

# Council's licencing practises driving down private hire wages



## Urgent action is needed, warns GMB.

The City of Wolverhampton Council has granted almost 90 per cent of all new private taxi licenses issued for the entire Midlands region so far this year, a new study shows.

GMB Union, which obtained the figures through a Freedom of Information request, has called on Wolverhampton Council to do more to protect the living standards of drivers.

The data reveals Wolverhampton issued a whopping 8,563 licences in the first five months of 2024 – more than 87 per cent of the new licences issued by some of the largest authorities in the East and West Midlands.



Wolverhampton issued nearly five times as many licences as Birmingham – despite being just one fifth the size.

GMB has sounded the alarm after workers in the industry have reported wages being driven down by excessive competition.

Wolverhampton Council became the first in the UK to crack down on Private Hire vehicles displaying signage on doors in an attempt to curb bogus taxis.

**Kate Gorton, GMB Organiser, said:**

“Wolverhampton’s private hire licence dominance is a well-documented phenomenon.

“But the fact remains that Private Hire Licenses’ give thousands of working people their income every month, including GMB members across the Midlands.

“More and more drivers report a flooded marketplace is pushing down income.

“The imbalance between supply and demand is meaning drivers are waiting for longer between jobs and are forced to compete with inflated competition.

“Wolverhampton bosses rightly point out barriers to capping application – but we’ve got one council essentially issuing licences for the rest of the whole region.

“The saturation of the market threatens the entire industry.

“We need urgent action to ensure standardisation across licencing authorities, in terms of price, testing and timescales and Wolverhampton has a key role to play in making sure that happens.”

*Response to Freedom Of Information Request by GMB Union from some of the largest licencing authorities in the Midlands.*

*Private Hire Licenses oblige drivers to operate though a licenced booking operator (such a Uber), unlike Hackney Carriage Licenses.*

Council	No of Private Hire licences issued 01/01/24 – 31/05/24
Wolverhampton	8,563



<i>Birmingham</i>	<i>277</i>
<i>Solihull</i>	<i>239</i>
<i>Walsall</i>	<i>194</i>
<i>Dudley</i>	<i>117</i>
<i>Leicester</i>	<i>76</i>
<i>Telford and Wrekin</i>	<i>70</i>
<i>Nottingham</i>	<i>70 (combined Hackney &amp; PH licences)</i>
<i>Sandwell</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>Gedling</i>	<i>47</i>
<i>Lincoln</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>Coventry</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Mansfield</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Derby</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Charnwood</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Oadby and Wigston</i>	<i>2</i>

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