

## WAV Consultation Responses

1. I am writing to voice my opinion on the proposal to make all taxis in Aberdeen wheelchair accessible I AM NOT IN FAVOUR FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS
  1. This is not a mandatory requirement and we meet all present legislation.
  2. Whilst I am in favour of non discrimination of disabled persons, I am of the opinion that they are well served with the availability of disabled access taxis at present, and it has been said that the present disabled access taxis are not suitable for all disabled persons. There is a greater requirement for disabled access taxis to be called for by telephone than hailed on the street or taxi rank, and this would be easily fulfilled. Even in taxi ranks there is always a mix of taxis
  3. The added cost of providing disabled access taxis will ultimately be borne by all users just to fulfil the ruling Councils whim.
  4. The present general type of disabled access is no more than a converted van, and is generally not as comfortable a ride as a saloon car
  5. I am not a taxi driver, or close friends with such, but I feel that the added cost of selling their present saloons to buy these converted vans is a imposition that is not required and will push some drivers into hardship

I AGAIN RESTATE THAT I AM NOT IN FAVOUR OF A 100% DISABLED ACCESS FLEET OF TAXIS AND CONSIDER WHAT IS AT PRESENT IS MORE THAN ACCEPTABLE

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    1. We do not feel that there is a requirement for 100% of taxis to be fitted for disabled persons
    2. We feel that 50% would be a reasonable amount in the City of Aberdeen.
    3. Unsure!
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3. I do not think it necessary to impose the need for an entire fleet of WAV. There are many legal costs imposed on taxi drivers at the moment without imposing even more by way of purchasing costs and high depreciation levels of WAV vehicles. Aberdeen is already a very expensive city for taxis without making it worse.

The percentage of WAV vehicles should be calculated by the demand and or the number of complaints received from disabled customers about the lack of suitable vehicles.

In addition the council have just given a licence to UBER which will put even more pressure on the current taxi service.

Will the same WAV requirements be incorporated into the UBER licence? Make it an level playing field or give an incentive to the current fleet to introduce WAV vehicles by reducing their current high overhead costs.

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4. My views on wav

All yellow plated taxis be wav and all private hire taxis stay saloon that means you stay a mixed fleet in its entirety and that would mean not one disabled person would have to wait for a wav taxi in all weathers on the rank they would have the same Service as an able bodied person,if anyone wants a saloon car as you know with technology with taxi apps now you can request a car wherever you are,as for you bending over backwards to prevent law suits from drivers because this is really what it is all about because If you where interested in disabled people you would have had something in place a long time ago. A way that would be accepted by drivers would be to go back to you're original plan and let all yellow plated saloon car drivers keep there plates until they give up taxing or have to retire because of health.

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5. I'm presently an Aberdeen City Council licensed taxi driver and have been for nearly 11 years,I've nearly always worked nightshift and in that time the amount of wheelchair users I've seen at any of the ranks at any time can be counted on two hands,there is already an over provision of WAV taxis for the percentage amount of wheelchair users that need them,also there are WAV drivers with exemptions to accepting wheelchair users so you'll never really have a 100% compliant fleet other than in type of vehicle,there's also the fact that a lot of elderly passengers prefer and find it a lot easier accessing or going into a saloon to a WAV,therefore you're discriminating against them,the existing fleet split is more than adequate and there's always the option of a wheelchair user phoning or booking a taxi/Private Hire vehicle through one of the many taxi offices who offer WAV's,albeit this does cost an extra £1 - which I'm sure you could exempt for a wheelchair user.

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6. I am in agreement with having a mixed fleet of wheelchair accessible and saloon vehicles. I prefer to use a saloon car as I can transfer into the front seat. The driver folds my chair and puts it in the boot or back seat.

Wheelchair accessible vehicles are too time consuming for the passenger to get in and out of. This is unacceptable for the passenger, when the meter is running, ends up very expensive!!! The driver doesn't stop the meter when he/she parks the taxi to assist the passenger!!!

However, on several occasions I have been charged extra for driver assistance to put my wheelchair in and out of a saloon car!! This is unacceptable and illegal!!!

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7. 100% WAV fleet of taxis is not difficult to achieve. All of the largest and busiest cities in the UK are 100% WAV and it is no problem for them. Glasgow, Edinburgh, Birmingham, London etc.

The vehicles used there are accessible for all the public - regardless. They are designed with low floors and large doors so people with any disability can enter them. If Aberdeen cabbies insist on using the argument that some disabled people can't enter the current WAV fleet and need to use saloon cars, it can be countered by having a fleet of 100% London Hackney Carriage style vehicles that have been used for many years and are tried and tested for every eventuality.

The only way a person in a wheelchair can be guaranteed to get a WAV off a rank is for the total public hire fleet to be 100% wheelchair access. If there is only one taxi on the rank, the only way it can be a guaranteed WAV is if they are all WAV's.

Taxi drivers who have been forced to put WAV's on the road have had a limited choice of vehicle to choose from. Invariably more expensive and less practical for personal use than an ordinary saloon car. Although I note with interest some taxi drivers in Aberdeen use expensive German models of vehicles with impunity. Often these vehicles cost twice as much as a WAV. Whilst this does plenty to massage their ego and granted, it's a much nicer ride for any passenger, I think the council need to consider the wheelchair using public and also the taxi drivers who have needed to supply a WAV whilst their colleagues have basically stuck two fingers up and not changed their vehicle to a WAV.

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8. I believe it is discrimination against the able bodied in the city forcing them to travel in adapted vehicles just for your information I am registered disabled and find it much easier with a saloon car
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9. I have been taxiing for 22 years and this has been going on since I started. First I was told 2002 then 2012 then 2017,2018 and now 2019. I have driven 7 different wheelchair accessible vehicles since 1996 and have never had one passenger that can get into a saloon that is unable to get into my car. If the majority of other major city's in the uk can manage why can't we? All I want is a fair system and not the two tier one that is and has been used since 1994. If it's not illegal, it is definitely morally wrong. This will go on for ever until you make a definite decision and not keep putting off for another year. So either all taxis should be WAV or all saloon and give incentives to drivers to drive WAV. Eg. More expensive to license saloon. (Drivers choice). Or maybe taxi driver first licensed vehicle must be WAV. For say 5 years. Or saloons must be electric or hybrid.
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10. What utter nonsense!

There is no practical need for every taxi in Aberdeen to be wheelchair friendly. There are ample such taxis for those who need them.

I work adjacent to the taxi rank in Chapel street. In almost 20 years I have never seen anyone queueing at the rank with a wheelchair.

I see the taxis on a daily basis and more than half would appear to be wheelchair friendly. During the day in particular the rank is full with a choice of wheelchair accessible vehicles.

Whilst I acknowledge that those who are unfortunate enough to have a need for a wheelchair should be assisted where possible I think to impose such a restriction on hard pressed taxi drivers is a step too far.

I hope common sense will prevail in reaching a conclusion to this issue.

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11. As a WAV driver I believe that Aberdeen should have a mixed fleet as not all of our community are wheelchair bound

And some less able bodied people struggle to get into my WAV.

To make all taxis WAV would be a mistake and realistically unfair to non wheelchair bound passengers

I realize that you may think that PH cars will fill the void for picking up less restricted passengers but this takes the choice of going to the ranks away from the general public

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12. I have been a taxi driver in Aberdeen since the year 2000. When I started taxiing I was told at that time by the licensing committee that we would all be in WAV Vehicles by the year 2002 and I am not the only driver I know of at least another 10 drivers that were told the same. Keeping this in mind I decided to go yellow plate as the period of 2 years was acceptable to myself before we were all the same. Instead it is now 17 years later and I am still being discriminated against and all because ACC would not implement THEIR POLICY. Since then I have been heavily involved in helping to run wheelchair action group and the case with Jim Wilson v Aberdeen City council and we all know what happened there. At present we are still awaiting the council review to be completed and if this result is not to our satisfaction then we will instruct our legal rep to carry out a judicial review with the case Jim Wilson v Aberdeen City council with immediate effect as this is not what their q.v. intimated during court proceedings.
- I'm not sure why ACC won't implement their policy I think it's because certain people can't get in to the WAV cars these are the cars that ACC passed as being fit for purpose. If this is the case then ask yourself this and if possible an answer would be appreciated ?
- How do the WAV cars manage to pick up these passengers in bigger city's than Aberdeen such as London, Manchester, Liverpool etc. I have asked this question at various meetings with the councillors but guess what they never answer it I can only assume they don't know how to.
- If this is true about passengers not being able to get into WAV cars answer me this question. Why are you still passing the vehicles that passengers are not able to get in to ?
- Also why are the drivers not being notified that the WAV cars that they have purchased are not fit for purpose because when I bought my 4 WAV Vehicles I presumed that my car was fully accessible because I was not told by the council that they were not.
- I could go on for ages talking about this but I suppose the only way we will get satisfaction is in the courts and at present the wheelchair action group is preparing for this because in my mind if the council does not get the result they want with this survey then they will just put it back for another consultation until they get the result they want.

