



Covid-19 Licensing Response

Advice and guidance for current licence holders and new applicants on changes to our Licensing service

This guidance is for current licence holders and anyone planning to apply for a new licence. It explains the changes we are making to our Licensing services to help minimise the disruption caused to licence holders by Covid-19. It is of course subject to change at short notice in the event of a further change of circumstances.

Everyone has a role to play in limiting the spread of Covid-19. Licence holders, including taxi and private hire car drivers, are reminded to follow Government advice including advice on isolation if you have symptoms and on social distancing particularly if you or a family member are in the vulnerable groups.

General Guidelines on Changes to the Licensing service

1.1 Face to Face Contact

We are not currently offering face to face contact at any of our licensing offices so we would ask you not to come in person. This includes the Fleet office at Kittybrewster.

1.2 Submitting Applications

We are asking customers to only submit **essential** applications or paperwork. If necessary, your application should be sent electronically to licensing@aberdeencity.gov.uk.

Your application should be signed. Any necessary documentation should accompany the application. If you do not have scanned/electronic copies of documents, you can provide photographs. Images of documents must be clear and legible.

Once we receive your application, we will review it and contact you in due course to arrange payment. Please do not send us cash.

You can find electronic copies of our applications at:

<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/business-and-licensing/licences-and-permits>

If you are applying for a taxi or private hire car driver's licence, we will also contact you with specific instructions on providing your right to work documentation unless you have already provided us with this previously.

Please be aware that it may take some time to review and process your application. **You should expect most applications to take the statutory timescale of 9-12 months to process.**

Please be understanding with our team who will be doing their utmost to be of assistance during these unprecedented times

1.3 Committee and Board Meetings

Meetings of the Licensing Sub-Committee (in place of the full Licensing Committee) and the Aberdeen City Licensing Board are being reviewed and where meetings are required we will be taking measures to ensure that the national guidance is followed, this may mean remote attendance, or hearings by way of written submission, and we will be in touch with applicants/respondents directly in this regard.

Guidance for Existing Civic Government Licence Holders

2.1 Your Licence is Due to Expire

We appreciate that this is a time where some may be anxious or worried. We are aiming to minimise disruption as much as is possible.

Please ensure that your renewal application is submitted to us before your current licence expires. Please do so via licensing@aberdeencity.gov.uk per paragraph 1.2 above.

Guidance for Taxi and Private Hire Car/Driver Licence Holders

3.1 Vehicle Inspections

Vehicle inspections are currently suspended. Licences will temporarily not be suspended as a result of a lack of valid test, but licence holders should ensure that the vehicle remains safe for carrying passengers if intending to continue operating the vehicle meantime. Inspections will be reintroduced as soon as it is safe to do so.

3.2 ID Badges

ID badges will not be available at present.

3.3 Street Knowledge Test

Appointments for the street knowledge test will not be available at present.

Guidance for Liquor Licence Holders

Premises Licences

4.1 Premises Licences Food Takeaway and Delivery Services

Following the announcement by the UK Government regarding a relaxation of planning rules, the Licensing Board is supportive of licensed premises which wish to provide a food take away and food delivery service.

Where the premises sell food and are licensed for off sales of alcohol, the delivery of alcohol with food will also be permitted, subject to compliance with the appropriate provisions within the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005. Licence holders should refer to chapter 14 of the Board's Statement of Licensing Policy for more information:

https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2018-12/New%20Licencing%20Board%20Policy%20%2718%20WEB_0.pdf

Should the business wish to continue providing this service in the long term, the Board will require a major variation to the premises licence to include the activity within the Operating Plan, however, the Board will permit deliveries in the interim.

Question: If my pub is closed for a period of time because of the current coronavirus outbreak will the Licensing Board treat the licence as having ceased to have effect?

Answer: No, the Board's Policy document does however say that where premises are closed for six months then the licence will be reviewed. In the current circumstances however, the Board will take a proportionate and pragmatic approach and only deem a licence to have ceased to have effect if premises which close because of the current situation remain closed after normal business resumes throughout the country without any communication to the Board regarding the reasons for remaining closed.

4.2 Changes of Designated Premises Manager (DPM)

Premises licence holders will have a period of 28 days in which to intimate the departure of a DPM to the Board, and a period of 3 months in which to submit a variation to appoint a new DPM without the Premises Licence being affected.

Personal Licences

4.3 Personal Licence Holder - Training

Please do not leave booking a course to the last minute. We are aware of some training providers facilitating online courses.

Nevertheless, if you have been unable to complete the required refresher training by the relevant date the Board have agreed to allow an extension period of 3 months. This extension relates to both the date by which the training must be completed and the date by which evidence must be submitted to the Board. Please submit any evidence by way of e-mail to licensing@aberdeencity.gov.uk

4.4 Renewal

Renewal applications can be submitted at any time during the period from 12 months prior to the date of expiry up until the day before the date of expiry.

Occasional Licences

Question: I have submitted an application for an occasional licence which has not yet been granted. I wish to postpone it. Can I do this?

Answer: Yes, if you advise us immediately, we will allow you to amend the date of the event in the application to a later date. The application with the revised date on it will require to go through the consultation process in the normal manner.

Question: I have already been granted an occasional licence for an event taking place in the next three months. If I decide to cancel will I get my application fee back?

Answer: No, the fee covers the cost of processing the application and as it has already gone through the process the fee cannot be refunded. However, if you reschedule your event, please let us know so that we can notify statutory partners of your change of plan.

Question: We are a voluntary body and have an occasional licence for an event later this month. If we decide not to proceed with the event will it still count as one of the 12 occasional licences to which we are entitled in any one 12 month period?

Answer: If you notify us in advance of the event that it is not going ahead and that the licence will not be taking effect then it will not count towards one of your 12 licences

Question: Can I open my premises early for food outwith licensed hours?

Answer: Yes, subject to Government guidance on Covid-19

Guidance for Public Entertainment Licence Holders

5.1 Rescheduled Events

If you have already lodged a Public Entertainment Licence application and wish to re-schedule your event to another date(s), please email licensing@aberdeencity.gov.uk preferably with a note of your application and the name of your event to let us know your plans. If you do wish to have your event on another date you will not be charged by the Licensing Authority for the change of date.

5.2 It is not legally possible for the Council to extend the period of a public entertainment licence that has already been granted, so whilst we have discretion to change dates within the licence period, we cannot extend those dates.

Further Guidance

6.1 We will continue to update this guidance as necessary. If you have an urgent specific query you can contact us by email. licensing@aberdeencity.gov.uk Due to the anticipated volume of enquiries please be aware that it may take some time to respond but we will endeavour to answer all queries as quickly as possible.