

## Appendix 3

### Health and safety assessment report into the suitability of Exeter Taxi Ranks for use by rear and side access Hackney carriage vehicles

#### Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to identify the risks associated with the use of rear and side loading Hackney carriage vehicles at taxi ranks in Exeter.

#### Definition:

Hackney Carriages can be 'flagged down' off the street or from a taxi rank. Private Hire Vehicles must be pre-booked through an operator and are not permitted to use taxi ranks. Rear access vehicles can be used for private hire and are not within the scope of this report.

#### Background:

At present Exeter's Hackney carriage fleet consists of some 43 wheelchair accessible vehicles, of which 29 vehicles are currently rear loading and 14 side loading. The current Taxi Policy will require all 29 of the existing rear loading wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs), to be replaced with Euro 6 emission standard *side loading* vehicles by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020. Numerous members of the Hackney carriage trade have requested that the Licensing Authority give consideration to amending the current Taxi Policy to allow rear loading WAVs to be replaced with rear loading Euro 6 models. This report assesses the risks of continuing to use rear loading WAVs on Exeter taxi ranks.



### **Exeter Taxi Rank Description:**

- **Sidwell Street (John Lewis):** 11 car rank situated outside John Lewis. Shelter adjacent to front rank space, with a loading bay situated in front of this.
- **Fore Street:** 1 car rank until 10:30 pm, reverting to whole length of bus stops (shared with buses) from 10:30pm.
- **North Street:** 1 car rank opposite rear Sainsbury's Entrance. There is a loading bay to the rear of the rank and the road narrows to the front.
- **Exeter Central Station:** 2 car rank adjacent to Le Tabac (to left of Central Station Entrance), with disabled bay in front.
- **Exeter St Davids:** 14 car Rank immediately adjacent to the left of the Station entrance. Pedestrian crossing directly in front of the rank.
- **Little Queen Street:** 1 car rank adjacent to Loading bay.
- **Bailey Street (Timepiece):** 3 car rank operating from 10:30pm daily. Double yellows directly behind and in front of rank.

### **Assessment of risks:**

Persons at risk include:

- Taxi Drivers
- Passengers including
- Wheelchair passengers: Note that there are many different designs of wheelchairs with varying dimensions suitable for people with different disabilities, or degrees of disability and a vehicle which is accessible for one such design may not be suitable for others.
- Other passengers including those with visual, audible and mobility limitations
- Other vehicle users
- Members of the public

### **Objective:**

There are currently around 1.2 million wheelchair users in the UK of which around 2 thirds use a wheelchair on a regular basis. It is recognised that the Council's objective should be to minimise risks to passengers, and transport staff whilst using the Council's Licenced Hackney carriages. As such, the following assessment of risks related to using the Taxi Ranks has been undertaken.

### **Risks identified:**

#### **Site specific - Loading space required:**

Rear loading vehicles require an additional 3 metres of space in order to manoeuvre a wheelchair user into the vehicle using a rear loading ramp. This will have an impact at some taxi ranks where space is at a premium:

