

## Improving Disabled People's Access to Redditch Taxi Fleets

### Survey Responses

Redditch Borough Council is considering relaxing its policy on the licensing of vehicles as hackney carriages so that instead of additional hackney carriages having to be "brand new" wheelchair accessible vehicles, they can be wheelchair accessible vehicles that are up to six years of age.

Please note that in this context a "wheelchair accessible vehicle" means a vehicle capable of carrying a wheelchair user whilst they remain seated in their wheelchair.

Do you agree with this proposal?

**Yes - 15 (68%)**

**No - 7 (32%)**

#### Other Comments Received in Relation to this Question

Although I agree that there should be more wheelchair accessible hackney carriages in the Borough, I don't feel the quality of the vehicles should be compromised by allowing vehicles to be up to six years old.

As long as they are well maintained regularly and spot checks done

Yes, as long as it is safe, and has been properly adapted - AND CHECKED/approved etc.

who cares how old it is if its safe clean and usable!?

This will make it more affordable for drivers to purchase and license a wheelchair accessible taxi

Otherwise the situation is restricted - it is necessary to encourage the greatest possible number of taxis available

I believe that the vehicle does not have to be a brand new taxi, as long as it has gone through all the stringent tests that RBC taxi licensing ask of all their taxis. Also buying a wheelchair access vehicle brand new would be too expensive for most of the taxi firms, which is one reason why we do not have many of them.

As long it is maintained and fit for purpose the age should not be restrictive

There is no substantial difference in use or safety of a WAV over the rest of the fleet.

As long as the vehicle has regular services of the vehicle and ramps etc to ensure that the vehicle is safe for use then I feel a taxi can be used up to 6 years old.

Access to services under the Equality Act 2010 should be for everyone and not just for the able bodied.

Disabled people have a very limited social life – the lack of transport extends their social exclusion

Disabled people should be given the same opportunities as their peers without transport this is extremely difficult

With the services at the Alexander Hospital being moved to Worcester disabled people are going to struggle to attend appointments due to mis matched bus services and also the limitation of available positions for wheelchair users

Employment opportunity for disabled people are already limited with accessible transport disabled people would be able to venture out of county

Accessible transport would increase freedom of independence which is often lacking in the majority of disabled peoples lives

It makes good business sense and there is definatly a niche in the market to extend taxi services considering how many disabled people there are within our county

The spending power of disabled people within the county would benefit hundreds of business including the taxi provision themselves, if they had accessible transport.

I agree as it is giving more flexibility to disabled people with wheelchairs.

There are too many old bangers used as taxi/private hire. Many of these vehicles have in excess of 300,000 miles and should not be used for this purpose only new cars and buses should be allowed for this purpose. It would be a good idea to restrict mileage on vehicles also operators should supply service details many of the companies do not even service a vehicle until it breaks down.

Because we can buying cheaper 6 years old hackney taxi is cheaper so all the drivers can buying. I cannot afford a new one.

Because buying a six year old hackney carriage is cheaper so all the drivers can buying hackney taxi. I cannot afford a new one.

I cannot afford a brand new taxi with disabled access.

Because I am a dual badge taxi driver in Redditch but I cannot afford a brand new hackney vehicle. I will buy a hackney vehicle if is 6 years old so it will help the disabled customer to reduce the waiting time to get a disabled access vehicle.

What happened to those vehicles which were given out to people for this very purpose. I think there were at least four licences. I also think that this is a private hire matter unless there is a survey carried out on each taxi rank.

The taxi trade is already overcrowded with licensed hackney and private hire vehicles. How will you accommodate additional hackney carriages i.e. ranks/stands and adaptations to existing ranks so they are wheelchair friendly. Have not seen any evidence to back the Councils claim that more wheelchair access hackney carriages are needed. For example no proof of any independent survey being done. The Council has also not considered the fact that this will open the gateway for drivers easily obtaining a hackney carriage licence in Redditch and using the loophole to go and work in other Boroughs out of Redditch. There is no legislation to restrict this practice to make sure all Redditch hackney carriage licences issued remain in the Redditch Borough.

