

Complaint 1 – January 2016

Incident of reckless and dangerous driving by a licenced taxi driver

I want to report an incident of reckless and very dangerous driving by a Torbay licensed taxi driver.

Today 23/1215 time between 13:00 13:09. i was crossing the road just outside BHS with my daughter.

We were more than halfway across the road and almost near the curb when a speeding taxi driver appeared to drive at us we jumped onto the curb and out of the way. We were both clearly shocked and very shaken by the incident. It was distressing because I had a sensation of almost feeling the car as it very narrowly missed us. It appeared as if he was deliberately trying to run us down. Although I think his intention was speeding in towards the taxi rank lane which was empty of other taxis to pick up a fare. (this was indicated by the fact that once I had walk down towards the taxi rank he already had a gentleman in the car and was about to leave).

I was so distressed and shocked by his driving that I approached the person driving who had by now picked up a gentleman. I knocked on the window of his car and the gentleman opened the door. I explained to the driver that he was driving reckless and speeding in a built up area and that I am reporting him. He shouted at me to get off his car. His manner and behaviour was aggressive and in my view unsuitable and unnecessary.

A young man who witnessed the incident could see my level of distress and shock as I was so upset I couldn't even write down his number, fortunately between my daughter and the young man details were exchanged and he has offered his support as a witness to this shocking incident. He give me his telephone number and his email address. With CCTV footage in this area I am sure you will have a record of this extremely dangerous driving by the person.

Taxi driver details Reg: Y15PDJ.

Complaint 2 – February 2016

Speaking inappropriately to passengers. Received a lift from him recently and was talking lewdly about her daughter and then saying lewd things to the mother. Her daughter has had lifts with him before and refuses to get lifts with him now as made to feel so uncomfortable.

Another taxi driver (number given) has said that he also called another customer's wife a slag resulting in men looking for him to harm him.

Does not know Taxi Company or name of driver only know it is a taxi number 67 stationed on union street.

Complaint 3 – April 2016 - Hand Written – Attached at end of this document at Annex 1.

Complaint 4 – November 2016

Complaint from a Council Solicitor relating to an altercation over 'right of way' in Castle Road. There was limited room on the highway and space therefore only for one vehicle at any given time. Mr Johnston was the only vehicle travelling in his direction, whilst there were several (including a van) travelling the other way. The complainant was passing between parked cars when it was alleged that Mr Johnston drove straight at her. There was not room for two vehicles to safely pass through.

The complainant stopped her vehicle at which point Mr Johnston also stopped and turned off his engine. He (Mr Johnston) told her there was room and to move over. The complainant was clear that there was not room to pass without making contact. She (the complainant) got out of her vehicle to take the HC licence number of the Taxi. Mr Johnston's manner is said to have been aggressive and he was advised by the complainant that she considered his actions to be far below those expected from a licensed driver. Mr Johnstone continued to argue at which point the complainant identified herself as a Council solicitor and advised Mr Johnston that she would be putting in a complaint.

Mr Johnston also made a complaint to the licensing department, alleging that the Council Solicitor called him stupid and advised that he would lose his licence. The Council Solicitor strongly denied saying this and having viewed smart phone footage of the incident, Craig Noble (licensing officer) wrote to Mr Johnston giving words of advice.

The letter to Mr Johnston is attached as annex 2 below.

Complaint 5

Customer said that she was in a taxi on the way home from a night out on Saturday and another taxi overtook them doing around 60+ mph in a 30mph zone.

Complaint 6 – April 2017

Good afternoon; I am PC 2671 COLLINGS based at Torquay Police Station. On Saturday 1st April 2017 at approximately 1325hrs I was in company with another Police Constable driving an unmarked Police vehicle. As I approached Union Street from The direction of Castle Road I pulled out of the junction in order to turn left joining stationary traffic. A marked Taxi registration Y15 PDJ was to my right.

The driver was clearly not happy that a vehicle had pulled out in front of him into a yellow hatched box. The taxi drove forward in an aggressive manner stopping a short distance away from my vehicle. The male driver then began to gesticulate and point in an erratic manner towards me clearly not realising I was a uniformed Police Officer.

I stopped the driver on Union Street to offer words of advice in relation to his aggressive driving. The driver identified himself as Mr Philip JOHNSTON and provided me with a taxi licence number of LD0107. Mr JOHNSTON remained aggressive in his manner and at first refused to provide me with any form of identification.

This incident had been clearly witnessed by my colleague PC 159 METHERELL who also clearly observed Mr JOHNSTON'S aggressive and intimidating driving.

This is not the type of driving or behaviour expected of a professional driver and is clearly not the type of person suitable enough to be responsible for the carriage of passengers. Mr JOHNSTON clearly thought this behaviour was acceptable even after I had offered him words of advice. Mr JOHNSTON'S manner of driving was completely unacceptable.

What makes his behaviour even more concerning is that he is deemed to be a professional driver. I fear that the attitude and aggressive behaviour of Mr JOHNSTON on this occasion may be adopted by him on other occasions.

If you would like to contact me further about this incident please call 101 asking to speak with PC 2671 COLLINGS or contact me directly on my work number of xxxxxxxxxx. Kind regards PC 2671 COLLINGS

Complaint 7

Self-reported incident relating to an altercation with a van driver, whom Mr Johnston stated had been aggressive towards him but felt there may be a complaint made by the van driver. No such complaint ever followed and as such no complaint has been recorded against Mr Johnston and he has been advised that this is not a matter that has been considered as part of this particular investigation process.

Complaint 8 – July 2017

Whilst driving towards Torquay harbour, on 6/7/2017 I was undercut and blocked by a taxi at the Belgrade road traffic lights at approximately 19.25 - 19.30hrs. For some reason the taxi blocked the centre lane obstructing me from proceeding toward the lights. When I attempted to change lanes into the right, the taxi moved in front of my vehicle obstructing me again. After a few seconds of obstruction, he then drove all across the carriageway to the left hand side of the road and went up Belgrave road. I have no idea why this behaviour was displayed and find it concerning that this vehicle and driver are available for public hire. Unfortunately I did not get the taxi licence number.

Reg Number Y15 PDJ

Complaint 9 – September 2017

Conduct of taxi driver, deliberately driving towards children and a school teacher who was crossing the road, he made no attempt to stop, stating that we need to get out of his way he has right of way!

Teacher had to physically push pupils to safety. Had I not moved out of the way he would have continued driving into me! He then persisted to hurl abuse at the teacher in question and the students. He dropped his fare off and then came back up the street and hurled more abusive and threatening behaviour. He also contacted the school and was rude to the reception staff. He told our receptionist that he had done this before at another school! (Quite concerning)

Complaint 10 – October 2017

The incident occurred 12/10/2017 approximately 5:35pm. It was at the cross roads at the top of Tor Hill Road. The traffic was stationary at a red light and I cycled up the hill in the cycle lane and stopped at the junction, just beyond the cycle lanes give way lines. The cycle lane extends beyond the stop line for traffic to put the cyclist in clear view of drivers. The lights changed, and as I pedalled off, heading straight over the junction, the car at the front of the queue, who had stopped beyond the stop line but was still positioned well behind me, was driven at me with the drivers hand on the horn.

I instantly stopped and turned around to find out what was wrong. The car had stopped dangerously close to me. The car in question was a black Mazda 6 taxi. Registration plate Y15 PDG. The driver began to aggressively yell at me and I questioned him what was the issue. He then drove passed me and stopped in front of me telling me he had it all on camera. He then proceeded to get out his car and square up to me with his face in mine telling me I had hit his car and again he had it all on camera.

This is untrue as the camera footage will show. He was a man in his 40's or 50's with grey hair. With the driver still squaring up to me I went to take my phone out of my bag to record the confrontation as evidence but before I could remove my cycling gloves and unlock my phone he had got back in his car and sped off dangerously along Abbey Road.

Before I continued I allowed the car behind him to go around me. It was a gold/beige Honda Civic. The driver told me as he passed I should report the taxi driver but didn't stop to be a witness. I cycled over the junction to continue on my route and the driver of a black VW Golf offered to be a witness. I told him I didn't have the registration plate so felt I couldn't proceed with a complaint as there were no signs on the side to show who he was driving for.