- **Fore Street:** During the daytime the bus stop which is immediately behind the taxi rank space is in regular use and as such this will mean that whilst the passenger is being assisted at the rear of the Taxi, buses will be pulling out. During the evening when the rank reverts to a shared taxi rank/ bus stop. The rank does not benefit from raised kerbs which would assist side loading WAVs in that the raised kerb would reduce the ramp gradient making loading/ unloading safer and less effort.
- **Sidwell Street:** Cars at the front of the rank would usually be able to move forward into the loading bay in the front of the rank as this loading bay is generally only in use early in the day (before 9am). However, this will mean that whilst the passenger is being assisted at the rear of the Taxi, taxis in position 2 potentially could be pulling out with other passengers. The Sidwell Street rank does not benefit from any raised kerbs which if in place are advantageous for side loading vehicles.
- **North Street:** There is a loading bay to the rear which could be utilised if unoccupied, but if this space is occupied then the lack of space in front of the rank would mean that a wheelchair user could not be loaded without the WAV being moved out into the road thereby putting the wheelchair user and driver at risk from other vehicles whilst loading in the highway. The rank does not benefit from any raised kerbs.
- **Exeter Central Station:** If the disabled space in front of the rank is unoccupied then the first car can move forward to accommodate the extra space required to load from behind. However, if this space is occupied then there would not be sufficient space (3 meters), in order to load from the rear. The station rank does not benefit from any raised kerbs.
- **Exeter St Davids:** The first rank space is adjacent to the pedestrian crossing and as such vehicles in this space cannot move forward to provide extra space for rear loading. Instead they rely on the vehicles behind to co-operate which appears to work well generally. The station rank does not benefit from any raised kerbs.
- **Little Queen Street:** Whilst the rank space itself is only for one car, there would usually be space either in front or behind the space to accommodate rear loading. The rank does not benefit from any raised kerbs.
- **Bailey Street (Timepiece):** Due to the curve of the road, it would not be possible for the first rank space vehicle to move forward safely to provide extra space for loading, and as such they would be reliant on the vehicles behind them reversing. The rank does not benefit from any raised kerbs.

If the vehicles require manoeuvring, and in particular if there were a need to reverse vehicles in order to accommodate the extra space at the rear of the taxi, there is the potential for accidents to occur to other members of the public including children and persons with visual or audible impairments. The risk of reversing vehicles injuring members of the public would increase in poor weather conditions or after the hours of darkness when visibility is limited.

Despite the lack of raised kerbs at our ranks, I consider that purely in terms of safety they would lend themselves more to the use of side-loading vehicles.

#### **Side access / rear access disabled taxis:**

It is clear from the Consultation report provided by Living Options, that personal preference will influence which type of wheelchair accessible vehicle a person will choose to use, with some respondents clearly favouring rear loading vehicles, and others favouring side loading vehicles.

#### *Side Access Vehicles*

Looking purely in terms of safety, the side loading WAVs have the significant advantage of loading from the kerb rather than the roadway, thereby making loading safer for both the driver and the passenger. Side loading models are also considered safer by some organisations (such as Disability Rights UK and the Spinal Injuries Association), due to the fact that the wheelchair user is seated in the centre of the vehicle, whereas in rear loading models the wheelchair user is generally seated in the rear impact zone. In addition, our existing licenced side loading vehicles all incorporate an integrated ramp which is housed under the floor panel of the passenger compartment, and as such it is quick and easy for the ramp to be put in place.

Most side loading models only have access ramp access from the left-hand side of the vehicle; however, in the event of an accident there is a rear and in some cases a right-hand door that could be utilised in an emergency.

In terms of health and safety disadvantages, loading from the side tends to mean a greater ramp gradient than rear loading vehicles as side loading vehicles are typically higher standing and have shorter ramps than their rear loading equivalent. The higher ramp gradient requires the driver to put in additional effort during loading leading to a greater risk of manual handling injuries, and also leads to a greater risk of accidental release of the wheelchair users chair during unloading. The gradient of the ramp increases where a kerb is not used. A pavement or kerb tends to be 10-15cms higher so reduces the gradient of the ramp.

Side loading vehicles also generally require the wheelchair user to be facing towards the rear of the vehicle whilst travelling, thereby potentially affecting the ability of the passenger to communicate with the driver in the event of an emergency.

### *Rear Access Vehicles*

Rear access WAVs are typically lower standing than their side-loading equivalents, and in many cases have longer access ramps. The result of this is that the ramp gradient on rear-loading vehicles is often significantly lower, meaning that loading can be undertaken with less effort and consequently greater safety and passenger comfort.

In rear loading WAV's the wheelchair user is seated facing forwards and as such it is easier to communicate with the driver, and is generally considered more comfortable whilst travelling.