Refer to Redditch Taxi Association Letter

Too many taxis in Redditch, not enough demand for this type of vehicle. Cross-border loophole will open up

There is no demand for any more. Before any policy change I would like to see a report or an independent survey completed to back such changes. There are already sufficient amount of wheelchair cars in Redditch this will produce more overcrowding on existing ranks that are designed to accommodate such vehicles.

**Redditch Borough Council is considering amending it's policy on the licensing of drivers of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles to require all drivers to undertake refresher training in driving standards and disability awareness every three years.**

**Do you agree with this proposal?**

**Yes - 13 (59%)**

**No - 9 (41%)**

**Other Comments Received in Relation to this Question**

I see more and more hackney carriage/private hire licence holders driving to very poor standards and with sub standard vehicles. Refresher training in driving standards every 3 years would, hopefully, raise the standard of driving and impress upon them the importance of having a well maintained and road worthy vehicle.

I have also been advised by wheelchair users that some companies within the Borough do not use the required restraints when fixing their wheelchair in their vehicles. Additional refresher training in disability awareness would promote a great understanding of how to interact with disabled passengers and ensure their wheelchairs are securely restrained.

I am also under the impression that a number of Redditch companies have purchased wheelchair accessible vehicles but do not readily take wheelchair passengers due to the additional time it takes to load and unload them. I believe they have only purchased these specialist vehicles in order to take advantage of the extended period they are allowed to keep the vehicles as licensed hackney carriages, as opposed to standard non-wheelchair accessible vehicles.

Everyone's needs updated training regularly for health & safety reasons

Definitely must be compulsory. The standard of driving should be better, and the driver should end up having a greater degree of empathy. One thing that should also be seriously considered AND PROMOTED is that drivers of taxis who have passed the advanced driving test - set by the Institute of Advanced Motorists - should be officially recognised etc. And if all the registered drivers of a taxi firm have passed the IAM test then that taxi firm must get special recognition.

yes absolutely, most able bodied drivers have no clue about any kind of disability

and some especially council licenced are racist and dangerous, and I have had personal incidents with drivers who should not have been behind the wheel.

Over time everyone forgets what they learned on a course. Refreshers seem a very good idea.

As long as it isn't too onerous

I believe that every taxi driver should have a refresher course as they get into bad habits, and it does not hurt to remind them about the standards that are expected of our drivers. As a disabled person who is ambulant and walks with crutches it is a lot to be desired at the moment.

It is crucial to understand the needs of disabled passengers to complete their journeys safely and securely

All professions require updated training. Training becomes less effective and relevant over time.

Drivers need to be made aware of disabilities and what each disabled person may need in regarding assistance in and onto/off the vehicle.

All clients must feel safe and secure when travelling on public transport. Without training drivers would not know how to approach the disabled person and support their needs.

Drivers must be aware of working dogs and the legislation assigned to carrying a working dog such as those for visually impaired people and wheelchair users.

It makes good business sense to enhance customer satisfaction

Disabled people travel differently to able people i.e taking corners at the correct speed, being helped to fit their seat belts, being clamped in correctly

The vulnerability of disabled people can expose them to areas of danger that they themselves may not be aware of.

I agree as the Council is giving training to people to help with assistance to wheelchair people

Many drivers in Redditch do not have full command of the English language this should not be allowed.

All the drivers already pass the taxi test and are well trained.

All the drivers already pass the taxi test and are well trained.

Every driver is very well trained and already undertook the taxi test.

Most of the drivers already know about disability awareness. As I am a taxi driver for more than 5 years.

If the Council is willing to pay then yes, otherwise no. Simply Council Officers don't pay out of their own pockets for any of their training or courses. Charge new drivers only.

I would like to see evidence that supports the need to make such amendments to policy i.e. complaints etc. If anything considering the time a driver spends on the road on a daily basis, driving skills, reflexes, judgement calls etc are much better and natural than an average driver who drives to and from work. However if the Council still considers this amendment, as I feel it is a gimmick to generate yet again more finances from the taxi trade, I would agree only on the basis that there was no costs involved. As for disability awareness the last time we completed such a course we had to pay for it, again generating more revenue but did not receive any documentation that such training was completed.

Refer to Redditch Taxi Association Letter.

Most of the drivers do a great job without extra training. New drivers must do extra tests initially when applying. Where is my certificate from disability test?

