

# **Accessibility Policy for Hackney Carriages Consultation survey April / May 2013**

## **Headline report**

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## **1. Introduction & purpose of report**

The city council is responsible for licensing taxis and private hire vehicles and their drivers. The Equality Act 2010 requires providers of public transport services, including the drivers and operators of taxis and private hire vehicles, to ensure people are not discriminated against (or treated less favourably). Taxis are an important, and sometimes the only means of transportation for many people.

The City Council's Licensing Committee is seeking to develop an accessibility policy for hackney carriage and private hire, drivers, vehicles and operators. The policy will sit alongside the 'Blue Book', which is the licensing policy and handbook produced by the council providing guidance to taxi drivers, proprietors and operators.

As part of a wider consultation on the Council's Draft Accessibility Policy for Hackney Carriages it was decided to carry out a survey with residents and interested groups on the draft policy. The purpose of this report is to feed back the responses to that survey.

## **2. Methodology**

A questionnaire was devised in conjunction with the licensed taxi trade bodies and The Fed a charity which works to promote independence and dignity for people with disabilities.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to gain feedback on the wider draft Accessibility Policy with an emphasis on the use of side and rear loading wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV) and saloon cars.

As with similar consultations on draft policies the questionnaire took the form of a consultation document (a simplified version of the draft policy) with questions inserted after key sections to determine if respondents agree or disagree with the proposals and why. In addition, questions were asked about respondents' use of taxis and their preferred type of taxi.

The questionnaire was made available < insert dates > on the Brighton & Hove Consultation Portal and advertised via the Council's and the Community and Voluntary Sector's networks and websites.

## **3. Response and response rate**

Ninety four questionnaires were completed. As the sample was self selecting there is no response rate. The number of responses is not untypical for this type of consultation and methodology.

A relatively large proportion of respondents have chosen not to complete the equalities and demographic questions. This and the small number of respondents make it difficult to say if the respondents profile is representative of the city's population. However, the profile of respondents appears to be...

- Representative by gender, ethnicity (white UK/British and BME)
- Over representative by LGB, those with a health problem or disability, carers, those aged 35 to 64 and those aged over 64
- Under represented by those aged 16 to 34

Twenty three licensed taxi drivers (25%) responded to the survey.

Even after taking taxi drivers' responses out respondents use taxi frequently with nearly a half (48%) using them at least once a week and nearly nine out of ten having used a taxi within the last six months.

Representatives from the following groups completed the survey.

- B&H Federation of Disabled People
- Black and Minority Ethnic Community Partnership
- Clare Project
- [freedompowerchairs.org.uk](http://freedompowerchairs.org.uk)
- Somerset Day Centre
- Tenant Disability Network part of the BHCC tenant groups.

#### **4. Key findings**

1. The majority of respondents tend to agree or definitely agree with the draft policy.
2. Requirements, training and guidance for drivers has the highest level of agreement which is backed up by responses to the question about taxi drivers' knowledge / awareness of how to assist disabled and or people with mobility problems.
3. The policy relating to the inside of vehicles had the next highest level of agreement. Not being able to get a wheelchair passenger and two carers in a real loading WAV being the biggest issue.
4. The lowest level of agreement is for the policy on how to support and maintain a mixed fleet. The key issues being how to match supply to demand, a particular issue for wheelchair users at night.
5. For older people, people with a range of health problems and disabilities and wheelchair users, side access WAV can be used by the fewest number of people and is the least preferred type of taxi.
6. Wheelchair user, older people and people with a health problem or disability are most likely to agree with the draft policy.
7. Taxi drivers and frequent taxi users are least likely to agree with the draft policy.

## 5. Results & findings

The results to all questions have been analysed by;

- Age (those aged under 35, 35 to 64, and over 64)
- Gender
- Ethnicity (White UK/British and BME)
- Sexual orientation
- Respondents with a health problem or disability
- Wheelchair users
- Carers
- Type of respondent (including taxi drivers)
- Frequency of taxi use (excluding taxi driver)

In many of the cases the number of responses is very small making it difficult to make robust conclusions; therefore care should be taken when interpreting these results.

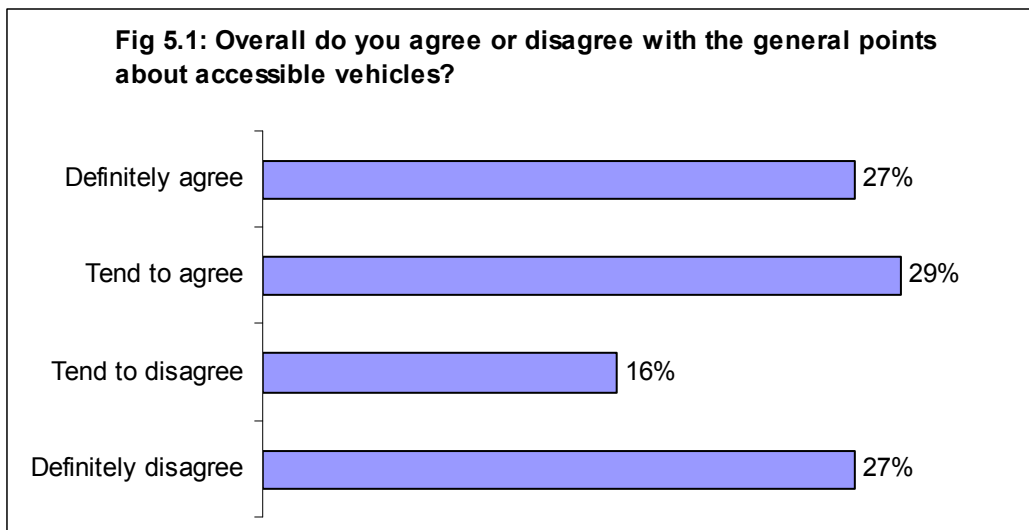
**Where there is a notable difference between groups this will be included in the report. If there is no notable difference no mention will be made.**

