

Charlesworth, Tom (City of Lincoln Council)

From: Howard Collins [REDACTED]
Sent: 21 September 2017 22:33
To: Charlesworth, Tom (City of Lincoln Council)
Subject: Equality Act 2010

RE: Equality Act 2010 – Access for wheelchair users to Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles

I would like to make the following comments for consideration by Members.

I am a licenced Private Hire driver in Lincoln, badge no. 4588. I work under Direct Cars, and one of a small number driving a wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV). I work full time during the day, Monday to Friday, and most Sundays. I am aware of the new legislation and would urge Members NOT to make a list of designated WAVs in Lincoln as I believe it will result in a reduction of, and most probably the disappearance of, wheelchair accessible Private Hire vehicles.

I would personally say that if the new legislation is enforced in Lincoln I would be looking to move to a standard saloon car as soon as possible, as driving a WAV would then become a disadvantage to me and my earnings.

There is a good commercial reason why wheelchair work is charged at a higher rate than a standard vehicle.

First, most wheelchair jobs involve extra travel when picking up. When a booking comes through, the nearest vehicle is allocated to the job but as there are only a small number of WAVs in the city this almost always means a trek across town, much more so than for a standard fare. This would not be viable if the fare was lower than at present.

Wheelchair work also often requires considerable extra waiting, and some customers require that we enter their homes and take them in their chairs to the vehicle. This can be very time consuming and is as I understand it way beyond the requirements of the new legislation. The additional charge we make helps to make this viable.

Our wheelchair customers are a mixture of regular / weekly users and occasional bookings for hospital appointments etc. Customers are aware that they pay a premium for what is considered a specialist vehicle, and I have never had a complaint about this. I have though had many customers say how much they value the service we offer, and that they are just grateful that we offer it. Without private hire options for travel would be much harder to find and considerably more expensive.

Finally, I am sure that someone will suggest simply making all private hire vehicles in the city WAVs. This would solve the problem of travelling long distances to pick up customers, but would create a whole new problem for the operators in that most would be faced with buying brand new adapted vehicles, as good second-hand adapted vehicles of the type/ layout required for cab work are hard to find. This would then mean considerable extra costs for the operator, and much higher fares for everybody.

I am happy to be contacted if Members have any questions about the points I have raised.

Howard Collins