No due to the fact drivers who are existing drivers have many years of experience and are some of the best and experienced in the Borough. However they should make more rigid and intense training for any new applicants as some of them should not hold a hackney or private hire licence.

**Redditch Borough Council is considering amending its policy and conditions for the licensing of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles to require vehicle proprietors to display stickers in their vehicles that provide information on how passengers can make complaints or pass on compliments.**

**Do you agree with this proposal?**

**Yes - 19 (90%)**

**No - 2 (10%)**

**Other Comments Received in Relation to this Question**

I think this would be very useful. However, I would question whether Redditch Borough Council have sufficient manpower to deal with these due to the ongoing cut-backs to staffing levels.

So the public can view the details clearly.

And ensure the sticker is LARGE and of an approved/standard design - with large font, and it must be put in a prominent position etc.

because they treat you like its your fault when they have been rude or dangerous and you end up injured. and if you ring the office they say they don't know who picked you up.

This will make it easier for the public to report issues to the council.

This is a basic requirement and avoids the person having to ask the driver if it is a complaint.

This would help on both sides as if you have received exceptional treatment from a taxi driver (not normal treatment which they should be doing) you can give a compliment the same way as you can complain about a driver.

If the vehicle is licensed then there should be a complaint process and information where you can make that complaint or compliment.

What is the point of compliments? What would you do with the compliments? If they were used in anyway to influence or effect the outcome of enforcement you would be in breach of existing legislation. The compliments aspect is concerning and sets a negative precedent in taxi licensing law. This aspect is likely to be judicially reviewed and is more about appeasing drivers than improving standards.

Saves the passenger the time and hassle of having to make phone calls to find out who they need to really speak to when there is a problem.

<p>You can not access a service unless you know how to access it.</p>
<p>This allows passengers to understand a driver is following code of conduct set out to him and they have information available to see where they can get in touch which helps the communication between passengers and driver.</p>
<p>As I have said before, many proprietors have old transport cars and buses with very high mileage and due to lack of English do not give a good service to customers.</p>
<p>Already there is a sticker with the taxi number displayed. We don't mind.</p>
<p>Already there is a sticker with the taxi number displayed. We don't mind if this is changed.</p>
<p>Already there is a sticker with the taxi number displayed. We don't mind if this is changed.</p>
<p>Because there is already a vehicle plate number is stick in the inside of the windscreen. And also we taxi driver always should wear badge so everybody can read over identity and badge number.</p>
<p>Depending on size of stickers. Also private hire should have "pre-booked" stickers like other towns and cities.</p>
<p>Because majority of customers if they have complaints or issues will either contact the operator they booked the taxi directly or in serious issues contact the police or Council anyway. However if the Council feel there is a need, why not alter the licence plates and include a contact number like some Boroughs rather than waste more money on stickers. However I strongly feel before actually implementing any changes, the Council should set up an independant complaints line for drivers who have issues with licensing i.e. badge renewals, suspensions, plate renewals and enforcement issues.</p>
<p>Refer to Redditch Taxi Association Letter.</p>
<p>I agree but more staff is required - who will pay? Who will pay for stickers? Recommend do it on red or green plates. Tell customers through newspapers on how to complain.</p>
<p>Rather than display stickers on the dashboard, the information should be included on the rear plates and on the interior licence sticker.</p>



**Redditch Borough Council is considering publishing a list on their website of all taxi owners / operators who can provide a vehicle that is capable of carrying a passenger who remains seated in their wheelchair.**

**Do you agree with this proposal?**

**Yes - 21 (100%)**

**No - 0 (0%)**

**Other Comments Received in Relation to this Question**

I would welcome this. However, detail regarding whether they have split ramps and high headroom would also be useful as different wheelchairs have different transportation needs.

It will give people confidence and reassurance to know they can trust the recommendations.

Obvious, and make it easy to find on the RBC website. [The search facility on the RBC website isn't very good.]

helpful as you don't know who you can call unless you personally know a driver who has a suitable car a list of companies who will put a chair in the boot without complaint or extra charge would also help.

This will make it easier to know who to call.

Again this is an obvious thing to do with so much usage of the internet and in the interests of providing a comprehensive service for users.

Yes as otherwise you have to phone round different taxi firms to see if they take wheelchair access vehicles.

Usually you have to call each firm to see if they have a suitable vehicle and if it is available.

