



Craig Whittaker MP

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Assistance Dogs and Taxis

Thank you for contacting me about assistance dog owners and taxis.

I know that taxis and private hire vehicles (PHV) are essential for many disabled people, and drivers are required to make reasonable adjustments for disabled passengers. The Equality Act 2010 places duties on taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) drivers to carry assistance dogs at no additional charge. Taxi and private hire vehicle drivers are obliged to transport wheelchair users in their wheelchair, provide passengers in wheelchairs with appropriate assistance, and charge wheelchair users the same as non-wheelchair users.

Failure to comply with this requirement can result in prosecution and a fine on conviction of up to £1,000. A driver was recently fined £1,546, including legal costs, for refusing access to a guide dog. I think this sends a strong message right across the industry, and I hope my ministerial colleagues will draw it to the attention of licensing authorities.

Although there is no legal requirement for taxi and private hire vehicle drivers to undertake disability awareness training, the Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance on taxi and private hire vehicle licensing recommends that local licensing authorities to work with the industry in their area to improve drivers' awareness of the needs of disabled people. This includes encouraging their drivers to undertake disability awareness training.

You may be interested to know that the Government plan to issue for consultation this year, revised best practice guidance for local licensing authorities (LLAs). I understand this will include strengthened recommendations relating to the provision of an inclusive service.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP