

Response 1

-----Original Message-----

From: Keith Swankie

Sent: 20 December 2017 08:47

To: LAWlicensing

Subject: Provision of wheelchair accessible taxi and private hire vehicles - comment

After reading this report and as a wheelchair user I believe that Arbroath has only one said vehicle run by a private operator Now living on a bus route that encompasses a supported residence for disabled residents if they were to board the bus that occupies the only wheelchair space on the bus so it's a lottery as to whether the bus is an option. Therefore, a town the size of Arbroath really needs more of these vehicles As with retailers and restaurants needing to provide disabled facilities should all taxi firms not need to provide said facilities as in a wheelchair accessible car with trained drivers. Yes this will incur a cost but perhaps there would be a grant from gov to help them with this I am sure the out lay would soon recoup

Thanks Keith Swankie

Response 2

-----Original Message-----

From: Ryan Galloway

Sent: 20 December 2017 21:41

To: LAWlicensing

Subject: Provision of wheelchair accessible taxi and private hire vehicles - comment

Hi,

In response to the consultation exercise in respect of accessible taxi provision in Angus I would like the following points to be considered.

As a parent of an 11yr old Powerchair user residing in Forfar we have been amazed at the poor accessible taxi provision. For many years after our sons diagnoses there were no suitable taxis that could transport my son in the Forfar area. At present we are aware of only one company in Forfar with a single accessible vehicle operating.

This is not acceptable in this day in age. With my son moving to high school next summer we anticipate his quest for independence to increase as his confidence grows. He hopes to be able to visit the town centre with his friends and with the lack of suitable taxis his options for returning the relative short distance home are limited. I have yet to see an accessible taxi waiting in the ranks within Forfar town centre. This is simply unacceptable.

Dundee city council have proactively encouraged the use of accessible vehicles to the point that it appears most of the fleet is accessible. The odds of getting an accessible taxi on a rank in Dundee appear far higher than any in Angus. I believe Dundee City encouraged the introduction of these vehicles by incentivising them for operators with a reduction in the frequency of testing. Whilst I

don't agree with this approach I think the council have a duty to support operators who wish to provide accessible vehicles.

During my sons 7 years at primary school we have also struggled to obtain accessible taxis for short school excursions. Once again the poor provision in Forfar meant that one had to be located and sourced from another town. These short trips did not merit the hiring of an accessible bus as most of his class would walk but due to inclement weather a taxi was the only way he could be involved in the excursion.

We are fortunate to be in a position to afford our own transport so reliance on taxis is negligible however there must be many wheelchair users and those with restricted mobility that struggle to get around Forfar.

I would actively support any increase in the provision of accessible taxis in Angus but also believe that with the provision of these vehicles the operators should be supported with suitable training in respect of care and communication with disabled passengers.

Submitted for consideration

Ryan Galloway
Forfar

Response 3

-----Original Message-----

From: Wendy Duncan

Sent: 10 January 2018 19:28

To: LAWlicensing

Subject: Provision of wheelchair accessible taxi and private hire vehicles - comment

Dear sir/madam

I would like to see an increase in accessible transport / taxi . I am a parent carer to my adult son who is a wheelchair user and we struggle to get a taxi to take us out and about for daily activities, shopping and appointments. My son is of an age now where he likes to go to pubs and clubs however this is difficult and sometimes impossible as he find it hard to get a taxi. This has caused social isolation and prevented him from the same social experiences as the rest of his family and peers .

Kind Regards
Wendy Duncan

Response 4

Dear Tina

RE ; WHEELCHAIR TAXIS Committee report 369/17

I am writing in response to the consultation regarding wheelchair taxi provision within the Angus area.

I currently hold a Taxi operators licence and have done for a number of years now within Angus specialising in wheelchair transport.

I shall quote some obvious facts and figures however, this is only part of the story as there are numerous other factors that should be considered by the committee.

I could not source Angus figures but according to census in 2015/16 “ www.disabled-world.com / statistics states 1.9 % of the UK population are wheelchair users, of which some 88% of these potential wheelchair taxi customers do in fact have their **own mobility transport** . This leaves 12% of only 1.9% of the British population requiring a taxi on occasions.

By any mathematical sum this is obviously a very very small piece of the taxi trade pie. There are currently 187 taxis in Angus of which 14 are wheelchair accessible some 7'5% of the taxi fleet so on the face of it there is **ample vehicle coverage and so no unmet taxi requirement**.

Firstly other factors the committee to consider are, and this is a very awkward delicate statement but never the less relevant for debate. Because of the 187 taxis in Angus a massive number of over 100 drivers are in fact self-employed owner drivers or they rent their vehicle from an operator and this is where the first issue arises. This is not a discriminatory comment but mere fact based that if you transfer an able body passenger from point “A” across town to point “B” it will take an average of 8-10 minutes in any Angus town.

However a passenger in a wheelchair on the same journey will take some 15-20 minutes. Access from home to car, then loading and securing the wheelchair, then driving style/method takes longer and then unloading and ensuring safe entrance at their destination. Now the awkward statement in all of this is the fare is the same. A self-employed driver will choose to maximise profit and therefore not undertake wheelchair work.

In addition the next area of debate is that a wheelchair taxi is far greater purchase than a conventional saloon car, generally some 20-30 % more expensive. My latest purchase was a Ford Connect Grand Tourneo XL this was some £21,500 new however after Ford or any professional coachbuilder adapts the vehicle for wheelchair passengers it was £27,895 some £6,395 out of my pocket.

The difficult question arises is to why would any profit related business outlay a higher expenditure on this vehicle with no increased income and in fact takes longer to make the same cash flow as a saloon car. I have no answers nor solution but merely to point out the issue to the committee.

However some 10 years ago Dundee City Council also had a lack of wheelchair taxis and so gave a financial substance (many thousands of pounds) to each operator who would put a wheelchair taxi on the road, this proved very successful and in fact too successful as they saturated the taxi trade as drivers accepted the payments but for the reasons mentioned above a vast majority of these drivers are self-employed so they ignore wheelchair calls with a variety of excuses to the callers and concentrate on normal taxi work.

Taxi school contract work is highly sought after especially for a wheelchair vehicle and is a good regular source of income to any driver but Angus council transport policy contributes to the lack of wheelchair taxis. To my knowledge Angus council is the only council in Scotland to accept tender applications from taxis outwith its area. This has a very detrimental effect as a vast majority of school wheelchair contracts attend specialist schooling outwith Angus. For instance Kingspark in Dundee has many Angus pupils and because of this policy We (Angus) taxi are tendering unfairly against Dundee taxis because after dropping off their passenger the Dundee taxi is now on its own patch at 0900 ready to work however an Angus taxi has now to return back to Angus with an extra time costs which gives Dundee cars an advantage whilst costing a tender. This Angus council policy has a knock on effect discouraging anyone considering operating a wheelchair taxi vehicle. Locally there are 2 wheelchair taxis in Kirriemuir both transport able bodied pupils and 1 in Forfar has no contract at all. This is a tremendous waste of a rare specialist vehicle. Should wish to discuss further please contact myself.

To summarize that a wheelchair Taxi is;

- More expensive purchase
- Higher depreciation costs
- Due to vehicle weight and load more expensive to run on fuel, tyres and maintain
- Tariff rates are same as saloon car
- Longer to undertake same journey as saloon car
- Angus council accepts tender from anywhere in Scotland

Given the above there is no valid reason for a taxi operator to purchase this vehicle so to avert a crisis in the near future if Angus council wishes to protect a wheelchair taxi fleet I can only suggest one avenue to our mutual benefit,

Angus Council transport procurement service is on the PUBLIC SCOTLAND website so this needs to be changed to Angus registered vehicles only. If this is not possible there is a route in the website for what is termed a "Quick Quote" this system is open for the supplier (Angus council) to approach 3 companies of their choosing and the cheapest quote wins the tender therefore if you were to offer wheelchair contracts to Angus wheelchair registered vehicles this is the only path that merits the purchase of these vehicles in the future.

Yours truly,

Darren Penman

A Helping Hand Taxi company

Response 5

-----Original Message-----

From: Carol Speed

Sent: 17 January 2018 19:35

To: LAWlicensing

Subject: Provision of wheelchair accessible taxi and private hire vehicles - comment

Dear Sir/Madam

I would like to see an increase in accessible vehicles / taxi as my family members and friends use wheelchairs and find it difficult to access transport to get around Angus. With an ageing population many people would benefit.

Thanks

Response 6

-----Original Message-----

From: Wendy Duncan

Sent: 27 January 2018 13:06

To: LAWlicensing

Subject: Accessible private hire and Accessible Taxi

Dear Sir Madam

I'm writing in support of the increase of Accessible private hire /taxis . As a mother of a young adult who requires an accessible taxi we have struggled for many year to get around because of a lack of them. This impacts greatly on social and health needs and opportunities. We have also experienced very poor attitude and refusal of taxi service from accessible vehicles. Leaving us stranded.

Kind Regards

Wendy Duncan

Response 7

-----Original Message-----

From: Catherine Matheson

Sent: 27 January 2018 15:27

To: LAWlicensing

Subject: Provision of wheelchair accessible taxi and private hire vehicles - comment

As I am the carer of a teenage wheelchair user, I support the increase of wheelchair accessible taxis in Angus. There is a distinct lack of these vehicles in Forfar, in particular, for general hire. We would also appreciate some training input for the drivers of wheelchair accessible taxis, as we have suffered terrible abuse and poor treatment from some of these drivers in the past.

Response 8

From: Kein Speed

Sent: 29 January 2018 20:37

To: LAWlicensing

Subject: Wheelchair taxis

Hi as a wheelchair user i do not feel that there is not enough wheelchair accessible taxis in Angus, I also feel that they aren't big enough

Response 9

-----Original Message-----

From: Lois Speed

Sent: 29 January 2018 20:05

To: LAWlicensing

Subject: Provision of wheelchair accessible taxi and private hire vehicles - comment

Dear Sir Madam

I'm writing to show my support for an increase in private hire/accessible taxis as I am a parent /Carer to two children who require accessible vehicles to get around. We have struggled for many years to travel in taxis and this has often restricted and impacted on us being able to get around and attend health and social appointments and activities.

Bus and train travel is restricted to one wheelchair space and we often can't use this method of travel either because of shortage of wheelchair spaces.

Hopefully we will see a change to licensing and an increase in accessible vehicles.

Kind Regards

Response 10

-----Original Message-----

From: Amanda Low

Sent: 30 January 2018 19:23

To: LAWlicensing

Subject: Provision of wheelchair accessible taxi and private hire vehicles - comment

As someone who works with wheelchair users I find that as a whole Angus seriously lacks in accessible taxis and public transport.

Wheelchair ramps in taxis can often be too steep for some people, Larger taxis that could accommodate more than one wheelchair would benefit families where more than one member is wheelchair dependent

Response 11

Telephone call from Barry Gibbs, Carnoustie.

Called to tell TM that he has read the letter sent to him regarding the provision of wheelchair accessible taxi and private hire vehicles and he doesn't believe that there is a shortage in Angus. He has a minibus and over the years he has only had two calls to supply someone with a wheelchair accessible vehicle.

He feels that 99.9% of people have mobility vehicles. If there was a shortage, he would get lots of phone calls. Mr Gibbs indicated that he goes to lots of houses everyday connected with the taxi school runs that he does. He thinks that people have but don't use the mobility vehicles that frequently either, however.

If there were a shortage, he would get requests every week. Mr Gibbs doesn't think there is a shortage based upon that.

Response 12

31.1.18

Telephone call received from Mary Cathro, resident of Arbroath

Ms Cathro advising that she is an electric wheelchair user at all times. She has experienced problems getting a taxi in Arbroath. Noting that if there is a need for a taxi and one day the taxi is on an airport run – she can't get out. She has no other way of getting out and about.

Noting that there is only one taxi in Arbroath that takes electric wheelchairs. Ms Cathro thinks that it is not fair on her and other residents. There are many ordinary taxis in the town and only one for us. Ms Cathro indicated that she is beginning to feel penalised.

Ms Cathro indicated that she pays more than an ordinary person that hires a taxi. Going into town in Arbroath costs £3 for a normal taxi but it costs £4 for her.

Once a month Ms Cathro requires to attend at the hospital. She has to book in advance, if she can.

If it is raining and Ms Cathro has to go down town she can't do that if the taxi driver is away.

Response 13

31.1.18

Telephone call received from Beatrice Gerrard resident of Arbroath

Advised by Ms Gerrard that she has a scooter at the moment. Ms Gerrard is unsure if she will ever need a wheelchair but is of the view that there are definitely not enough wheelchair accessible taxis available. Ms Gerrard advised that two residents at Andy Stewart Court are left without transport, even though they place regular orders, as the taxi is going somewhere else. Ms Gerrard feels that this is a shame – they can't even get to appointments.

Ms Gerrard is aware that Lois Speed has two disabled sons that require a taxi if they are going any distance.

Ms Gerrard advised that she knows how important this issue is due to family experience too.

Response 14

From: Louis Benson

Sent: 01 February 2018 00:06

To: LAWlicensing

Subject: Wheelchair accessible taxis

I feel there is a need for a more comprehensive service than currently is available in Arbroath.

At present there is only one car available, with no service to be had on the driver's day off, and no choice.

Louis Benson

Response 15

30.1.18

Val Laing called from Andy Stewart Court. She is the Chairperson for the tenants. Advised that there are two or three wheelchair users at Andy Stewart Court. However, there is only one wheelchair accessible taxi in the Arbroath area. If that taxi driver decides to do an airport run, they are stuck. The residents can't get out then – they have no other way to get out. This happens quite often.

Response 16

24.1.18

Mr Lewis from Arbroath indicated that he thought there could be some more wheelchair accessible taxis in Arbroath.