### 5.1 Accessible Vehicles Policy

The Council has and continues to support a policy of maintaining a mixed fleet of wheelchair accessible vehicles and saloon cars, to meet the needs of different passengers. The general points of the policy includes that all new or replacement multi-seater vehicles (vehicles capable of carrying 5 to 8 passengers) must be wheelchair accessible and have a mixed fleet of wheelchair accessible vehicles – either side or rear loaders and will aim to achieve a minimum of 60:40 ratio of rear-loaders and side-loaders.

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the general points about accessible vehicles, if there was anything that had not been considered and if they had any comment that they would like to make.

From fig 5.5a below, more than a half of respondents (56%) agreed with the general points about accessible vehicles. However 43% disagreed over a quarter (27%) 'definitely' disagreeing.



**Base: All respondents who answered the question excluding those stating 'don't know / not sure' (n=92).**

### **Differences by equality groups and demographics**

While many of the groups are not mutually exclusive, fig 5.1b below clearly shows that there is little consensus across the different equality and demographic groups.

Wheelchair users (87%) and those aged over 64 (79%) are most likely to agree with the general points while BME respondents (18%), taxi drivers (32%) and frequent taxi users (38%) are least likely to agree.

### **Why respondents disagreed with the Accessible Vehicle Policy**

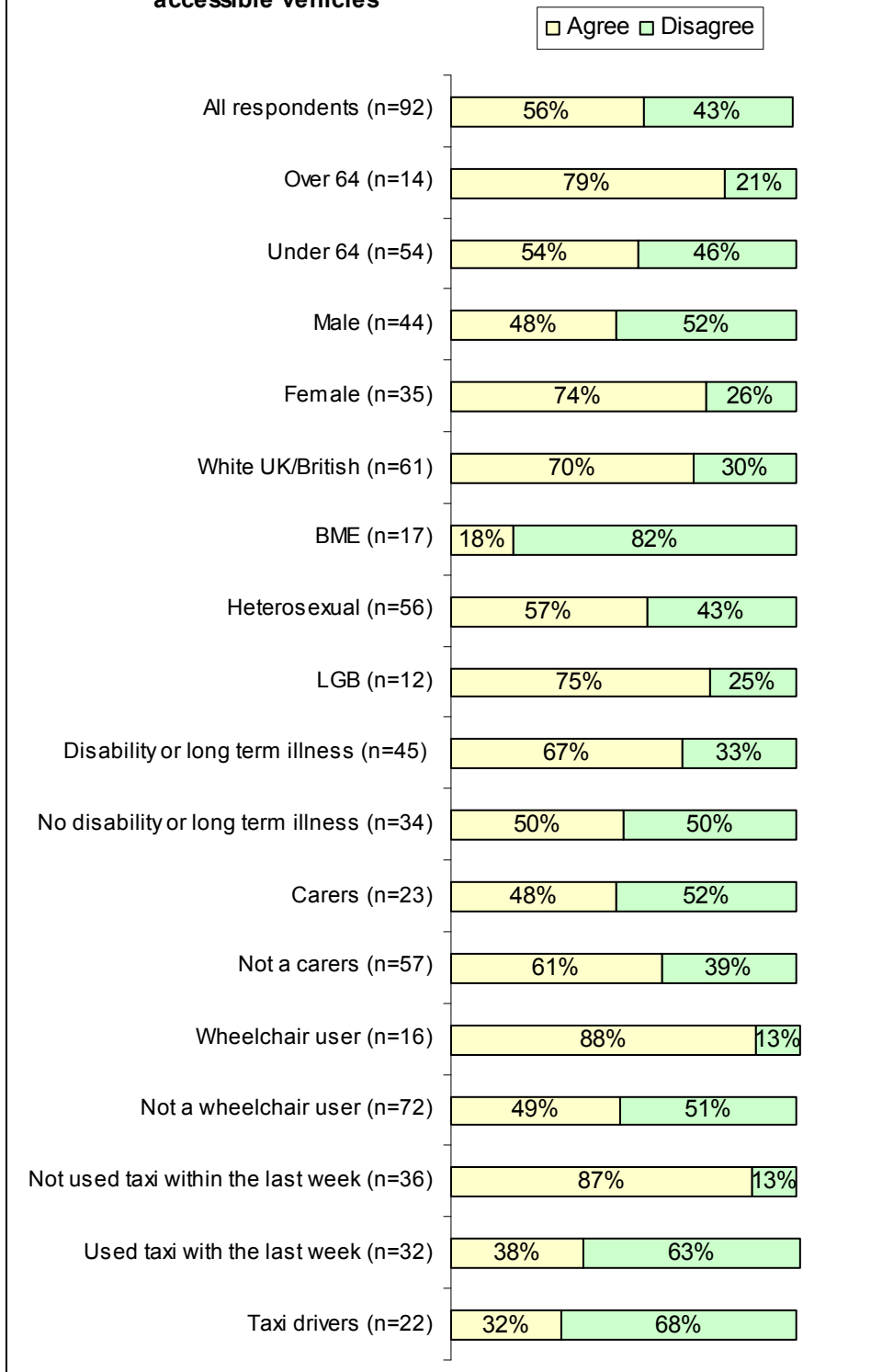
Nearly three quarters of respondents (29 people) who disagreed with this part of the Accessibility Policy made comments. The two main themes revolve around there being too many WAV / not enough/prefer saloon cars (13 people) and the difficulty that some people have in getting in and out of WAVs (12 people). Despite the consultation document clearly stating that the policy will not result in the loss of all saloon cars there is a thread within the comments that suggests some respondents do not think this will be the case.