Potential Health and safety disadvantages of rear loading vehicles are set out in the Spinal Injuries Association Taxi Charter (attached further in this report), and include the following:

- It is safer to keep wheelchair users on the pavement than to put them in the road, particularly facing away from on coming traffic.
- Taxi drivers may not be familiar with lowering a wheelchair over a kerb which can present dangers to the passenger. Similarly, passengers using electric wheelchairs may find it impossible to go down over a kerb. If access is from the pavement then these issues do not arise.
- Being seated in the centre of a taxi is likely to be safer than being seated at the rear of the vehicle. The majority of accessible taxis have centre divisions which would provide passenger protection in the event of a side impact. However, most rear loading taxis leave the wheelchair passenger at the back of the vehicle in the rear impact zone.
- The need to have an alternative exit in the event of an accident is paramount. In an emergency a side loading vehicle will offer the passenger the opportunity to exit the

vehicle from an alternative exit. In the case of a rear loading vehicle where the rear doors or tailgate are damaged, this would be impossible. This is not acceptable for a public service vehicle.

### **Securing the passenger:**

Having assisted the passenger into the vehicle, the driver will then need to ensure that the passenger and wheelchair are safely secured. Any ramps used will need to be removed and stored away prior to the journey commencing. The additional time taken to complete these tasks satisfactorily will be several minutes working either to the side or the rear of the vehicle. Side-loading WAVs therefore have the safety benefit that the driver is not working at the rear of the vehicle during this time.

### **External Bodies:**

A number of disabled persons groups have published information asking licensing authorities to prohibit the use of rear-loading WAVs as hackney carriages. The argument for this approach is that the wheelchair user has to be on the road during loading and unloading and is therefore exposed to risk from traffic. This is seen as being particularly relevant for Hackney Carriages, which of necessity; predominantly operate from side loading hackney carriage stands. Information from the following groups have been included in Appendix ...

- The Spinal Injuries Association (SIA);
- RADAR the disability network (now called Disability Rights UK);

In addition, the Department for Transport report 'The Safety of Wheelchair Occupants in road Passenger vehicles' (2003), used crash test data and numerical modelling to assess the safety of wheelchair users in the event of a crash. Of specific interest in the report is the comparison between the crash performance of forward facing wheelchairs versus rear facing wheelchairs:

- *"For forward facing occupants in M1 and M2 category vehicles it was apparent that some injury criteria such as head displacement and lumbar spine compression were better for the wheelchair occupant than the conventionally seated occupant, however neck loads in particular were higher. The addition of a head and back restraint was found to improve the situation significantly..."*
- *"Rear facing wheelchair passengers in M1 and M2 vehicles were found to be greatly more at risk than equivalent vehicle seated passengers, particularly in terms of neck and spine loads, the situation being worse still for both smaller and larger than average persons. Again, the situation was mitigated through use of a head and back restraint..."*

(M1 Category vehicle= Vehicles with ≤ 8 seats in addition to the driver's seat)



**Figure 7** M1 and M2 forward facing  
– vehicle seated



**Figure 8** M1 and M2 forward facing  
– wheelchair seated



**Figure 18a** Set up with no head  
and back restraint



**Figure 18b** Wheelchair occupant  
with no head and back  
restraint

It is worth noting the age of the report (I was unable to find any more recent research of this type), and that they only examined the effect of a simulated impact to the front of the vehicle, but the findings suggest a greater degree of safety for the wheelchair user if they are travelling in the forward facing position. However, where head and back restraints are provided the results were improved in both positions and were largely equivalent. Rear loading WAVs do not commonly include head and back restraints, whereas more modern side loading models generally do incorporate this, and as such I conclude that levels of safety in the event of a crash to the front of the vehicle would likely be similar, whereas rear loading WAVs would likely be more vulnerable in the event of a rear collision.

Both rear and side loading models already on circuit all have European whole vehicle type approval and as such pass relevant European Community safety standards.