The position of way is clear we do not intend to get involved with the consultation process as there was nothing wrong with the previous consultation carried out but the answer didn't suit some councillors hence we are in this ridiculous situation of stalling for time the council did not even listen to their own legal team but make no mistake the wheelchair action group did. After this process is complete we intend to re evaluate the position and do whatever is required to get fairness delivered to our members no matter what the cost one thing I do know this will not go away until we achieve no discrimination has been achieved.

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13. I read in the press about a consultation regarding wheelchair accessible taxis. I totally appreciate the need for these but as a disabled person, though non wheelchair user, I find the type of vehicle needed to cater for wheelchairs extremely difficult to access. For me and I'm sure many elderly people or those who have other mobility difficulties ordinary saloon cars are much easier to access. If ever using a taxi rank I always forgo a wheelchair taxi in preference for an ordinary saloon. The saloon car doors are never so awkward to handle and these vehicles feel much much easier to sit into and get out of.

Just as it is wrong to have no wheelchair accessible taxis it is wrong to have only wheelchair accessible taxis. Discrimination works two ways and therefore there should be a sensible proportion of both types of vehicle.

I feel this is a topic which greatly affects me, as a resident of Kingswells where we have no proper bus service, taxis are very necessary.

It was by pure chance I read an article in the Evening Express but there was no mention there of where to send comments. I looked on the internet and found this site and can only hope this reaches the appropriate group or person.

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14. this all depends on what the definition of 'accessible' is. If we are just talking about wheelchair accessibility then this excludes many people who struggle getting in and out of wheelchair accessible vehicles so I agree all cars should be 100% accessible to all disabilities and people with restricted mobility. Also taxi drivers/companies have had since 1994 to change their cars so they should not be able to make excuses now for not changing over.
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15. 1. No. If all the taxis were designed for disabled people, they may be unsuitable (like a van, less comfortable, less safe than a car) or too expensive for poorer people to use. Better to have a % provision by taxi operator. Disabled people would by definition almost always order taxis from home or from a taxi rank. They are not likely to be hailing a passing taxi in the street.

2. 25%

3. The taxi operator would do that. Taxis are regulated.

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16. Even though I'm driving a wheel chair vehicle with annoying rattling noise, I don't agree with full wheel chair Fleet . It has to be mixed .but I want to make few points

1. Drivers who got the medical certificate to avoid doing wheel chair hires need to be checked Hard since are they doing this deliberately
  2. Airport fleet Need more Luggage space not wheel chair vehicle, so number of wheel chair vehicle can be reduced
  3. There are drivers Renting saloon plates from retired Drivers or some other not working drivers . It has to be stoped. Need to be given to OR swap for Drivers .
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- 17.
1. Many of our clients (older people and people with disabilities) have difficulty in using 100% accessible vehicles for various reasons this type of vehicle is not suitable for all disabilities.
  2. 75% accessible – as per above comment
  3. I am assuming that this would have to be monitored by yourselves based on actual numbers and %
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- 18.
- I am writing in response to your consultation paper regarding whether our Aberdeen taxi fleet should be 100 per cent wheelchair accessible. This is being sent as an email as I had some difficulty writing on your consultation form.

Yes I believe our taxi fleet should be 100% wheelchair accessible.

We must protect the most vulnerable in our society. Equality can only be achieved with a fully wheelchair accessible taxi fleet. Having carried wheelchair bound people in my taxi I have seen first hand the problems they face.

WAV driver/operators must not be financially disadvantaged in a mixed fleet scenario where licensed for a yellow plate to only operate a WAV while other driver/operators are to be allowed any type of vehicle including saloon type cars. This is illegal under current trading law. Since 1994 drivers have spent millions of pounds out of their own pockets on the adaptation of vehicles to WAV standard. This does not include the cost of the cars that were converted. Five years should have been enough time for our council to formulate a solution and offer fair trading for all taxi drivers, instead of making new drivers, the most defenceless, pay for its WAV policy.

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- 19.
- While I totally agree that we need wheelchair access in some taxis, I do not agree that all taxis require wheelchair access.

I am only 5ft. have scoliosis, spondylitis, osteoporosis and not full use of my arms and find it extremely difficult to access and egress from these minibus type of taxis.

Surely Aberdeen City Council should take into account that there are many people who do not require wheelchairs, but find trying to climb in and out of minibus taxis causes problems and can be painful.

I would be most obliged if you could please take the above into consideration when deciding on future policy.

