

Notes from Consultation with Disability Groups

Ranks

1. Disabled people do not rely on taxis in YTC as they find the current rank difficult to access due to the slope.
2. They feel the current rank is in the wrong place for disabled persons – other rank locations suggested were:
 - Outside Burger King
 - Princes Street
 - Opposite Argos
 - Back outside M & S

It was felt that these were better locations due to the wider pavements and the flat surface.

The location of the current rank also leads to problems with drivers queuing at the top of Middle Street to access the rank. Whilst queuing they are blocking the dropped kerb making life more difficult for people with disabilities.

3. It was felt that some ranks could be set aside for disabled accessible vehicles only.
4. A rank in the bus station was suggested.

Accessibility of Taxis

1. It was felt that there was currently only one company providing WAV's in Yeovil, and that due to the limited number of vehicles it was often difficult to access one of these vehicles.
2. School run times were a particular problem, as the vehicles tend to be used for these contracts as they can seat more passengers than a normal saloon car.
3. Some participants thought 100% of vehicles' should be WAV's, others thought that 50% would be a good figure. Others felt that each operator should have to provide a % of their vehicles as WAV's.
4. It is not just people with disabilities that find WAV's easier to use. They are also better for the elderly, children and mothers with pushchairs etc..
5. It was felt that there were currently problems with language, particularly where the drivers first language was not English. This makes it even harder for people with speech difficulties to communicate with the driver.

6. Disabled customers need more time, so drivers often unwilling to take a booking.
7. Taxi drivers more concerned with making money than providing a service to disabled customers.
8. Customers often left waiting for up to 30 minutes.
9. Often when calling to book a taxi everything is okay and agreed until you mention disability and then the vehicle suddenly becomes unavailable.
10. If we increase the % of WAV's will prices increase for the customer.
11. Community cars are only available for medical and hospital appointments and are now that expensive that if taxis were available, they would be preferred.

Training Needs

1. All taxi drivers must have disability awareness training and understand the needs of disabled persons.
2. Taxi drivers' attitudes towards disabled persons need to change. They don't seem to realise that if the service provision was better, disabled persons would use taxis more.
3. Drivers have a lack of understanding in relation to assistance dogs. An example was given where a driver had refused to allow an assistance dog to sit at the feet of a blind person, which caused great distress to the dog owner.
4. Drivers should be reviewed every 6 months.

Other Issues raised

1. SSDC should encourage reporting of complaints and make the whole process easier. Perhaps this could be provided online.
2. A customer newsletter was suggested, perhaps this could utilise South Somerset News.