sufficient information exists we can identify that it is a genuine private hire/taxi vehicle and forward the information onto the relevant local authority.

Complaints where we are not the lead agency

There are a number of matters where the Council is not the lead agency. You may contact us about these matters using the form below but it is important that you also contact the relevant agency identified below as they have specific powers and responsibilities to deal with the matters.

- Crime in Progress (involving a taxi or private hire driver/vehicle please call 999)
- Criminal Complaint (e.g. discrimination, inappropriate behaviour, child and adult safeguarding issues, violence or theft, contact Northamptonshire Police on 101)
- Moving Traffic Offence (e.g. using a phone whilst driving, dangerous driving or speeding, contact Northamptonshire Police Drivewatch Hotline 0800174615)
- Illegal Parking (contact the parking enforcement agencies)
- Civil Matters such as fare and breach of contract disputes.

Where a pressing social need is identified, the lead agency will make the Licensing team aware of the issue and provide us with relevant information to allow appropriate licensing action to be taken.

It is also important to note that the Licensing Team may be able to deal with a complaint that other agencies are not be able to pursue.

Information to provide when making your complaint

We would ask that you provide as much detail as possible, for example this might include:-

Date and Time of Incident	Driver Details e.g. description, driver licence number
Vehicle Colour	Vehicle Registration
Vehicle Licence Number	Journey Start and End Location
Operator Company e.g. the Company you phoned to make the booking	

If you only have limited information it is still important that you submit your complaint as these can often still be investigated.