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20. At their meeting of Wednesday 31 January 2018 the consensus of the Disability Equity Partnership was that 'One size does not fit all'. If Aberdeen Council were to implement the proposed strategy, some disabled people in the city would be served, but this will be to the obvious detriment and disadvantage of other disabled users. We recommend a common-sense mix of vehicle types as the best policy to ensure that service is fully accessible to the widest diversity of users within our community. Additionally, were Aberdeen Council to knowingly implement such a restrictive ruling, this may well expose them to a challenge of discrimination under current Equalities Legislation, under Access to Goods & Services; in that they are openly treating some people less favourably.
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21. 1. Do you think the taxi fleet should be comprised of 100% accessible vehicles?

Of the persons in attendance, 10 % voted Yes, 90 % voted No.

Reasons for this answer: Whilst improving accessibility for wheelchair users, the increased height of the chassis and doors above the kerb / road makes access more difficult for non wheelchair users with mobility issues. The level of comfort for non wheelchair users is less. The level of in cabin noise is higher for all, including the driver.

2. If "No", what percentage of vehicles should be accessible vehicles, and why?

No more than 25%, this seems more the adequate for perceived (to those present) need to WAV vehicles.

3. How would that percentage be maintained without discriminating against identical applications?

The meeting had no view, or suggestions, to offer with regard to this question.

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22. I am a frequent business user of taxis in Aberdeen and travel from outside the city to the airport every time I travel. I always request a saloon car for simple comfort reasons. This topic always come up with the taxi driver during the journey.

1. There are simply enough voluntary wheelchair accessible vehicles on the road. If this becomes to be a critically low level, incentivise it!

2. Non all wheelchair users wish to use a wheelchair accessible vehicle

3. Many Non wheelchair users do not like to travel in wheelchair accessible vehicles.

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23. I am 57 with arthritis and I do feel that Aberdeen City needs to be 100% wheelchair access as I personally find getting into someone of the bigger vans quite daunting to access. I also feel it is quite an undignified process to get into the vehicle. I would like to add that I do use the taxi rank frequently and find the taxi drivers to be very helpful.

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24. Whilst I am not altogether against wheelchair accessible taxis, I find that there are more than enough of them on the road at present.

As a fairly young 60 year old and in town regularly on a Saturday, I always take a taxi home at night and much prefer a saloon car as I have arthritis in my leg and find the wheelchair cars hard to get in and out of and they are also very uncomfortable. When possible I wait in the queue for a saloon car to take me home.

My mother (who died a few years ago) would have found it impossible to get in and out a wheelchair accessible car as she was so stiff.

I must say I have very rarely (if ever) seen a person in a wheelchair at the ranks.

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25. I can't see why all taxis need to be wheelchair accessible when there is a small number of people disabled in the city. There seems to be a trend that the minority Rules the majority nowadays. I have travelled in a wheelchair accessible taxi and it is not the most comfortable for passengers. Please be realistic and not one size fits all . No one is denying there are a need for a small minority which there is already in the city and it has worked well for years .

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26. Firstly I would like to comment on this website that is intentionally designed to mislead people away from voting on major council issues so that the voting is isolated to council members only, why advertise in local newspapers regarding the vote on wheelchairs and if every car needs to have this access installed.

In my opinion we have more taxis already fitted with this facility than we need, in future I will not use a taxi with this facility, it is my choice, I am not alone, thousands of people are tired of paying good monies to ride long distances in taxis that rattle over our goat tracks you call roads.

I will ride in a decent saloon car, not a modified van, therefore I will vote NO for further taxis to have this facility installed.

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27. Whilst I agree that some taxis should be wheelchair accessible I do not agree that this should be the case for all licensed taxis in Aberdeen

We already have one of the highest costs of fares in Scotland and I am sure that the cost of purchasing taxis that are wheelchair accessible would end up passed onto the customers.



Have you researched the percentage of the public that would need a wheelchair adapted taxi?

Our transport system in Aberdeen is woeful, the bus service is also one of the most expensive and after 5pm the service is shocking. We have no trams, no real local service and now I fear you will price taxis out of the equation and you wonder why the roads in Aberdeen are congested.

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28. Discrimination is unacceptable. It should not be tolerated or even worse still facilitated. It is preventable!

Aberdeen City Council is on the brink of tackling this scourge within our society, albeit in a small way, by taking a significant and positive step. The opportunity to stop treating our wheelchair user residents like second class citizens is in the Council's hands & minds at this moment. Our wheelchair resident's should be no less important within our community in Aberdeen than anyone else, and mustn't be treated as such either. They are every bit as valuable a member of our Aberdeen family.