Other themes within the comments include;

- That the policy focuses too much on the needs of wheelchair users and should focus more on the needs of other people with disability and mobility issues
- The council should listen more to the taxi trade as they understand the issues best
- The ride in WAV is uncomfortable and not as safe as saloon cars
- The higher levels of pollution that WAV cause
- The difficulty in ordering the appropriate taxi and or choosing the appropriate vehicle for their needs at taxi ranks

Full text responses are available in Appendix 1.

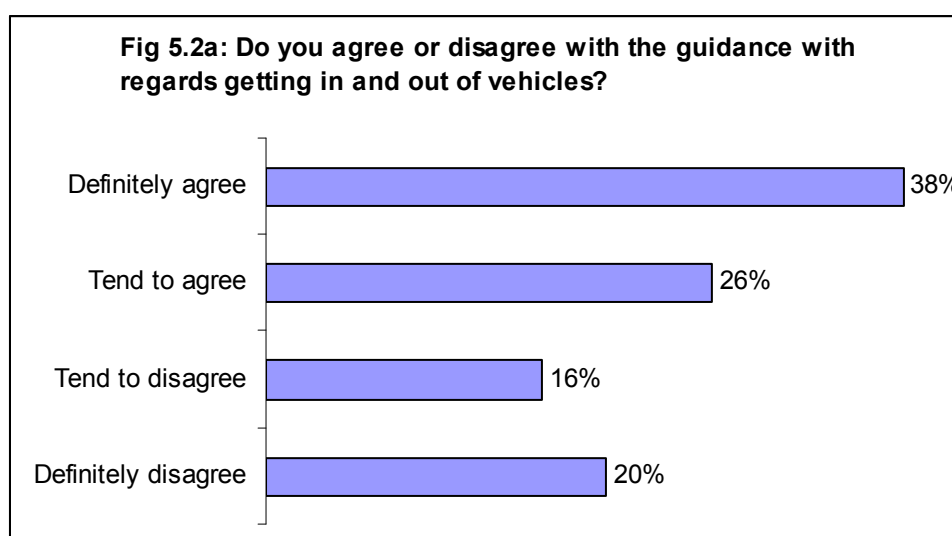
**Fig 5.1b: Agreement with the general points about accessible vehicles**



**Base: All respondents who answered the question excluding those stating 'don't know / not sure'**

## 5.2 Getting in and out of the vehicle

The accessibility policy provides standards wheel chair accessible vehicles must meet with regards passengers getting in and out of the vehicle. Respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the guidance, if in the context of making the city's taxis accessible for all residents there was anything that had not been considered and if they had any general comments they would like to make about getting in and out of vehicles.



**Base: All respondents who answered the question excluding those stating 'don't know / not sure' (n=80).**

Fourteen people (15%) either responded 'do not know / not sure' or did not answer the question. Among those who responded nearly two thirds (64%) agreed with the guidance while just over a third disagreed (36%).