It was then a group of 3 teenagers who had been stood on the opposite corner of the junction where the incident occurred told me they had seen it and memorised the plate. I stopped to take the details. By the time I had done this the VW Golf had left. I do hope the car had a dash cam installed as the evidence will be incriminating against the driver and show how aggressive he was. He created an incident out of nothing for no reason.

APRIL 2016

TORBAY COUNCIL
21 APR 2016
COMMUNITY SAFETY

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear Sirs,

I write with a serious complaint about one of your licenced taxi drivers, No. 67, who has been rude on the three occasions I've been in his car.

The first time he snapped at me not to put a shopping bag on the seat, that it should be in the boot. I explained I had delicate fruit + veg + bags tend to fall over in the boot + got a surly response.

The second time he had the same surly manner from the start, snapping 'Where to?' after I paid him I couldn't see the door handle in the dark to which I got - 'It's right in front of you' - nastily.

I tried to avoid him after that + stood to one side if I saw him + took the next taxi. This next driver said 'You didn't fancy that one then?' I said no he was rude + he said 'You're not the only one to avoid him!'

The 3rd time I got in his taxi by mistake not realizing it was the rude one. I sat in the back with my bags + he set off + then snapped 'Put your seat belt on' before I had a chance to do it. I tried to do but explained it was difficult while moving as I have shoulder + wrist problems. 'Is it done now?' he snarled. I again said I was trying but the belt locks when jerked by lurching along + jolts my joints.

To this he said 'It's no different moving to stationary' - very aggressively. At the end I paid him under his glaring gaze, got out + looked to check the cab number discreetly. He saw me do it + went crazy, shouting that I had broken the law. I tried to calmly explain again so as not to be aggressive back but he went completely over the top + shouted loudly 'You're a liar, you're a liar!' + drove off at a furious, dangerous pace.

I'm pretty sure his number was 67 + he was probably 40 ish with greying cropped hair + ear studs. (Sid Vicious lookalike with manner to match!) The last occasion was Wed 30th March, approx 5pm. I have been a while writing due to ill health.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

My Phone No. [REDACTED] but PIN. only please, if you call. Thank you.

Taxi Licencing,
Community Protection,
TOWN HALL,
TORQUAY.

P.T.O. →

BY HAND.

I have to say that almost without exception all the other taxi drivers in Torquay are really nice & helpful.

Annex 2 – Letter of advice following the incident described as Complaint 4 (above)

Dear Mr Johnston

Re: Driving Complaint

As you know you made me aware of a situation which took place on Castle Road, Torquay on the 10th November 2016. You stated that the other party has stated that she was a Solicitor for Taxi Licensing.

You stated in your original email to me that she caused a traffic jam for no reason as there was ample room for her to her through. I have had the opportunity to view the video footage which she took on her mobile telephone and I have to say that the room on the highway was limited and you were the only vehicle travelling in your direction whilst there were several other vehicles all travelling the opposite direction.

It seems to me the easiest and most courteous thing for you to do was to pull over and allow the other vehicles through particularly as one of the vehicles in the opposite queue of traffic was a van which obviously required more space than the cars.

As a professional driver you should be aware of the conditions on the road at all times. You should also be acting in a professional and courteous manner at all times, in all circumstances. I realise that you say she said things to you which you deemed inappropriate and I have taken this matter up with her; I must say she denies calling you stupid and saying anything about losing you your licence as she is not in a position to do this.

There is no real need for me to receive this sort of complaint about any driver and simple courtesy should always be shown to other road users. Please ensure that you act in a professional manner at all times.

Torbay Council expects the highest standards of professionalism and courtesy at all times under all circumstances from all of its Licensed Drivers. Should we receive any further complaints you may find the matter will be dealt with by the Licensing Committee.

Should you require any further information please contact the Licensing Office on the telephone number above.

Yours sincerely

Mr Craig Noble

Licensing Enforcement Officer

Licensing and Public Protection