Wheelchair users should be able to easily access and use the first taxi in any of our city's taxi ranks, just like anyone else. It is unacceptable for them to be expected to wait outdoors in the elements, whilst unsuitable taxis pick up others, until a suitable taxi eventually turns up. That's disgraceful!

Wheelchair accessible vehicles may not be as popular with some of the public, but the option of calling for a Private Hire Saloon vehicle is available to all, should it be preferable.

We mustn't allow the desire from some people for personal comfort & luxury to stand in the way of equality and fairness.

Aberdeen City Council must now do the right thing. Power to their elbow. The time for change, fairness and equality is now!

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29. Having a mixed fleet can accommodate all walks of life why you making this unlawful act on just one disability wheelchair?.how can you get a scooter in a WAV as it's don't have a boot space? Plus not having headrest for the wheelchair in those cabs . It don't look safe incase of an accident,some children in pushchairs are loaded inside without getting into a real seat, do you check the intercom on a council test as it's very important to talk with the customer? I hope you understand all disabilities and not one sizes fits all, be right lawful and safe and keep the saloon car
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30. I am a wheelchair user and my view is that not all taxis should be wheelchair accessible. What would be preferable is a mixture of wheelchair accessible along with ordinary saloon cars but with a proportion of wheelchair accessible cars being available at any given time. What we found was that so many of the accessible cars are the bigger vehicles and the drivers work Friday and Saturday nights as they can charge larger fees for taking more passengers. That is the nights most people are going out in larger groups but this meant that either none or very few wheelchair accessible vehicles were available at weekends through the day. Not everyone can get into these larger vehicles and not all wheelchair passengers wish to travel in their chairs so this can cause difficulties. Also many drivers got their licences to drive taxis through having an accessible car but then got exemption certificates to say they were unable to take wheelchairs usually due to a back problem. This distorts the figures of how many wheelchair vehicles are on the road at any time and would still cause difficulties if all taxis were accessible. Some wheelchair people are unable to stand so cannot transfer while others are capable of transferring and prefer to do so. Disabled people are not all the same and many have complex needs which means that different transport is required rather than one size fits all approach.

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31. There is absolutely no need to have all the taxis in the city with wheelchair access, certainly there should be a percentage of the fleet suitable for disabled people. Being a relatively active senior citizen when I was faced with trying to get into a taxi which was deemed suitable for disabled I found it awkward to get in and out of the taxi and more or less fell into the seat so you really need to give consideration to the more mobile of us who do not need a wheelchair access car. Surely it is sensible to make the fleet a 50/50 split so those of us who do not require a special car do not land up injuring ourselves when being forced to use a disabled car when we don't need one. There are plenty of disabled friendly taxis, you can phone a request one - I know because my mum did this on a regular basis. Please for a change use some commonsense - surely some of you have some.

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32. Has anyone at the council considered the fact that a change to the taxi licensing laws regarding 100% wheelchair accessible vehicles is not going to serve the needs of many disabled and elderly users. This is simply because there are many who cannot enter a wheelchair accessible vehicle due to difficulties actually being able to get on board.

If they call for a private hire saloon vehicle it will cost them an extra £1 before they even start. This question has come up on various occasions and no one seems to be willing to address it. There was a petition started. What happened to it? I have written this on behalf of the service users I encounter everyday in my line of work.

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33. Requiring all taxis to be wheelchair accessible seems like the proverbial sledgehammer to crack a nut.

What percentage of journeys is taken by wheelchair users?

This seems like a sure way of increasing journey prices for everyone.

Can we not provide a minimum number of accessible vehicles to cover the normally expected wheelchair traffic with a sensible margin?

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34. I am writing to you regarding the ongoing debate about the possibility of having all yellow plated hackneyed taxis 'Wheelchair accessible' in Aberdeen City. At the moment I believe the Aberdeen taxi fleet is almost a 50/50 between Wheelchair accessible and saloon cars.

The reason for me writing this is because a friend of mine has a wheelchair. When he orders a taxi he asks for a saloon car because he finds it near impossible to access a wheelchair accessible taxi (it is too high for him).

This is not a problem when he has to order a taxi from home because he will get a saloon car eventually coming for him. The problem is when he is out and about. If he is in town for a night out just now he can go to the taxi rank or flag a saloon car down. He gets into the saloon car, the wheelchair goes into the boot and all is fine. The same happens when he flags a saloon car on the street. If there was just wheelchair cars available on the street / rank he would have to get rolled in on his wheelchair which could be on a busy main road.