### Differences by equality groups and demographics

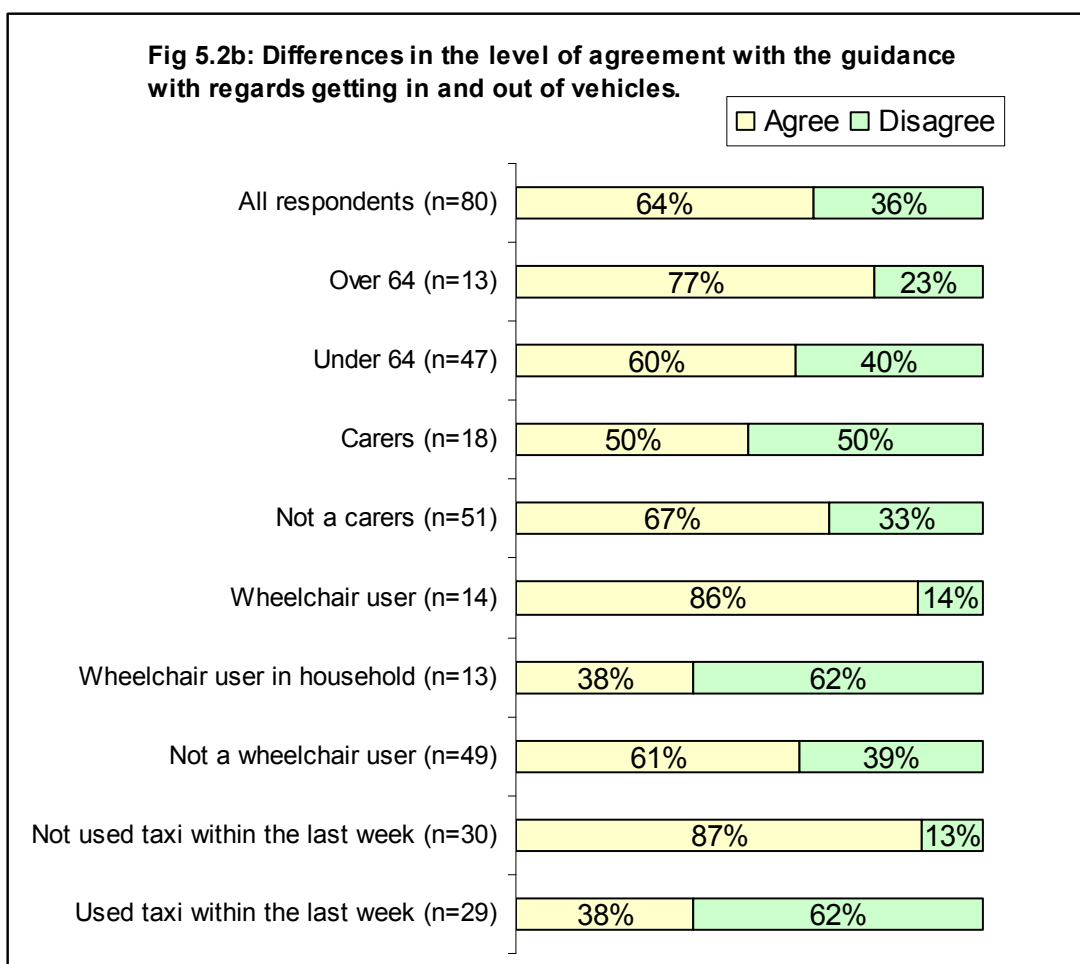
Wheelchair users (86%) and those aged over 64 (77%) are most likely to agree with the guidance while taxi drivers (32%) and frequent taxi users (38%) are least likely to agree (fig 5.2b below).

### Why respondents disagreed with the policy in relation to getting in and out of the vehicle

Two thirds of respondents (19 people) who disagreed with this part of the Accessibility Policy made comments. The only theme as such relates to the difficulty some people have with getting in and out of high step vehicles (6 people). Three people mentioned the danger/difficulty in using rear loading WAV and two people suggested lowering the kerb at bus stops as this is where taxis pick them up.

Full text responses are available in Appendix 1.



