

Private Hire Board



by **EDDIE TOWNSON**
Chairman Private Hire Board

I have spent the last few months talking with **The PCO** on the subject of medical assessments, the trade is losing good drivers over non-existent medical problems. **DVLA Group 2 medical requirements** are typically used for large vehicles such as buses, lorries, etc.

DVLA Group 2 was never intended for smaller vehicles, but with the absence of any other medical requirement it has been adopted for **London licensing**. Since that time **C1** classification of licence has been classed as **Group 2** and this is different – it allows for an individual assessment of a particular problem i.e. Diabetes.



Properly controlled diabetes should not stop a driver from working

Properly **controlled diabetes** should not stop a driver from working and **The Campaigners for Rights of Injecting Diabetic Private Hire Drivers (CRIDPHD)** has been working tirelessly to get this approved by **The PCO**. The following information, which makes interesting reading, has been extracted from their newsletter.

Since the writing of Newsletter 2, back in June of this year, the successful campaigns throughout Great Britain to win **Taxi / PH licenses** has continued. The latest and very much the most satisfying so far is that of **Pat Flynn** co-founder of **CRIDPHD**.

After a **five year fight against Berkshire Council**, she attended an **Executive Licensing Committee** meeting last week where they overturned their previous ban and invited **Pat** to re-apply for her **Taxi licence**. Pending her medical with the council's occupational health Doctor, which she is confident of passing, **Pat should be back driving her Taxi before Christmas**.

Gordon Rooney of Renfrewshire Scotland was also **granted his Licence in September** and as far as I know is now plying his trade on the streets. I am awaiting the results of other driver's appeals from around the country.

Unfortunately **The Public Carriage Office (PCO)** in **London** has not been as 'fast' at coming to a decision yet and the drivers in the Metropolitan area still have not been given any concessions. The news is not all grim though. At a meeting kindly arranged by **The GMB** at their Regional Offices in North London on 6th October, **PCO Head of Standards Officer Alexander (Sandy) Kennedy** said, that he hoped that by the end of the year, (yet another one), that **The PCO** would be able to come to a conclusion to this issue.

Apparently they required clarification of the **Secretary of States Medical Advisory Panel's recommendations** that **C1 medical criterion could be applied as the necessary medical requirement for the issuing of Taxi / PH licenses**.

We know that **Professor Brian Frier**, Head of that Panel has now responded to this requested clarification. I shall be pressing **Mr Kennedy** as to **The PCO's conclusions** by the end of this month.

28th October saw the closing date for the submission of responses to the Draft Consultation Document for **Best Practice Guidance for Taxi / PH vehicles**, to be issued by the **Department for Transport (DfT)**, sometime soon, when, well,

watch this space, wherein it is **advocating C1 medical criteria be the accepted standard to be applied by Local Licensing Authorities**.

Our response was of acceptance of this with a provision that the **DfT** would oversee the implementation of this standard and that it was complied and adhered to by all the Local Authorities of Great Britain. **Unfortunately**, as it stands, this document will not be a mandatory ruling and discretion as to its recommendations and guidance **will still lay with the Local Licensing Authorities**.

Diabetes UK are supporting us wholeheartedly in their response to the **DfT**, calling upon the **DfT** to indeed make **C1 standard a mandatory requirement**. A copy of this, I am sure, can be obtained from **Diabetes UK** should you wish to read it. It is a very hard hitting response and highlights the evidence based arguments we have long been fighting for **Proper, individual medical assessments**.

Our campaigning is not yet over

Our campaigning is not yet over it will continue until we see fit and healthy insulin injecting diabetic **Taxi / PH driver's** being issued licenses all over Great Britain without the need to appear before Executive Committee's at appeals, without the need to go before the Courts to be recognised as **'FIT AND PROPER'** to hold our licenses.

When this fight is won we then need to help other diabetics campaigners win the same recognition for **Individual Medical Assessments**, such as **Britain's Emergency Ambulance Drivers** and **HGV drivers**, that is to name but two of the professions who still have blanket bans imposed upon them under the driving umbrella.

The **DDA**, back in 1996, made it **illegal to discriminate against disabilities**. It seems that diabetes however you as an individual are affected by it can still be used to discriminate us from others. This was wrong for us and it is certainly wrong for others.

This strongly shows that the will to contest the regulations where a regulation appears to be wrong is always worthwhile, hopefully **The PCO** will join the enlightened and allow drivers with diabetes to drive.

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Joining associations and organisations as members gives the opportunity to fight these problems and show strength through unity.

On another subject, **The Private Hire Board, The LPHCA and The GMB** are all working very hard to rectify **Red Route, Parking, Bus Lane** and other problems that exist at the moment. The very passengers who need door to door transport most, the disabled, elderly and those with special needs, previously only used **Licensed Taxis for Taxicard, Dial a Ride, Capital Call, etc.**, for their transportation. Many of these passengers are now using **Licensed Private Hire** for these services.

Where **Tfl** control **Red Routes / Bus Lanes** and many of the above passengers now use both **Licensed Taxi's and Private Hire** for transportation, it could be argued that **Tfl** are in fact inadvertently discriminating against the very passengers they try most to help.

As we still get ticketed for dropping on **Red Routes** and remain prohibited from using **Bus Lanes** journey times will take longer and the **Private Hire Driver's** job is made unnecessarily harder. **Licensed Taxis** are rightly exempted so **Licensed Private Hire** must become exempted too.

Eddie Townson

Free Member's Helpline

The **LPHCA** has financed a free helpline for members with **Croner Consulting** one of the biggest consultancy companies in the U.K.

Full details of how the helpline works has now been sent to all members with a membership card. Any members who have not yet received a membership card, please contact us.

The 'free to member's helpline' will deal with:-

- Tax & PAYE
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- Consumer Protection
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