

Licensing Complaint Statistics

Background

The licensing authority is responsible for the granting and enforcement of 'taxi' licences.

When a 'taxi' complaint is received it is recorded on the Councils database under one of four categories:

- Operator
- Vehicle
- Driver
- Driver – Inappropriate Behaviour

Examples of how complaints are allocated to each category

- *"I telephoned Example Cabs and booked a taxi to take me to the train station but the taxi did not arrive".* – This would be recorded as an Operator complaint
- *"I was driving behind taxi number 1234 and his right rear brake light is not working"* – This would be recorded as a Vehicle complaint
- *"I was travelling in taxi number 4321 and he charged me £10 for a journey which normally costs me £7"* – This would be recorded as a Driver Complaint.
- *"I was travelling alone late at night in the back of taxi number 5678, during the journey the driver pulled over and asked me to get in the front passenger seat, I told him no. At the end of the journey he asked if he could have my phone number, I told him no. The driver made me feel uncomfortable about travelling alone".* – This would be recorded as the more serious category of Driver Inappropriate Behaviour.

In order to produce statistical data for this report, the licensing officer reviewed the number of 'Driver' and 'Driver – Inappropriate Behaviour' complaints received by licensing for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2021.

Each complaint was assessed to see if CCTV would have assisted in the investigation in to the complaint.

The first requirement is that the incident which lead to the complaint being made would have to have happened inside the licensed vehicle so that it would have been captured on in-car CCTV.

Complaints which were solely regarding allegations that the vehicle was believed to be speeding, or the driver was not taking the most direct route were discounted as CCTV would not record the speed or direction of travel.

Complaints regarding disputes over the fare are included in the figures on the basis that any in-car CCTV system would have the ability to record audio and would capture the conversation between the driver and passengers.

Complaints which were resolved through investigation, regardless of the outcome, are also included in the figures as it is reasonable to expect that the ability to review CCTV would have meant that the investigation would have been concluded sooner, saving officer time.

The outcome of the investigation in to the complaints have not been included in the report but it should be noted that not all complaints resulted in formal action being taken against a licensed driver.

In most cases, without CCTV, a complaint is between 2 individuals, the driver and the passenger, and the investigating officer must consider both parties version of events without any evidence to support either side.

There were also a number of complaints where the complainants' version of events were shown to be inconsistent or the complainant would not engage with investigating officers.

False or exaggerated complaints can and do happen. The effect of a complaint on a driver's ability to work and earn a living can be immediately impacted by suspension or revocation of their licence even if the complaint is investigated and found to be malicious and unfounded and the licence is reinstated, the driver would not be able to work during the investigation and would therefore suffer a financial loss.

It is important to make the point that where present, the benefits of protecting an individual due to the presence of an in-car CCTV system are as much for the driver as they are for the passenger.

In order to allow for a comparison between the 'costs versus the benefits' of installing an in-car CCTV system, the complaint categories have been kept separate. The benefits of resolving a high number of 'minor' 'Driver' complaints (where the outcome is unlikely to result in the suspension or revocation of licence) may not be perceived to outweigh the cost to the licence holder of installing a CCTV system. Equally, the benefit of reviewing CCTV in order to evidence and resolve an allegation of a serious

offence to or by a driver or passenger may well exceed the financial cost of installing a CCTV system.

Results

The number of complaints the authority received during the period 1 April 2018 - 31 March 2021, which were assigned to the category of 'Driver Complaint'.

2018/19	86
2019/20	126
2020/21	51
Total for the period	263
Number where CCTV would have been beneficial	31 (11.79%)

The number of complaints the authority received during the period 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2021, which were assigned to more serious category of 'Driver – Inappropriate Behaviour'.

2018/19	5
2019/20	4
2020/21	1
Total for the period	10
Number where CCTV would have been beneficial	5 (50%)

Combined figures

Combined total of complaints received 2018-2021	273
Combined total of complaints where CCTV would have assisted	36 (13.19%)