

# Crawley Borough Council

	Report No: PES/066	<b>B</b>
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## Report to the Licensing Committee

7 March 2012

### Hackney Carriage Improvements – Disability Awareness

#### 1.0 Key Points

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to guide members in their deliberations as to whether private hire and hackney carriage drivers should be required to undertake disability awareness training. It is considered that undertaking such training would enable taxi drivers to offer a better service to the general public.
- 1.2. Private Hire and Hackney Carriage drivers frequently encounter passengers with various disabilities and it is therefore considered necessary that all drivers are aware of the needs of disabled passengers.
- 1.3. Disability awareness courses are available from many different training organisations however some disability awareness training companies charge for their services.
- 1.4. This report set outs options for Elected Member's perusal to improve disability awareness amongst Crawley Licensed taxi drivers.

#### 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1. That all taxi and private hire drivers licensed by Crawley Borough Council shall be required to undertake a specified disability awareness course in order to improve the service they provide to the general public.
- 2.2. That a suitable condition be formulated and attached to private hire driver's licences and that proof shall be required for all hackney carriage licence applications that disability training has been undertaken and passed prior to renewal or new licences being issued.

ANGELA TANNER  
Head of Planning and Environmental Services

### **3.0 Background**

- 3.1 At the committee meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2011 it was agreed that further investigation be carried out to develop a number of options in respect of improving awareness of the needs of disabled customers using the Hackney Carriage Service, and that officers present options to the Committee within the next 6 months.
- 3.2 Without an accessible transport system, many disabled people are deprived of the freedom to move beyond their immediate environment. Accessible vehicles would obviously make travel easier, but would be irrelevant if the transport infrastructure, i.e. stations, transport information; ticket sales points, remained inaccessible or staff lacks the necessary training to enable them to offer appropriate assistance.
- 3.3 It is suggested that disability awareness training should be a requirement for all taxi drivers and not be solely restricted to those holding a hackney carriage licence. This would enable all taxi drivers to understand the needs for disabled passengers and offer a service which would make travelling easier for them.
- 3.4 Disability Awareness means educating people regarding disabilities and giving people the knowledge required to carry out a job or task thus separating good practice from poor. Guidance on this matter suggest it is no longer sufficient to acknowledge discrimination due to disability as unlawful and positive action needs to be taken to address such problems.
- 3.5 Disability is a complex matter and any training needs to cover the following as a minimum:
- Deafness as regards communication
  - Visual Impairment
  - Learning Disability
  - Mobility Issues - different types of walking issues, appropriate types of vehicles, and wheelchairs/power chairs if appropriate
  - People with mental health issues
  - Working with assistance dogs
- 3.6 Whilst some drivers may be very experienced in dealing with certain aspects of disability, the intention is to bring all drivers up to a minimum standard in the key areas in point 3.5.

### **4.0 Ward Members' Views**

- 4.1. The Council on this occasion has not consulted or sought the views of Ward Members as this matter is not ward specific.

### **5.0 Staffing, Financial and Legal Implications/Powers**

- 5.1 There are no extra staffing or financial implications to the Council.
- 5.2. **Article 1** of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998 entitles every person to the right to peaceful enjoyment of their possessions, which includes their livelihood or their means of earning it.

5.3 A number of methods for the delivery of disability training have been explored. Further to the research that has been carried out by the Licensing Officer it is considered that on line e-learning is the most suitable and cost effective method of training drivers as this can be added to the current electronic knowledge test undertaken by all new applicants and also be delivered in a similar fashion to existing taxi drivers upon renewal of their licence. The cost of online courses has been found to be of the order of £10 due to the numbers involved. The costs of any such training would be directly recoverable by way of the licensing fees.

**6.0 Risk Implications**

6.1 Merely acknowledging the existence of a possible lack of awareness concerning disability amongst licensed taxi drivers in Crawley with positive action to resolve the matter may have obvious poor public relations outcomes for the Council or may lead to challenge.

**7.0 Environmental Implications**

7.1 None.

**8.0 Links to the Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Plan**

8.1 The proposals contained in this report relate to the following key areas of the Sustainable Community Strategy

Community Cohesion		Community Safety	Y
Young People and Children		Health and Well Being	Y
Older People	Y	The Environment	
The Local Economy	Y	Social Inclusion	Y

The following key principles are applicable:-

(i) Working together	y
(ii) Dignity, respect and opportunities for all	y
(iii) Involving People	y
(iv) Making it last	y

The report relates to the following areas in which the Council operates to enhance the town and the quality of life of local people:-

(i) Prosperity	n
(ii) Community	y
(iii) Environment	n
(iv) Value for Money	y

**9.0 Reasons for the Recommendation**

9.1. To improve the level of disability awareness amongst licensed taxi drivers in Crawley and improve the service provided by such drivers to disabled persons.

## **10.0 Background Papers**

10.1 Report PES/042 to Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2011.

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