## Conclusion

As stated previously, wheelchair user individual preference for rear or side loading vehicles will vary considerably. Linked to this would be their individual needs and capacities, from an individual who would prefer to sit in a salon car with the wheelchair folded up, through to passengers who are seated on their wheelchair during the journey and finally motorised chairs. Rear loading vehicles have several significant advantages over side loading models, including the passenger generally facing forwards (more comfortable), often shallower ramp gradients, and are sometimes able to accommodate larger powered wheelchairs which would not fit in a side-loading model. However, purely from a safety perspective, it is preferable that wheelchair accessible Hackney carriages should be side loading rather than rear loading. The basis for this conclusion is as follows:

- To reduce the need to reverse vehicles whilst on the Taxi Ranks to provide additional room for rear access taxis to put out their ramps, thereby improving pedestrian safety;
- To reduce the amount of time that a taxi driver is working in the road at the rear of the vehicle (driver safety);
- To reduce the time that a wheelchair user is in the road accessing the vehicle (passenger safety);
- To increase the likelihood of alternative means of escape for passengers from a damaged vehicle (side loading vehicles are more likely to incorporate an additional means of escape, although this will vary depending on the model);
- Side loading models are considered safer in the event of a rear collision due to the positioning of the wheelchair user in the middle rather than the rear of the vehicle;

It is further recommended that the Licensing Authority contact the responsible authorities (Devon County Highways and Great Western Railway), to request that they consider installing raised kerbs at Exeter taxi ranks as this would improve the comfort and safety of loading for wheelchair users accessing side loading vehicles.

Lee Staples

Principal Environmental Health Officer

December 2018

**Risk Assessment Report Photographs:**



Passenger seated in rear loading WAV with chair restraint straps in place



Rear loading WAV showing front seats folded and ramp extended ready to load wheelchair user.



North Street rank space (note loading area to rear and narrowing of road to front)



St Davids Station rank (note pedestrian crossing in front of 1<sup>st</sup> rank space)



St Davids rank showing Hackney carriages queuing



Central Station rank (2 car rank with disabled space to front and metered parking behind)



Fore Street rank (Traffic light stop sign directly in front of rank)





## **Policy for accessible taxi and private hire vehicles**

### **RADAR believes every Local Authority should have:**

1. A policy and strategy for delivering affordable and accessible taxis and private hire vehicles
2. A policy to allow disabled people to use taxis and private hire vehicles
3. At least 50% vehicle fleet accessibility
4. A driver training scheme for taxi and private hire vehicle drivers

#### **1. Policy and Strategy**

- a. Local Authorities should have a policy to improve the mobility of disabled people by the use of taxis and private hire vehicles
- b. Local Authorities should have a strategy for carrying out the policy by various means and within a timeframe
- c. These policies should be detailed in the Local Authority's Disability Equality Scheme

#### **2. Affordability**

- a. Local Authorities should have a scheme whereby disabled residents unable to use bus services routinely (i.e. a concessionary bus pass may also be held but is not always usable, such as when the holder has luggage, travels after dark etc.) can use taxis affordably. This policy should include:
  - i. Allowance of at least two single trips a day
  - ii. At least half fare discount
  - iii. Companions allowed at no extra fare

#### **3. Vehicle accessibility**

- a. All new and transferred licences for Hackney Carriages should be for side-loading wheelchair accessible vehicles with M1 ECWVTA and include features to cater for those passengers with reduced mobility, vision and hearing
- b. All new licences for private hire vehicles should be required to have an approved swivel seat fitted

#### **4. Driver training**

- a. Drivers should be trained in disability awareness, communication and use of equipment
- b. Training should be taken as part of the licence requirements on first issue and renewal
- c. It is recommended that driver training is mandatory. However, when introducing this, Local Authorities should work in partnership with other Local Authority areas in the region to ensure standardisation



## **Spinal Injuries Association Taxi Charter**

In its Campaigning for Change Manifesto 2009 – 2011, the Spinal Injuries Association (SIA) addresses the challenges that public transport and, in particular, taxis, present to those with spinal cord injuries (SCI).

