

LGA update

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Levelling Up White Paper

- The Government's Levelling Up White Paper contains a proposal to transfer control of taxi and private hire vehicle licensing to both combined authorities and upper-tier authorities.
- Received assurances that councils will be closely consulted on these proposals.
- Highlighted the need to consider reforms holistically and the impact this might have on licensing more widely.

Private Members Bills

- Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act
- Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) Bill

Taxi licensing guidance

- The Home Office has published its taxi licensing guidance to reflect changes around the right to work checks. A statutory instrument will be tabled on April 6th to correct the associated forms.
- Tax conditionality: the tax check service is now live and HMRC has published guidance to support councils.
- We are aware that some councils have faced difficulties with the new tax check service. If you experience any issues, please email: compliancepolicyisbc@hmrc.gov.uk

Wider taxi work

- DBS update service: we are working with colleagues across Government to try and find a resolution to this issue.
- Working on a guidance note on the importance of information sharing. Colleagues at the NPCC will share with this with the police.
- The best practice guidance from DfT has now been published. We will be reviewing the consultation and responding in due course.

Gambling licensing

- We have submitted evidence to the Gambling Act Review, focusing on the need for greater powers for councils to be able to approve, or reject, applications for local premises.
- LGA Safer and Stronger Communities Board lead members have written to the Gambling Minister, Chris Philp MP, to reiterate our priorities for the Review and to share case studies.
- We will respond to the Gambling Act Review White Paper when it is published.

Pavement licensing

- LGA lobbied hard to secure new burdens funding for the temporary regime. Year 2 funding should be distributed soon.
- Hoping to see some improvements in the permanent regime, such as an increase in fees, a longer consultation and determination period, and improved enforcement powers.
- Expecting this to form part of a Levelling Up Bill, which will be brought forward in May.
- Also expecting the temporary regulations to be extended to September 2023.

Animal welfare

- The LAIA guidelines were updated in February. We highlighted the importance of improved communication going forwards.
- DEFRA has launched a consultation on improving microchipping regulations. The deadline for responses is 17th May.

Kept Animals Bill

- This Bill includes provisions to deliver a number of reforms relating to kept animals, including farm animals, companion animals, and kept wild animals.
- For companion animals, the Bill seeks to address the issue of illegal imports by introducing powers to apply restrictions to imports of certain pet animals on welfare grounds through secondary legislation. The Bill also decreases the number of pets that can travel in a single non-commercial movement.
- For kept wild animals, the Bill prohibits the keeping, breeding, sale and transfer of primates without a specific primate licence. The Bill also amends the Zoo Licensing Act 1981 to increase penalties for non-compliance and provide local authorities with better tools for enforcement.

Online forms

- Government Digital Service has agreed to keep the forms live for local authorities to use until they have developed a suitable replacement. Funding is in place until end of March 2023.
- The LGA, IoL and NALEO are working closely with the Home Office and GDS and pressing hard for progress and clarity for councils.
- A team has now been appointed at the GDS to take this work forward.

LGA support offer

- We are updating our e-learning module which will cover the principles of being on a licensing committee.
- We will also be developing a series of short, interactive videos in which we provide various licensing scenarios for members to work through.
- We hope to have these resources ready for after the May elections.
- To complement this, we are running a second Licensing Leadership Essentials Course in October in Coventry.

Questions?

- If I can ever help with anything, please get in touch – jade.hall@local.gov.uk