

DATE

Your Ref:

Our Ref:

Regulatory Services Manager
City of Edinburgh Council
249 High Street
Edinburgh
EH1 1YJ

Taxi Examination Centre
33 Murrayburn Road
EDINBURGH
EH14 2TF

Dear Sir,

In relation to the request for information about reported crime in relation to taxis and PH operators.

Police Scotland are responsible for vetting all drivers who apply for the grant or renewal of Taxi or Private Hire Car Vehicle or Drivers Licence in Edinburgh. The checks carried out include interrogation of our Criminal History System, Police National Computer (including Driving Licence check), Scottish Intelligence Database and Protection of Vulnerable Groups Database.

Applications that have previous records on any of these systems are passed to the Cab Inspector for consideration. The Cab Inspector assesses the information and decides whether Police Scotland are going to object to the grant or renewal of the respective licence.

In instances where the offences identified are less serious, these cases are monitored until a disposal is received from the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service. If however the offences identified are deemed to present a serious threat to public safety, Police Scotland will submit a request to the City of Edinburgh Council for the immediate suspension of the relevant licence.

Regular enforcement activity is carried out by Divisional Officers and more recently a focussed enforcement programme has been undertaken by Road Policing Officers in partnership with vehicle examiners from the Taxi Examination Centre.

Between May and October 2019, the enforcement carried out resulted in the following numbers of licensed vehicles being stopped and faults/offences identified.

Month	Taxi's Stopped	Faults/Offences Identified	PHC Stopped	Faults/Offences Identified
May	123	26	71	17
June	41	14	81	29
August	34	4	50	17
September	30	7	25	7
October	53	6	37	4

It would prove extremely difficult and time consuming to provide an accurate picture in relation to reported crime for the Taxi and Private Hire Trade. There are many variables including whether if the licence holder discloses their occupation when an incident occurs whilst they are not working (Domestic Abuse etc.). In addition, the onus is placed on licence holders by the City of Edinburgh Council Licensing Conditions to disclose offences within 10 days of conviction. At present, every driver is vetted at least once in a three year period. Details of licence holders who are subject of complaints from members of the public or following contact with police officers are also checked to ensure they have no additional convictions or pending cases.

There is also an awareness that there is some concern from some members of the Taxi trade regarding the level of enforcement activity in the city centre in early hours of Saturday and Sunday morning. During these periods of peak demand it is not unreasonable to suggest that an expectation of the general public would be that these resources are best deployed to focus on public disorder and public safety.

The role of the CAB Inspector is unique to Edinburgh, West Lothian and Midlothian. It provides a centre point for all enquiries from these licensing areas and allows for immediate action to be taken when faced with licence holders who have committed serious offences. In many instances, these offences would remain undisclosed until the relevant licence is renewed. The consistency in approach applied by the Inspector in relation to all incidents, new licenses and renewal applications has seen the development of a longer term strategy with a view to improving public safety, driving standards and licence holder behaviour.

Yours faithfully

Chief Inspector Murray Starkey

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