It helps people access the appropriate service for them.

I have tried to look on the website for such information now that I have to use an electric wheelchair and there is no information at all so far of which taxi companies do provide wheelchair accessible taxis.

You can not access a service unless you know how to access it.

I agree to helping to work alongside people to be able to achieve a goal and having vehicles available for wheelchair users so they can go shopping, visit family,

appointments, etc at comfort and service.

Good idea.

It will be easier for the customers.

It will be easier for customers to book a disabled vehicle.

It will be easier for customers to book a disabled vehicle.

That will be easy for the disabled people to ring the right operator without wasting their time.

No objections at all.

Good idea to make it fair change P/H policy where operators need to stop discriminating on price. It will be good for customers to know who or how to book.

**Do you have any other proposals that you think the Council should consider to improve access for disabled people to hackney carriage and private hire services?**

I think the Council should ensure that disabled people are aware of the small number of wheelchair accessible vehicles that are available within the Borough and that many of these vehicles are multi-purpose so can be used as standard hackney carriages/private hire vehicles. This would help them understand that they are not as freely available in Redditch as they are in cities such as Birmingham or London. Unfortunately this results in wheelchair taxis need to be booked, in many cases, in advance, to ensure that the correct vehicle arrives.

General point, like the City of Oxford taxi tariffs, plus many other local authorities, all the taxi tariffs in Worcestershire must be in metric units, not the price per mile, the tariff meter should be set to kilometres. The published price of fares to show £ /km.

list of companies with chair adapted vehicles. list of companies who will put a chair in the boot, or carry service dogs without extra charge or moaning, list of companies whose drivers are willing to help carry goods to the door for you if you really can't, carry it a way to make sure you can complain if something happens and will be listened to drivers and cars more regularly checked for standards set rules about what they can charge so its not different with every driver as often happens. make cars easier to identify AS taxi, the company I use are great they text you telling you what car they sent, but its not always easy to identify car types in the dark at night... or a car type you have never seen before...

The council could make it mandatory for all its taxis to be wheelchair accessible taxis like they have in other towns around the country.

At the moment if a wheelchair disabled person requires a taxi, the taxi firms I have consulted on say that 48 hours notice has to be given. This is not acceptable as I feel that this is discrimination to the disabled person. How do you know if you might need a taxi for an emergency and there is no other way of getting there!

Bring down the price. I have used the only taxi company I could find to go out when I needed to. It cost me £24 for a return to my visit my sister who lives less than 3 miles from me. This is something I can't afford being a single disabled parent on benefits. Outrageous cost. In a normal taxi it would cost me £6 return to visit my sister and as I can no longer use a normal taxi £24 is not what I am willing to pay so I haven't used the service since and now I feel isolated and feel as though I will never be able to visit family and friends again.

I think when it comes to wheelchair users it is very difficult for me to say how I am going to know whats best for them as they are in a wheelchair permanently, working to help towards to achieve that goal and having training as well sounds like it will

help me to improve that service.

I do not understand how some drivers get a private hire licence when they cannot speak English. It says in the manifesto that all drivers should have a good understanding of English. Many do not.

Drivers who get dual badge council can offer to put the vehicle which is at least 6 years old (like Peugeot Partner) so then will be more disabled access vehicle will come on the road which will improve service to provide a disabled access vehicle to disabled people.

My proposal would be based on first hand knowledge of the taxi trade as I have been a driver for over 12 years. Over this period of time I have never experienced an issue with disability because literally all wheelchairs are foldable and customer is able to get into a normal saloon car. I feel to improve wheelchair friendly access the Council should consider making changes to how licences for private hire vehicles are issued. For example make it compulsory for anyone wanting a private hire vehicle licence will only be issued one if the car is a 6 year old wheelchair vehicle. And change policy so they cannot charge extra for this service. As at the moment in the last 24 months a lot of private hire licences have been issued both vehicle and driver that could have potentially been wheelchair friendly. Also there is no policy or enforcement in place to stop operators for charging extra for wheelchairs. Also give the Dial-a-Ride contract to a taxi operator with the vehicles as they would do a better and regular service.

Refer to Redditch Taxi Association Letter.

Restrict what private hire operators charge if wheelchair cars are used. Any other questions please contact Redditch Taxi Association.