The big concern here is what happens if there are no yellow plated saloon cars to be had in the rank or to be hailed on the street. Another problem is that he could wait for hours on the street in adverse conditions if he had to call for a taxi during peak times.

I have had this conversation with Taxi drivers of both Saloon cars and wheelchair accessible vehicles, both sets of drivers see the need for a diverse fleet.

Wheelchair accessible cars were made mandatory for new taxi drivers with yellow plates from the mid 1990's. Now when taxi drivers retire or leave the trade the saloon plate (yellow) goes only to be replaced with a yellow one for a wheelchair vehicle. This will mean eventually there will be no more saloon plated taxis to be hailed or picked up at ranks. When this happens then there will be an outcry from people who need this service.

Apart from younger people with limited mobility, a lot of older people have great difficulty accessing cars / taxis that are 'higher' off the ground than the saloon car, my mother being one of them.

Most taxi companies in Aberdeen have said there are more people asking for saloon cars, my friend included.

It is time for common sense to prevail here and continue to have a diverse fleet of taxis (like the City of Dundee have) to service our streets and cater for the people on them. Please, in this day and age do not discriminate against people who for no fault of their own cannot manage or are unable to access these higher vehicles.

Many people have their views on this subject but ultimately its the people with limited mobility who can only use saloon cars are the ones being effected by this on the ranks and the streets of our City.

My friend would not want all yellow plated taxis being saloon cars, just because he needs to use them....he knows that would be unfair.

I ask yourselves at the licensing / the council to please keep this avenue of being able to choose which type of taxi they use in a rank or hail on the streets of Aberdeen.

These people like my friend really need your help here.

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35. I am not a wheelchair user nor am I registered disabled. However I fall somewhere in between that and being able bodied. I have mobility problems and have a need to use taxis.

Gone are the days when taxi drivers get out of their vehicles to open doors and help you in and out. I find wheelchair accessible vehicles very difficult to cope with. The steps are too high, the doors are heavy, awkward and difficult to open and shut – despite instructions being shouted from the driver. Arthritis, many other conditions or just being elderly make these things a problem. Although I believe I have a right to choose a vehicle from the rank, taxi drivers don't seem to agree and insist you use the first taxi in the queue whether suitable for your needs or not. It's a bit like insisting a wheelchair user uses a saloon car. So I tend to let the person behind me go ahead of me and wait for a saloon car to arrive. I am sure there are a large amount of people, both young and elderly, who experience the same problems as myself and I dread the thought of a totally wheelchair accessible vehicle rank. In a way it's discriminating against which, I would imagine, is a large group of citizens in Aberdeen whose needs aren't met by WAV's.

It would be interesting to know what proportion of people picked up from ranks are wheelchair users. The policy should be equitable and realistic for all users and common sense applied.

In summary, I am happy that more wheelchair accessible vehicles are now available in the city but feel that taxis should cater for all needs, not just one specific group. I hope my views are taken into account when the decision is made. I know I am far from alone in my views but am probably in the minority taking the time to register them.

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36. I am writing to oppose the proposal of making all taxi vehicles in Aberdeen wheelchair accessible. I care for an MS sufferer who does not require a wheelchair – he struggles to get in and out of the wheelchair accessible taxis already and we witness elderly people amongst many others suffering from the same issue regularly. There are already enough wheelchair accessible vehicles to cater for user's needs.

Please consider those who are considered disabled but do not require a wheelchair and do not put this proposal into effect.

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37. I am sending this in response to your proposals on the possibility of making all the taxi fleet in Aberdeen wheelchair accessible or having a mixed fleet to include saloon cars.

I have held a taxi licence for more than 25yrs and in that time I have experienced many disabled people walking by wheelchair accessible taxis because they find it very difficult to access these kind of vehicles and prefer a saloon car as they are easier to enter.

I have spoken to other colleagues in the ranks with longer service than me and they confirm what I'm saying. If you pass your proposal many elderly taxi drivers may be forced off the road as they are not in a position to purchase one of these vehicles owing to their age.

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38. I would like to state that I do not agree with all the taxis in Aberdeen having disabled access.

My first point is that I and an awful lot of other people would like the choice of having a saloon vehicle especially when dressed up and going to a wedding for example.

My second point is that I have two friends that would struggle to get into the disabled cars. Although they use walking sticks they wouldn't find it easy to access or get out of these cars as they are considerably higher and have very narrow seats.

Please pass my points.

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39. I write to express my concern over Aberdeen City Councils (ACC) plan to implement a 100% Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle taxi fleet.