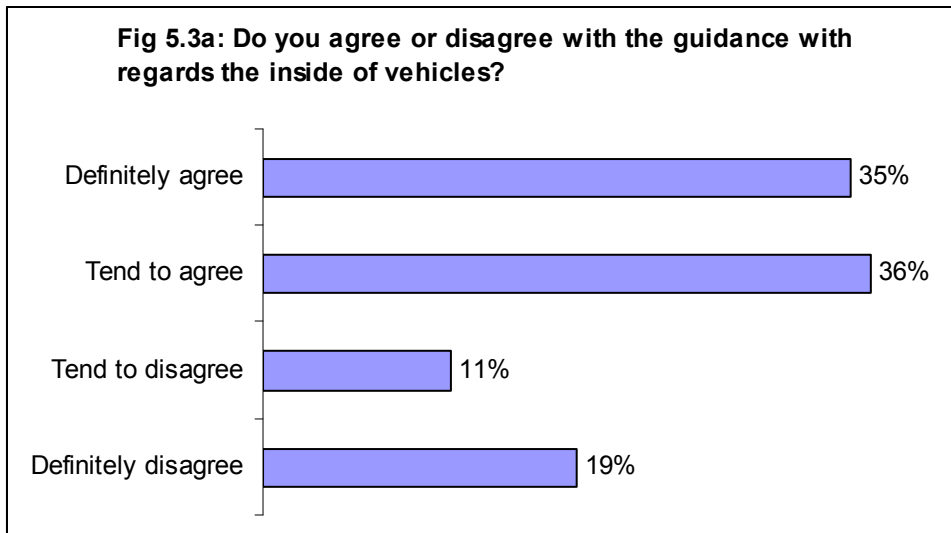


**Base: All respondents who answered the question excluding those stating 'don't know / not sure'**

### 5.3 Inside the vehicle

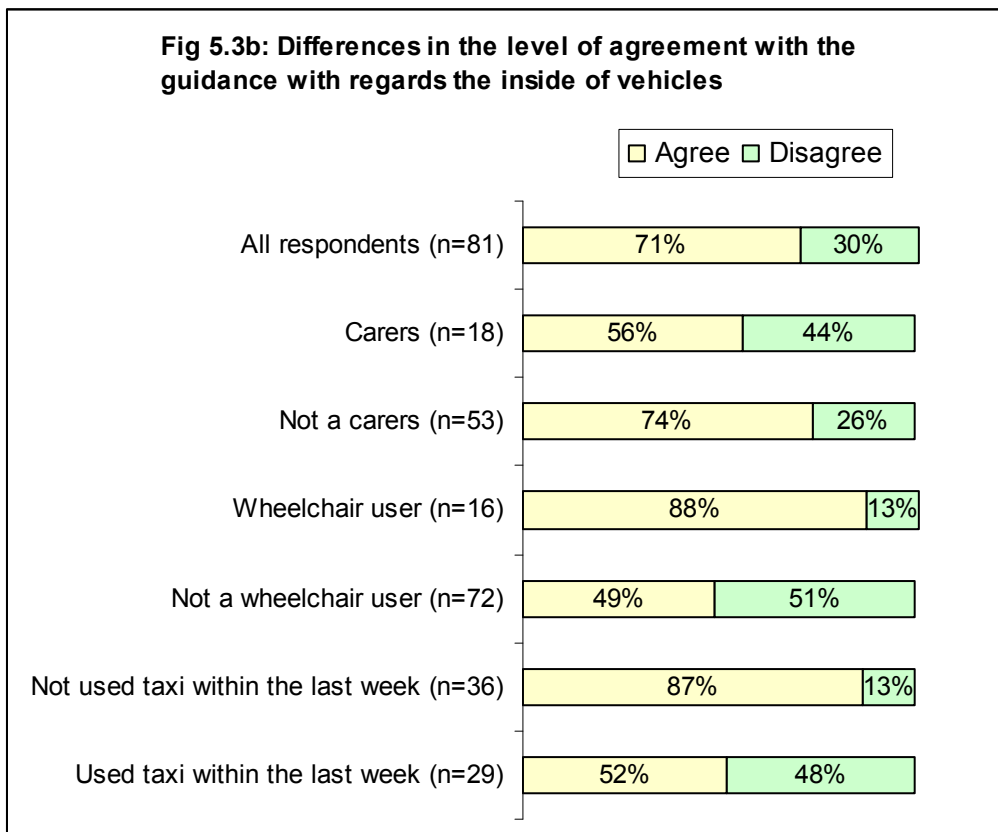
The accessibility policy provides standards that vehicles must meet with regards to the inside of vehicles. Respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the guidance, if in the context of making the city's taxis accessible for all residents there was anything that had not been considered and if they had any general comments they would like to make about the inside of vehicles.

From fig 5.3 below, thirteen people (14%) either responded 'do not know / not sure' or did not answer the question. Among those who responded more than two thirds (71%) agreed with guidance compared to less than a third (30%) who disagreed.



**Base: All respondents who answered the question excluding those stating 'don't know / not sure' (n=81).**

### Differences by equality groups and demographics



**Base: All respondents who answered the question excluding those stating 'don't know / not sure'**

From fig 5.3b above,

- Fourteen out of sixteen wheelchair users (88%) agree with the guidance about the inside of a vehicle compared to only 49% of respondents who don't use a wheelchair.

- Respondents who are frequent users of taxis (52%) and carers (56%) are the most likely to disagree with the guidance.

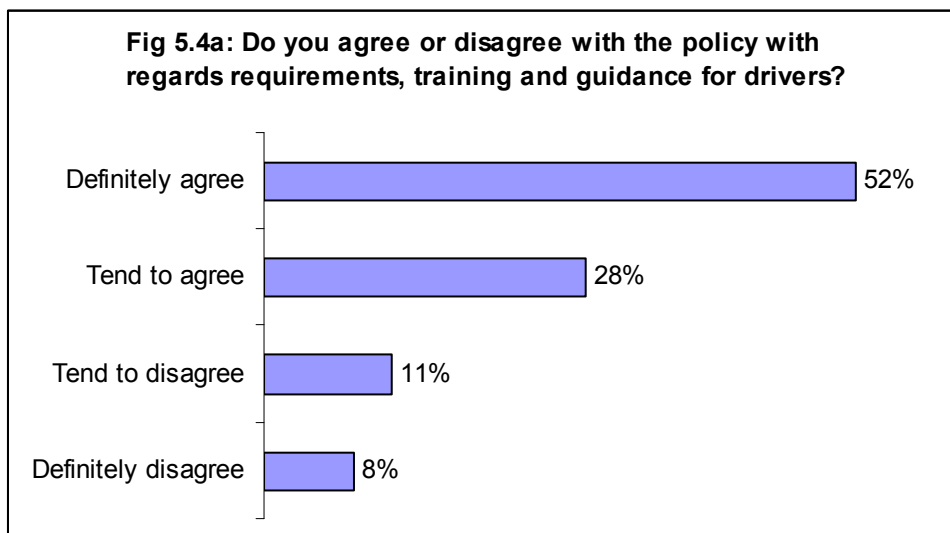
### Why respondents disagreed with the policy in relation to the inside of the vehicle

More than two thirds of respondents (17 people) who disagreed with this part of the Accessibility Policy made comments. Two people noted that rear loading WAV only have the capacity for a wheelchair passenger and one other so therefore could not meet the criteria for two carers. Of the other comments; some are technical in nature, some are unrelated to the question while the others continue the themes mentioned previously.

Full text responses are available in Appendix 1.

### 5.4 Requirements, training and guidance for drivers

The accessibility policy provides requirements, training and guidance for drivers when carrying passengers. Respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the guidance, if in the context of making the city’s taxis accessible for all residents there was anything that had not been considered and if they had any general comments they would like to make.



Base: All respondents who answered the question excluding those stating 'don't know / not sure' (n=88).

