



## **Update on the Safety, Equality and Regulatory Understanding Assessment and English Language Requirement for London Private Hire Vehicle Drivers**

This notice supplements [TPH Notice 01/23](#).

Private hire vehicle (PHV) drivers play an important role in London's transport system and it is essential for public safety and quality of service that they can understand their regulatory obligations and communicate in English at an appropriate level.

In 2016 we introduced an English Language requirement for London PHV drivers with transitional arrangements in place to allow them time to comply.

In July 2020, the Department for Transport (DfT) published [Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards](#) to further enhance the safety of taxi and private hire passengers. One of these Standards was for licensing authorities to test the oral and written English language proficiency for drivers. Another was for drivers to undertake safeguarding training to help them recognise and know what to do in the event of issues such as child abuse and county lines exploitation.

In September 2021 we changed how we assess the English language requirement in response to the DfT Statutory Standards and we introduced a Safety, Equality and Regulatory Understanding (SERU) assessment for London PHV drivers.

The SERU assessment tests a driver's understanding of safeguarding, equality and disability awareness as well as awareness of their regulatory obligations more generally. Questions in the assessment are based upon a [PHV Driver's Handbook](#) which is published [online](#).

In November 2023, the DfT published updated [Best Practice Guidance](#) for licensing authorities which recommends that taxi and private hire drivers should be trained in disability awareness and/or have their knowledge and skills assessed.

Transitional arrangements were put in place and extended to allow drivers time to comply with the ELR and SERU requirements - please see TPH Notices [14/21](#), [14/22](#) and [01/23](#).

New applicants for a London PHV driver's licence have been required to take and pass the ELR and SERU assessments in order to be licensed since 1 April 2023. The dates by which existing London PHV drivers are required to take and pass the ELR and SERU assessments (as set out in the relevant regulations) are as follows:

- those who did not provide ELR evidence by 30 September 2021 had to take and pass the SERU and ELR assessments by **30 September 2023**. We describe this as “Group 1”;
- those who provided evidence that they met the ELR but TfL deemed that evidence unsatisfactory must pass the SERU and ELR assessment by **30 September 2024** (“Group 2”);
- those who provided satisfactory evidence that they met the ELR must pass the SERU assessment only by **31 March 2025** (“Group 3”); and
- those who applied for a licence after 1 October 2021 must pass the SERU and ELR assessment by **30 September 2024** (“Group 4”).

This notice is relevant to the drivers in Group 1 – those drivers that had to take and pass the SERU and ELR assessments by 30 September 2023 but did not do so. The majority of drivers in Group 1 have taken and passed the ELR and SERU assessments and have received written notification that they are compliant. No further action is required by these drivers.

However, there are some drivers within this group who have not taken or passed the ELR and/or the SERU assessments. It is important that these drivers take steps to do so as soon as possible in order to become compliant.

We have gathered valuable data and feedback via the process of administering the assessments so far and in the light of that information and experience we have already made some adjustments to the SERU assessment. For example, we continually review the question database and make amendments where questions prove to be confusing to a large number of drivers. In the light of the feedback we have gathered, we also now intend to trial the way SERU assessments are carried out.

The SERU assessment is not and has never intended to be a memory test. A number of drivers have fed back to us that, in an assessment environment, it can be difficult to recall precise answers without referring to the Handbook.

We therefore intend to trial making the PHV driver handbook available for drivers to refer to during the SERU assessment i.e. an open-book SERU assessment. This will allow drivers to focus more on critical thinking, scenario evaluation and problem solving and less on simply recalling facts, information and technical terms. This is consistent with our overall objective, that drivers know how to act in the light of their obligations, rather than ensuring that drivers are able to produce the right answers (using the correct technical language) in a test.

We will actively monitor the SERU assessment trial and decide whether any changes should be rolled out to all drivers who have yet to take the SERU assessment. We anticipate that it will take several months to conduct the trial and consider the impact.

All drivers should be aware of their obligations to pass the SERU and ELR assessments. TfL is keeping under active review what steps it should take, and when, in relation to those drivers who do not satisfy those requirements.

While we are trialling the open-book SERU assessments, or any other changes we might consider appropriate, we will not take licensing enforcement action against

Group 1 drivers on the grounds that they have failed to pass the SERU assessment, except as explained in the next paragraph. Although we are not proposing any changes to the ELR at this stage, while we are trialling the SERU open-book assessments, for administrative purposes, we also will not take licensing enforcement action against Group 1 drivers who have so far failed to pass the ELR assessment except as explained in the next paragraph.

We will be contacting the affected Group 1 drivers in the coming weeks to make an appointment for an open-book SERU and/or ELR assessment. If you receive a letter from us, it is important to respond promptly and make every effort to attend your assessment. Failure to respond or attend the assessment may result in licensing enforcement action being taken which may include the revocation of your licence.

In the meantime, drivers in all groups should prioritise compliance with these requirements as soon as possible.

If a driver's licence has expired or is due to expire before they have taken and passed the ELR and SERU assessments, it will not be renewed until such time as the driver meets the applicable requirements.

We recognise that English is not the first language of many London PHV drivers and we remain available to support and assist drivers and applicants. The questions in the SERU assessment are about how PHV drivers should behave in the course of their ordinary working life. We also recognise that taking and passing assessments can be intimidating. However, we hope that drivers will not be unduly concerned about the process and there are various online resources, described below, to help them in their preparation.

We have made available a number of online resources to support drivers and applicants. As well as the PHV driver handbook, we have produced an [online assessment guide](#) which covers every part of the Handbook in detail, with a Knowledge Check at the end of each section. There is also a section on "what to expect" which explains the assessment process with screenshots taken from the assessment centre so candidates know what to expect on the day.

In addition to this, our online [Safeguarding Awareness course](#) is an important tool to help all licensees and applicants understand the role that they have to play in the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. We strongly recommend that this course is completed by all existing licensees and new applicants.

We are aware that many London PHV operators and PHV driver representative groups also offer free training for drivers to help them prepare for the ELR and SERU assessments.

More information can be found by visiting [tfl.gov.uk/ph-language](https://tfl.gov.uk/ph-language) and [tfl.gov.uk/tph-seru](https://tfl.gov.uk/tph-seru).

Our driver assessment guides can also be found by scanning the QR codes below.

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*For previous Notices and additional licensing information, please visit [tfl.gov.uk/tph](https://tfl.gov.uk/tph)*



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English Language Requirement



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