My concern is raised due to the fact that the whole reason why 'accessible' taxis were introduced in the 1st place was to prevent discrimination of wheelchair users and prevent their inability to pick up a vehicle suitable to their needs from a taxi rank. For the council to go ahead with the implementation of their 100% Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Policy, which would result in the removal of ALL saloon cars from taxi ranks across the city, the council would only be shifting their discrimination from one user group to another and they would find themselves discriminating against the non wheelchair using disabled people and wheelchair users who choose to transfer, that live in or travel through the city.

I believe that a number of disabled people, along with representatives of disabled groups, have already written to the council to express their concerns over the implementation of this policy. I also believe that if ACC go ahead with its implementation they could find themselves facing charges of discrimination in the future. According to the Scottish Governments Taxi and Private Hire Car Licensing: Best Practice for Licensing Authorities,

Second Edition, April 2012, responsibility for accessibility legislation for Taxis is primarily a matter reserved for the UK Government however under Chapter 4 - Accessibility and The Equality Act 2010 point 4.3 acknowledges that a number of authorities have adopted policies increasing the availability of accessible vehicles whereby only accessible taxis will be acceptable for licensing purposes however point 4.3 also highlights the importance of recognising ALL taxi users requirements within an area and adopting a suitable policy to address customers needs whether they are a wheelchair user, visually impaired or have other mobility requirements etc. Personally I feel that by proceeding with the implementation of this policy ACC are in breach of the Scottish Governments Best Practice.

Aberdeen City Council as a local authority have a duty stemming from the Equality Act 2010 to meet the different needs of individuals. Clearly, disabled people are a very diverse group with many differing needs, not all disabled people are in wheelchairs, in fact of the 8.6 million people registered as disabled in the UK only 5% are actually wheelchair users and of those most would prefer to transfer into a saloon vehicle as it makes them feel safer. The Equality Act 2010 states under taxi accessibility regulations that disabled people have the right to get in and out of taxis safely. If ACC do not include saloon cars within their taxi fleet many disabled people, particularly those with conditions effecting lower limbs/hip joints etc will have no option but to try and struggle to get into the other types of vehicles, risking their safety. Even when a step is provided to assist with the entry/exit of a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle the individual does not feel safe. I am aware of one lady, who I believe has previously written to the council to express her concerns with regard to the implementation of the Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Policy, has in the past got stuck trying to enter/exit a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle which resulted in her feeling very scared and highly embarrassed over the whole situation. Of course there is an argument that individuals who require a Saloon car could call and book a Private Hire Saloon however they should not have to make a call and pay the £1 extra incurred for making a booking. These types of vehicles should be available for them to pick up at a taxi rank or be flagged down. Of course these are principally the very reasons why the whole Wheelchair Accessible issue arose in the first place, as ALL taxi users no matter what their mobility should have the choice of picking up a taxis from a rank or to be able to flag one down.

I sincerely hope that full consideration is given to the needs of ALL taxi users within Aberdeen City and that the taxi fleet in Aberdeen does not become 100% Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles. I do appreciate that there is a requirement for some Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles in order to provide equality for all and perhaps a split of say 60/40 in favour of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles would be a more realistic figure in order to meet the needs of ALL disabled users no matter what their disability may be.

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40. I would like a few points regarding making all taxis having disability access. I certainly don't agree with this and as a taxi driver of 40 years with Aberdeen City Council I don't feel that not all customers want this either.

Being an Airport driver I come across a lot people bypassing the wheelchair accessible cars to get a saloon car. Some people say they are not so comfortable especially if they are going on a longer journey. I get compliments on the comfort of my car on many occasions and customers quite often comment on Aberdeen having some of the best taxis in Britain.

Another thing which I think is important is that we have seen customers phoning out of city firms in order to get a saloon car.

I also have a friend with walking sticks and she finds it very difficult to get in and out of the wheelchair accessible cars because they are a lot higher than a saloon car.

In conclusion I think that a split ratio for Aberdeen would be far fairer to taxi drivers and customers alike.

Please forward my comments to the relevant person.

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41. 1. No. Accessible vehicles are very difficult to climb into by persons similar to my build ie small in stature. I do have disabilities which makes it all the more difficult to enter into yet I do not use a wheelchair, the similar condition to many users of taxis.
2. In my opinion each company/owner should be given the choice of 50% each of accessibility and saloon to be fair not forced to 100% without choice.
3. Why are companies not given a choice with the condition that there should be at least 30% of wheelchair accessible taxis.
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42. This is a reference to the announcement that Aberdeen Council is still going ahead with turning all the taxis in the city into WAVs. I am disabled and I am not in a wheelchair being disabled and getting discriminated against is something you get used to.

For ACC to discriminate against non-wheelchair disabled is something I find totally disgusting, would it not make more sense to have a percentage of taxis as WAVs as if they are all WAVs myself and thousands like me will be unable to get a taxi. And to put it plainly that is not fair.

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43. I strongly oppose the idea of all vehicles (taxis) to be wheelchair friendly and the vote should be hundred per cent against it.

I am seventy three years old severely arthritic and have difficulty getting in and out of these vehicles. Saloon cars are far more accessible on entry and exit.

I speak with good experience having had three hip replacements, knee replacement, broken leg three places and broken right and left wrist. Continuing arthritic problems.

Firstly it is a very high step and you have to hold both handles, lever yourself up and lower your head to get in. Turn round to get seated. Very low seating. On leaving you have to pull

yourself up from a low seat. Can only use one handle. Lower your head to come out and your body weight is badly distributed.

Any error in balance on narrow step you would fall head first. Should you have driver assist may leave driver open to blame.

Should the taxi not be close to the pavement then the above movements are more difficult.

Seating in a saloon car permits easier movement on entry and exit. Place bottom on seat, swivel body in and likewise on exit. Lower feet to ground and stand up. Much safer.

No other city in Scotland desire 100% disabled access. Please use common sense and continue the service as it is.

Should you have any doubt on what I have written I invite you to travel with me on a disabled access taxi.

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44. I read in the press about a consultation regarding wheelchair accessible taxis. I totally appreciate the need for these but as a disabled person, though non wheelchair user, I find the type of vehicle needed to cater for wheelchairs extremely difficult to access. For me and I'm sure many elderly people or those who have mobility difficulties ordinary saloon cars are much easier to access. If ever using a taxi rank I always forego a wheelchair taxi in preference for an ordinary saloon. The saloon car doors are never so awkward to handle and these vehicles feel much, much easier to sit into and get out of.

Just as it is wrong to have no wheelchair accessible taxis it is wrong to have only wheelchair accessible taxis. Discrimination works two ways and therefore there should be a sensible proportion of both types of vehicle.

I feel this is a topic which greatly affects me, as a resident of Kingswells where we have no proper bus service, taxis are very necessary.

It was by pure chance I read an article in the Evening Express but there was no mention there of where to send comments. I looked on the internet and found this site and can only hope this reaches the appropriate group or person.

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45. I am writing in response to the consultation taking place before a proposal to make all Aberdeen taxis Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs) by June 2019.

I should like to see a mixed fleet of saloon cars and WAVs for the following reasons:

1. I have had a hip replacement, two knee replacements and walk with a stick. I find Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles extremely difficult to get in and out of, and much prefer a saloon car, as do many frail elderly people who do not have any specific mobility problems.



2. My adult daughter has Down's Syndrome, Autism and a phobia about getting on busses and minibuses. She refuses to get into a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle because the seats are higher than in a saloon car.

We often use taxis in Aberdeen to access hospital appointments, and always request a saloon car for the above reasons.

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46. We believe that the Council is considering whether to retain mixed types of taxis such as saloons and wheelchair access vehicles or to opt for the latter only.

With so much emphasis today on ensuring that the obviously physically handicapped are not disadvantaged in terms of access and transport, we can understand that a council might worry about its caring image, feel pressure to be up to speed, as it were, and make all taxis wheelchair accessible particularly if some other council has done so.

However, opting for wheelchair accessible taxis alone would be disadvantageous for and discriminatory towards those members of the public who are not obviously physically handicapped.

We would make two points. Firstly, there are those elderly people who are small and/or stiff, who find it difficult to enter and exit wheelchair accessible taxis because of the side high step. Secondly, it is also more difficult to open and close a sliding door. Entry into and exiting from a saloon and its door handling are definitely easier.

What is our evidence for this? We who are in our eighties but pretty mobile personally find it so. Also this is the experience of fairly physically active friends and acquaintances. Where does that leave even less physically strong or supple people? Their needs have to be met.

We believe the sensible thing to do is have both types of taxi on the road to provide for people who need wheelchair access and for those who, while not immobile or chair bound, are less agile or strong.

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47.
  1. Yes. A purpose built vehicle could accommodate able bodied and disabled people.
  2. N/A
  3. People in wheelchairs would not have to wait for a taxi as all purpose built taxis can accommodate all and make everyone equal.

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48.
    1. Yes. Wheelchair users should be able to hire a taxi on the same level as everyone.
    2. N/A

3. If the taxi fleet are all wheelchair accessible there would be no discrimination as all taxi drivers would be trading equally and the public would benefit.

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