

Feedback from Consultation Event for the Hackney Carriage Accessibility Policy

8 May 2013

Representatives from the Get Involved Group – a pan-disability group facilitated by the voluntary organisation the Fed for Independent Living.

Present:

Ten members of the Get Involved Group with range of disabilities
Involvement Officer, the Fed for Independent Living
Chief Officer, the Fed for Independent Living
Trustee, the Fed for Independent Living
Hackney Carriage Officer, Brighton & Hove City Council
Interim Head of Communities & Equality, Brighton & Hove City Council
A submission was received from someone who was unable to attend.

Discussion Questions

Discussion was facilitated by a member of the GIG and focused on the following questions. Summary of discussion provided under each question.

1. Types of vehicle – which kind of vehicles best suit the needs of people with different impairments
 - Peugeot premier very good – flexible seating, lots of head room.
 - Mixed fleet essential; preference for rear loaders over side loaders
 - What about having provision for more vehicles large enough to take mobility scooters

2. Driver training – experiences of driver attitude/awareness and if this has been a problem how this might be improved by training, and what type
 - Lack of understanding of role of an assistance dog; some taxis happy to take a guide dog but not an assistance dog
 - Waivers should be available in accessible formats, for example, Braille when the waiver is for carrying dogs.
 - How to assist a range of people with different disabilities into a vehicle
 - Know how to use all the safety measures in their vehicle, for example, clamps
 - Respect for different individuals needs, do not assume know how to help or what's best – ask the individual and listen

If an individual with a disability is travelling with an able bodied carer; do not solely communicate with the carer

Sensitivity, for example, drive more gently for individuals for all customers with a mobility issue not only those who use a wheel chair, for example, an individual with severe arthritis.

Carry out mystery shopping

Role play – put yourself 'in an other's shoes'

Involve individuals with a disability in assessing the current training provision and providing new training

Monitor which taxi drivers complete the training

Use principals of the Thumbs Up scheme

Supplement the current BTEC; assess if the available NVQ is better

The needed for equality training not just for drivers but also dispatchers

Customer to be able / made easier to request a female driver.

3. Other accessibility features of vehicles – what works/what doesn't

More and better use of internal lighting to aid lip reading by deaf passengers

Some doors don't open far/wide enough

Issue with level of seats for some people with an impairment they are too low for others too high

Clamps must be working

Seatbelts not always in right place – need better flexibility in design

Removable and reusable non-slip flooring makes a safer journey for assistance dogs

Avoid twin ramps, very unstable

4. Customer safety – any issues not previously discussed relating to safety

Greater clarity on complaints procedure, many attendees reported having travelled insecurely in a taxi but unclear on complaints and enforcement procedure

5. Any other issues relating to equality/accessibility that should be tackled by this policy

Poor attitude/customer service of operators – do not ask sufficient questions to check individuals needs; lack of consistency across taxi firms

Improving access for customers with a hearing impairment when ordering a taxi

Be clear what's covered in the policy and what is covered elsewhere for example, health and safety, work place regulations and vehicle maintenance

Key Messages:

Supportive of a mixed fleet

Rear loader preferable over side loaders

Clarity about complaints and enforcement procedure

Accessibility of ordering a taxi

Training for operators – ask the right questions

Quality assurance measures: scores on the door scheme and mystery shopping by individuals with a disability

Review training offer ensure appropriate balance between practical knowledge and changing behaviours and raising awareness, including breadth of disabilities.

Accessibility of waivers, for example, Braille for taxis excluded guide dogs

Be clear in the policy what applies to the driver and what applies to the vehicle