Section 36 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) introduces legislation to make taxis accessible for disabled people. However, this is still to be enacted by government. The delay in its implementation appears to be the technical specifications which define a “wheelchair accessible taxi” and the cost to the taxi trade of providing these vehicles.

In this document SIA puts forward an “**Accessible Taxi Charter**” to address the challenges currently facing those with SCI and other disabled taxi passengers in the U.K.

...because life needn't stop when you're paralysed.

## **The Present Problems**

- Vehicle types used for taxis differ across the country.
- The number and availability of wheelchair accessible taxis differ from area to area.
- Often drivers have no disability awareness training or are unaware how to operate equipment like ramps and clamps.
- This equipment is often in poor working condition or has been mislaid and is not with the vehicle.
- Wheelchair accessible vehicles licensed by local authorities may not be of a suitable specification.
- There is no standardised complaints procedure or enforcement for bad service.

## **Desired Outcomes**

SIA will be pressing for improved and compulsory driver training which will ensure:

- Drivers better understand the needs of their disabled passengers.
- Drivers are able to operate and maintain equipment properly.

SIA will also be pressing that via the licensing system:

- All vehicles working from official taxi ranks meet a minimum standard that enables it to carry a passenger safely in their wheelchair.
- Wheelchair accessible vehicles are provided with side access off the kerb side to provide direct access to/from the pavement.
- The built environment which is used for taxi ranks is suitable to allow easy and safe access for wheelchair users to the taxi, such as raised platforms at taxi ranks.
- There are sufficient wheelchair accessible taxis working away from a taxi rank to ensure that disabled people can obtain a vehicle that meets their needs.
- The level of accessible vehicles should be greater than those not capable of carrying a wheelchair user seated in their wheelchair.
- Taxi operators have a duty to provide an equal service for disabled and non disabled people.
- There is a standardised, enforced complaints procedure across all local authority areas.
- Taxi operators refusing to provide a service to disabled people are suitably punished to deter repeat offences.

## CHARTER

SIA believes that these recommendations will improve access for all disabled taxi passengers.

- All taxis (hackney carriages) should become side loading wheelchair accessible vehicles and cater for every disabled person.
  - All taxi drivers should be thoroughly trained in disability awareness and the competent use of the facilities in their vehicles.
  - The single specification for accessible taxis must be demonstrably safe in all respects and converted vehicles should not be tested to a lower safety standard than that used by saloon cars.
  - Standards should be deliverable in the short term by manufacturers and converters and also be affordable so as to ensure a quick delivery of the DDA requirements.
  - Accessibility standards should enable wheelchair users to access an integrated transport system, allowing an uninterrupted journey on trains, buses and taxis.
  - Authorities should ensure street planning and rank provision meet the need of disabled passengers.
  - Licensing authorities must ensure that drivers of accessible taxis do not discriminate against disabled people under the DDA.
1. Under the proposals of the DDA, it was envisaged that all taxis (hackney carriages) should become wheelchair accessible and meet a predetermined specification. It was envisaged that the trade would be given a ten year period to achieve this and SIA believes that this must commence as soon as possible.
  2. The Department for Transport has suggested that a mixed fleet of saloon cars and wheelchairs accessible taxis within the hackney carriage fleet is an option for meeting the needs of wheelchair users. SIA does not believe that this is practical or desirable and will seek to show why in this charter.
  3. SIA believes it is imperative that all taxi drivers are required to be trained in disability awareness and assisting disabled passengers safely into and out of their taxis. This is a major issue both in terms of safety for disabled passengers and the willingness of drivers to undertake journeys with wheelchair users.
  4. If a taxi driver refuses to take a wheelchair passenger then this should be treated as an offence under the DDA. SIA believes that if all drivers are properly trained then such situations need never arise.

