

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAV) update

Tom Ince attended the recent Department for Transport seminar on WAV vehicles and the taxi industry, there were around 10 other Local Authorities present. The overwhelming message from all areas was not around the number of WAV vehicles but the drivers refusal to take fares. It seems that across the Country WAV owners are happy to complete school contracts and then park the vehicle up.

We believe this is the issue in Wiltshire, as of 26 September 2022 there were 101 WAV vehicles, 13.2% of our fleet. 30% of private hire vehicles in Wiltshire are WAV but only 6% of hackney carriages.

Some local authorities do have a policy that all new hackney carriage vehicles must be WAV but Tom would question the amount of rank work that comes from clients who require a WAV. Most will be prebooked and therefore it is more important to have more PH WAV vehicles.

We currently operate a policy for operators that 1 in every 10 vehicles must be WAV, a small number of other authorities had a 1 in 5 requirement. These are all possibilities but we must understand the demand for WAV vehicles in Wiltshire before changing our policies as any change to mandate WAVs would have a significant impact on the industry and could actually lead to less vehicles being available. We are not receiving lots of complaints from the public that WAV vehicles are not available. Work needs to be undertaken before a full answer can be provided.

Adrian Hampton
Head of Highway Operations
30 September 2022