

Notes from Interview

Interview date: 14/12/2023 at 1030 in the Licensing Department.

Present:

AS – Arjan Sahota

RH – Russell Hawkins

RB – Russ Boniface

RH asked AS if he had insurance with him for DK17 VND. AS said that he got asked for it at 0900 this morning which was too late to get it. RH showed AS an email from 6th December asking AS to bring them. AS had no explanation as to why he did not read this but said he had insurance on his laptop which was with him. RH requested that it be sent later that same day.

RH asked what had happened in respect of the records that had been requested while AS was away on holiday. AS replied that one of his drivers, Alfred, was due to go in a vehicle they know as MA71. The vehicle was involved in a crash so was not available. Should have gone into vehicle ending VNN but they gave him VND in error.

RH pointed out an email that RB sent on 6th November pointing out that the vehicle was unlicensed and asking if the vehicle was being operated under his platform. RH asked why AS had never responded to that question. AS had no answer for this.

RH asked if Debbie from his company was in charge while he was away and that they were in regular communication. AS responded that she was and that they did communicate regularly. RH pointed out an email dated 27th November she stated:

Upon speaking with Arjan regarding this he has assured me that the information here is incorrect and the driver was assigned to 2 vehicles on our system at the same time (DK17VNN, DK17VND)

Arjan has asked if you can wait until he returns from the UK on Thursday and he will be in touch with you regarding more details.

RH asked why AS had not made contact regarding this matter.

AS responded that “Debbie told me on my return that he did not need to contact RH as it was all sorted”.

RH repeated that and asked if it was correct. AS replied that yes, that was correct.

RH stated that the vehicle in question, DK17 VND failed its inspection at Adams Morey on 15th August 2023. RH asked what had happened to the vehicle after this date.

AS replied that the vehicle remained in their car park from the date of failure up until Alfred started to drive it.

RH asked if this was from the date of inspection and AS responded, yes. It remained in their car park.

RH then stated that between 15th August and 28th November 2023, the vehicle had covered 2,516 miles. Alfred had the vehicle for 8 days and it then stayed outside his house until 28th November. How did it cover all these miles?

AS could not answer that and said he will look into it and get back to me by the end of the day.

RH asked how many cars Cab My Ride themselves own.

AS said they own 10 cars.

RH asked who was in charge of their fleet and AS stated that it was his father, Harjit SAHOTA. He was the fleet manager.

RH asked who gave the vehicle in question to Alfred and AS said it was "an operator". I asked if he was aware that this "operator" was on the phone to Harjit at the time the vehicle was handed over as Alfred had a question about livery. As a result of this call, an Aryvo sticker was applied to the rear door. AS said he was not aware of this

RH asked what checks were carried out when keys were handed to drivers.

AS replied that usually only his Dad (Harjit) his sister or he himself would hand keys over. There was seemingly no other process.

I asked what records needed to be in place before a vehicle was operated.

AS replied that a licence and compliance certificate need to be uploaded and a driving licence.

RH asked how this car could have been operated without a current licence.

AS replied because it was already on the system.

RH asked how it could be on the system without a current licence.

AS replied that there is no current system to stop a vehicle automatically working when a licence runs out. It relied on manual checks.

RB then recounted events from within the last couple of years where Cab My Ride had had new computer systems in place. Previously, CMR had been attracting a number of complaints around record management and ensuring vehicle are fit to operate under their platform. This led to multiple visits to CMR's office by RB and KO (another enforcement officer) to ensure compliance and the CMR were putting proper measures in place. All these visits were directly with AS each time. On one of the visits, AS demonstrated a computer system that required drivers to upload photos of their vehicle before a shift otherwise would not be able to log on to the platform. It also required all documents, such as licences and insurance, to be uploaded. A CMR staff member would then need to input expiry dates for each item into that driver's profile, without which a driver could not log on. The default position of the system was to not allow any driver or vehicle to work without regular input and updates from a CMR operative. This system was something CMR definitely needed to ensure future compliance with their licence conditions and duties as an operator. RB then asked AS what happened to this system and why had it failed.

AS stated the system failed in June 2023 and due to their developer also leaving without notice, the system was still not operative and would not stop drivers from working with expired licences.

RB accepted that IT can fail and asked what alternate measures has been put in place since then.

AS stated some manual checks had been conducted.

RB noted that these checks were clearly not effective and why further measures had not been taken as any systems is acceptable as long as its effective and ensures compliance.

AS stated that he didn't want to move to something like a spread sheet and accepted the checks were failing. AS then stated he could have the system repaired either today or the next few days and would invite RB and RH to see it operative again.

RB asked that if it was possible to get the system running that quickly, why had it not already been done in the last six months? And why had AS waited until now to address the situation and make progress? RB also stated that if AS was unable to provide an alternate operating system due to technical failure, the operator should have ceased processing bookings until they were ready to again operate safely.

AS did not have an answer for these questions and observations.

Interview finished at 1120.