## Critical Issues

The huge variety of accessible taxis in the marketplace can present disabled passengers with a poor, and in some circumstances unsafe, choice of vehicle. To address this issue SIA proposes the following:

### Safety

- The European Community provides a “Type approval” system for the production of all cars, called “European Whole Vehicle Type Approval”. Vehicles that are converted to accommodate wheelchair users can currently be tested to Single Vehicle Type Approval after conversion, which is a national standard. SIA does not believe that this is acceptable for a public service taxi. All such converted taxis should be re-tested to fully European Whole Vehicle Type Approval.
- SIA believes that side loading should be the standard adopted as the safest method of accessing taxis from taxi ranks and the street. The advantages of side loading are that:
  - It is safer to keep wheelchair users on the pavement than to put them in the road, particularly facing away from on coming traffic.
  - Taxi drivers may not be familiar with lowering a wheelchair over a kerb which can present dangers to the passenger. Similarly, passengers using electric wheelchairs may find it impossible to go down over a kerb. If access is from the pavement then these issues do not arise.
  - Being seated in the centre of a taxi is likely to be safer than being seated at the rear of the vehicle. The majority of accessible taxis have centre divisions which would provide passenger protection in the event of a side impact. However, most rear loading taxis leave the wheelchair passenger at the back of the vehicle in the rear impact zone.
  - The need to have an alternative exit in the event of an accident is paramount. In an emergency a side loading vehicle will offer the passenger the opportunity to exit the vehicle from an alternative exit. In the case of a rear loading vehicle where the rear doors or tailgate are damaged, this would be impossible. This is not acceptable for a public service vehicle.
- An agreed Government specification will deliver additional safety to passengers. Local authorities may currently license accessible vehicles to a range of technical specifications which may be inappropriate and potentially dangerous.

## The Right Specification

- One of the critical concerns of disabled people is the need for an integrated transport system so that journeys can be completed without disruption. The taxi is unique in delivering door to door transport and therefore needs, at the very least, to provide the same accessibility standards provided by buses and trains under the DDA.
  - The reference wheelchair measuring 1200 x 1350 x 700mm formed the basis of accessibility standards for buses and trains and SIA sees no reason not to adopt that same standard within the rear cabin of a taxi.
  - SIA understands that there are already many conversions in the marketplace that meet this standard. This demonstrates not only that this specification is achievable by converters, but that it is also presumably affordable by the taxi trade.
  - Accessibility for ambulant disabled passengers is a key issue. At present the purpose built taxi provides a swivel seat and demountable step on every vehicle. If this were replicated by converters it would address the perceived difficulty by ambulant disabled passengers of using accessible taxis.
  - Affordability is clearly a key issue for the taxi trade. However, there are currently many cities with satisfactory accessibility standards for their vehicles. It seems logical that if this specification can be afforded in these towns and cities then it should be possible across the country. Rural areas may present more of a challenge to the trade as income may be lower, but SIA understands that drivers in these areas commonly purchase second hand vehicles and would therefore be likely to purchase second hand accessible vehicles when the DDA requirements are introduced.

## **The Mixed Fleet Issue**

The Department for Transport has suggested that a mixed fleet of saloon cars and wheelchair accessible taxis may meet the needs of disabled passengers. SIA does not agree with this proposal for the following reasons:

- Under the DDA the choice of saloon car was envisaged as being provided by private hire. The taxi was instead seen to provide instant accessibility on the rank as part of an integrated transport system. This ensured that a wheelchair user was in no way disadvantaged when taking a taxi from the rank.
- It is not clear how a local authority can decide who will drive an accessible vehicle and who will drive a saloon car. Accessible taxis are of necessity more expensive to operate and this is likely to lead those driving accessible vehicles to revert to saloon cars over time. SIA does not want to see 100 per cent accessible taxi fleets gradually erode away. Any solution to this problem is likely to require new legislation, and will further delay implementation of the DDA.
- To overcome the concerns of those calling for the mixed fleet, the specification of any future taxi should take into account the needs of wheelchair users, ambulant disabled passengers, the elderly and those with other requirements.