Four out of five respondents (80%) agreed with the policy in regards requirements training and guidance for drivers. Less than one in five disagreed (19%).

## **Differences by equality groups and demographics**

There are no significant differences by equality and demographics groups other than to note that all 16 wheelchair users agreed with the policy regarding requirements, training and guidance for drivers.

### **Why respondents disagreed with the policy in relation to requirements, training and guidance for drivers.**

More than two thirds of respondents (12 people) who disagreed with this part of the Accessibility Policy made comments. The only identifiable theme, for four people, relates to the welfare of drivers in relation to assisting people with wheelchairs.

Two comments mention the difficulty in the provision of adequate training and the need for all drivers to be trained as well as training for dispatchers.

Full text responses are available in Appendix 1.

## **5.5 Taxi use**

Respondents were asked how often they use taxis, if they have difficulties accessing taxis and the types of taxis they prefer or can use.

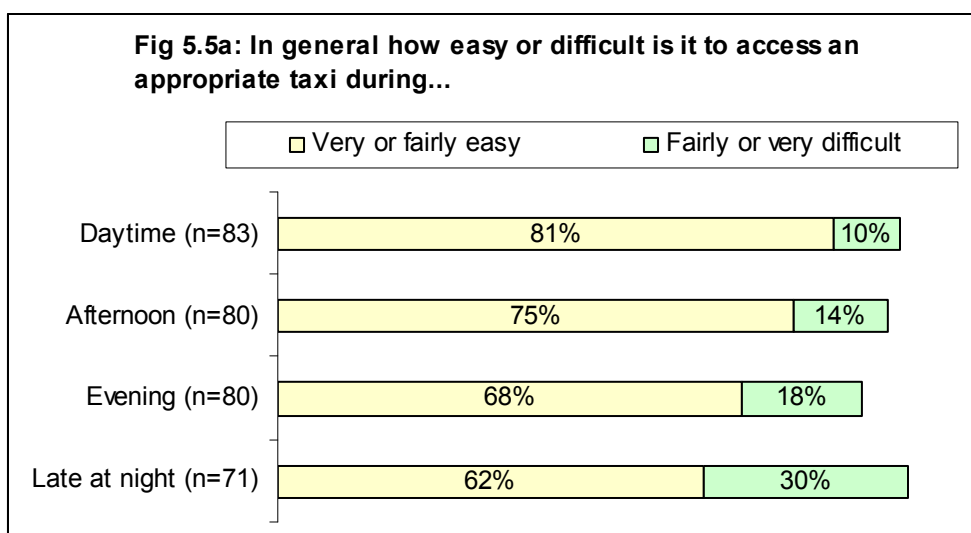
Thirty one respondents (33%) made comments about why they don't use taxis as much as they would like / need. Eleven people mentioned cost. The only theme (7 people) concerns not being able to ensure that they can get a saloon car or not get a van type taxi. Only two people mentioned not being able to get the correct type of wheelchair accessible vehicle and two people mentioned the general difficulties wheelchair users have in using taxis.

Full text responses are available in Appendix 1.

### **5.5.1 Accessing Taxis**

Generally more people find it easy to find a taxi than find it difficult (fig 5.5a below). The most difficult time to find a taxi is late at night with only two out of three respondents (62%) finding it easy, however, this is still twice as many as found it difficult (30%).

Twenty six respondents made comments about particular issues they have with accessing suitable taxis in the city. Similar to why some people don't use taxis as much as they would like the most mentioned (12 people) was too many/problems with the larger multi seat taxis or not enough saloon cars.



**Base: All respondents who answered the question excluding those stating 'don't know / not sure'.**

Among other comments three people found difficulties using taxis because of their disability; not accepting guide dogs, use of non standard mobility scooter and deaf people not having the option to order taxis by texting. Five people mentioned difficulties ordering taxis during busy times with two people specifically mentioning 'during the school run'.

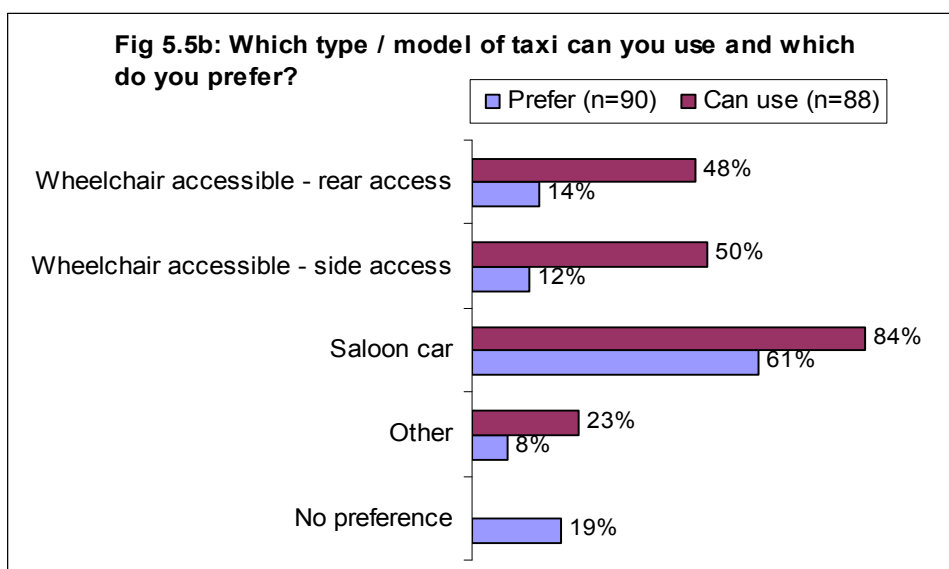
### Differences by equality groups and demographics

No respondent from a BME background found difficulties finding a taxi at any time of the day or night. The LGB community and those respondents with a health problem or disability tended to have slightly more difficulties finding a taxi than other groups. However, wheelchair users have by far the greatest difficulty in finding a taxi during the day or night.

