

# Wolverhampton's 'license factory' creaking at the seams, warns GMB.



**Five month waits for license renewal are being reported.**

GMB Union has today called on Wolverhampton City Council to act urgently to fix the council's private hire licencing system.

The warning comes as drivers have raised unprecedented delays in the council's licensing system, with some drivers waiting as long as five months for simple license renewals.



GMB has reported that drivers are out of pocket as unanswered emails and hour long waits on the phone leaves them unable to get updates on license applications.

Once the badge or plate expires, drivers are unable to work until it is renewed. While six month emergency extensions are being issued in some cases, providing the driver meets a set criteria, this is unsustainable and adding to the uncertainty drivers are already experiencing in the sector.

The news comes after it was revealed almost 90% of new licences issued by some of the biggest councils in the Midlands **were issued by Wolverhampton**.

The union is now calling for new powers for the West Midlands Combined Authority to intervene when councils fail to meet fair licencing timelines.

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

“Wolverhampton have built a private hire licence factory which is now creaking at the seams.

“It's becoming unsustainable and hard-working drivers are being forced to pay the price.

“Our members are too often being left in the dark, without clear advice or timelines. That means sky high costs for them, or even being forced out of the business altogether.

“If council bosses can't handle the workload they've created for themselves, then questions need to be answered about why one authority has been allowed to issue 8,563 licences in the first five months of last year.

“If Wolverhampton Council bosses can't sort the mess, then it's time for their licensing powers to be passed to the West Midlands Combined Authority.

“We need answers, and quick”.

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