## **Driver Training**

SIA believes that all taxi drivers should be trained in dealing with disabled passengers. SIA therefore recommends that:

- All drivers must undertake disability awareness training as a condition of their licensing.
- All drivers must demonstrate that they have full working knowledge of the equipment fitted to their taxi. This should include the ability to safely load and secure a wheelchair and assist passengers with other mobility requirements.

## **Local Authorities**

Local authorities could ensure that accessibility to taxis is made easier for disabled passengers in some very simple ways. The following key principles should be a requirement on all authorities.

- Taxis on taxi ranks should always be accessible from the near side.
- Ranks should have raised pavements at the point of entry so as to minimise ramp angles and step height.
- Cover should be provided for passengers at ranks where waiting is a frequent occurrence.
- Rank availability should take into account the needs of disabled passengers. For example, ensuring that hospitals have accessible taxi ranks near to the main entrance.

SIA would also like to see the introduction of a standardised, enforced complaints procedure across all local authority areas. This will ensure that disabled people can be confident that their complaints will be handled effectively. It would also ensure that offending taxi operators are suitably punished and that disability discrimination is taken seriously by the industry.

## **Timing**

The DDA envisaged a ten year changeover to the new specification when agreed. Given that the specification has yet to be decided, SIA urges that:

- The new specification be agreed as soon as possible based around vehicles that are currently in the marketplace and can meet the requirements outlined above with limited improvements.
- All vehicles that do not meet the final specification should be required to do so when the owner next changes the vehicle. This will prevent saloon cars being kept on the road and changed only at the last possible date.
- All authorities should only issue new licences for wheelchair accessible taxis that meet the agreed standard.

**SIA anticipates that this Charter will act as a benchmark for Government, Licensing Authorities, manufacturers and converters and members of the taxi trade. Please help us to deliver it as soon as possible.**

**For more information please contact**

Spinal Injuries Association  
SIA House  
2 Trueman Place  
Oldbrook  
Milton Keynes MK6 2HH

Tel 0845 678 6633  
Fax 0845 070 6911  
Email [cfc@spinal.co.uk](mailto:cfc@spinal.co.uk)  
Web [www.spinal.co.uk](http://www.spinal.co.uk)

Registered Charity No 1054097  
Charitable Company No 3175203

Campaign for affordable and accessible taxi and private hire vehicles

## Policy outline

---

### Objects

1. every local authority should have a **policy and strategy** for delivering affordable and accessible taxis and private hire cars
2. every local authority should have a **fare concession scheme** for disabled people to use taxis and private hire cars
3. every local authority should have *at least* **50% vehicle fleet accessibility**
4. every local authority should have a **driver training** scheme for taxi and private hire car drivers

### Details

#### 1. Policy and strategy

- \* a policy to improve the mobility of disabled people by the use of taxis and private hire cars
- \* a strategy for carrying out the policy by various means and within a timeframe

#### 2. Fare concession scheme

- \* membership with 'Taxicard' available free on application for disabled residents unable to use bus services routinely (ie a concessionary bus pass may also be held but is not always usable when the holder has luggage, travels after dark, etc.)
- \* allowance of at least two single trips a day
- \* *at least* half fare discount
- \* companions allowed at no extra fare

#### 3. Vehicle accessibility

- \* all new and transferred licenses for taxis (Hackney Carriages) should be for side-loading wheelchair accessible vehicles with M1 ECWVTA and include features to cater for those passenger with reduced mobility, vision and hearing
- \* all new licenses for private hire cars should require them to have an approved swivel seat fitted.

It is anticipated that under the DDA all taxis will be required to be fully accessible to an agreed specification by a due date.

#### 4. Driver training

- \* training in disability awareness, communication and use of equipment
- \* taken as part of the licence requirements on first issue and renewal

January 2006