Proportion of respondent who find it very or fairly difficult to find a taxi		
	Wheelchair user	Not a wheelchair user
Day time	4 out of 15 (27%)	3 out of 64 (5%)
Afternoon	7 out of 15 (47%)	3 out of 61 (5%)
Evening	5 out of 14 (36%)	8 out of 72 (11%)
Late at night	7 out of 12 (58%)	12 out of 65 (18%)

### 5.5.2 Model or type of taxis

From fig 5.5b below, more than four out of five respondents (84%) can use a saloon car while only about a half of respondents can use a WAV with rear access (48%) and a WAV with side access (50%).



**Base: All respondents who answered the question.**

While three out of five of all respondents (61%) prefer saloon cars only 14% and 12% respectively prefer WAVs with rear access and side access. One in five respondents (19%) had no preference with a small number of respondents having more than one preference.

While 21 respondents selected the 'other' option only seven people mentioned what that other option was. Three people mentioned London/black cabs, three people low/not high access and one Mercedes.

### **Differences by respondents with a health problems or disability and older people**

Care is needed when interpreting these results as the number of responses is too low to draw meaningful conclusions and results should only be seen as indicative.

From fig 5.5c below, four out of five wheelchair users (81%) can use rear access WAV, a third (63%) can use a side access WAV but less than a half (44%) can use a saloon car. However, wheelchair users don't have a clear preference for a particular vehicle. With a half preferring a WAV with rear access, a third a saloon car and a quarter a side access WAV.

Less than a third of older people can use WAV while three out of four can use a saloon car.

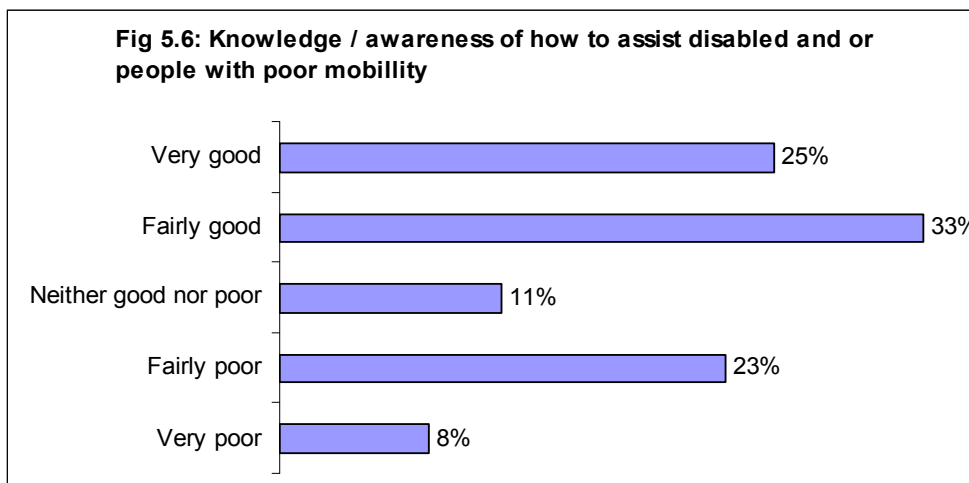
Other than for wheelchair users WAV are only the preferred type of taxi for at most a third of respondents. Apart from wheelchair users and respondents with a mental health condition saloon cars are the preferred type of taxi.

**Fig 5.5c: Type of vehicle that can be used and preferred choice of vehicle**

	WAV -rear access		WAV-side access		Saloon		Other		No preference
	Can use	Prefer	Can use	Prefer	Can use	Prefer	Can use	Prefer	
Wheelchair user (n=16)	81%	50%	63%	25%	44%	31%	6%	6%	0%
Physical impairment (n=38)	47%	26%	44%	21%	71%	58%	21%	13%	11%
Sensory Impairment (n=17)	64%	35%	53%	24%	59%	41%	18%	6%	12%
Learning disability / difficulty (n=6)	67%	33%	67%	33%	83%	67%	0%	0%	17%
Long-standing Illness (21)	57%	33%	43%	10%	62%	52%	19%	14%	10%
Mental health condition (n=8)	75%	38%	38%	0%	62%	38%	25%	13%	25%
Other disability (n=7)	43%	29%	29%	0%	57%	57%	14%	14%	0%
Aged over 64 (n=14)	29%	29%	14%	7%	79%	57%	7%	0%	14%

**Note:** Options are not mutually exclusive

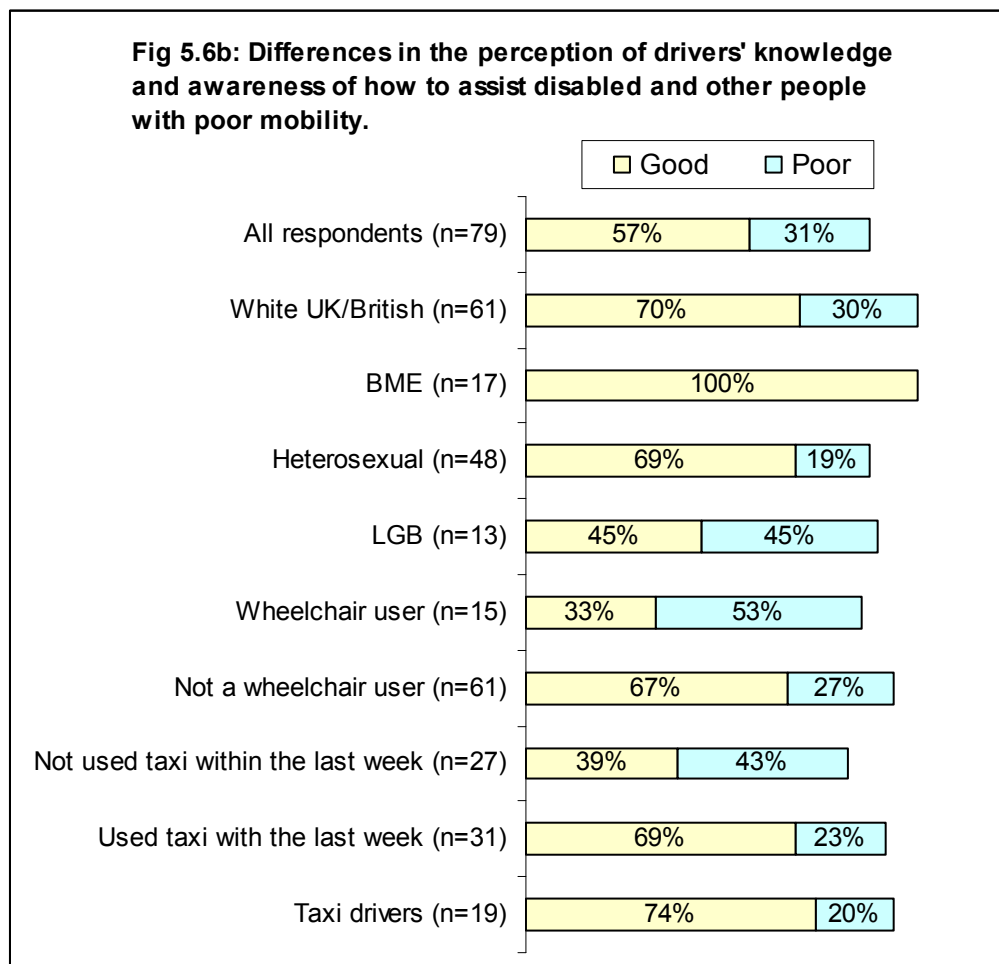
## 5.6 Taxi drivers' knowledge and awareness of how to assist disabled and people with poor mobility.



**Base:** All respondents who answered the question excluding those stating 'don't know / not applicable' (n=79).

Nearly three out of five respondents (57%) thought driver awareness of how to assist disabled and people with poor mobility was good, however a third thought that it was poor (31%).

## Differences by equality groups and demographics



**Base: All respondents who answered the question excluding those stating 'don't know / not applicable'**

All 17 BME respondents thought that taxi drivers' knowledge / awareness of how to assist disabled and people with poor mobility is good.

Three quarters of taxi driver (74%) also thought taxi drivers' knowledge / awareness was good with one in five (20%) thinking that it is poor.

More than a half of wheelchair users (53%) thought that taxi drivers' knowledge / awareness of how to assist disabled and people with poor mobility is poor with only a third (33%) think it is good.



## 6. Full profile of respondents

	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
<b>Type of respondent</b>		
Resident of the city	74	79%
A visitor	3	3%
On behalf of a community or voluntary organisation	7	7%
On behalf of a hackney carriage company	0	0%
A licensed taxi driver	23	25%
<b>Taxi use</b>		
Almost every day	20	22%
At least once a week	29	32%
About once a month	25	27%
Within the last six month	8	9%
Within the last year	4	4%
Longer ago	3	3%
Never used	3	3%
Total	92	
Not known	2	
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	45	56%
Female	35	43%
Other	1	1%
Total	81	100%
Not known	13	
<b>Age</b>		
under 35	14	20%
35 to 64	41	59%
over 64	14	20%
Total	69	100%
No response	25	
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
White UK / British	62	79%
White Irish	2	3%
Other White	4	5%
BME	11	14%
Total	79	100%
Not known	15	
<b>Sexual orientation</b>		
Heterosexual / Straight	56	80%
Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual	12	17%
Other	2	3%
Total	70	100%
Not known	24	
<b>Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last at least 12 months?</b>		
Yes	45	56%
No	35	43%
Total	80	100%
Not known	14	

	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
<b>Do you anyone in your household use a wheelchair?</b>		
Yes, I do	16	18%
Yes, someone in my household	13	15%
No	60	68%
Not known	6	
<b>Carer - look after or give help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of either; long term physical or mental ill health, a disability or a problem related to age.</b>		
Yes	24	30%
No	57	70%
Total	81	100%
Not known	13	