

APPENDIX 1

Background

In November 2022 the trade suggested several changes to the current transport policy, which were considered as part of a full public consultation including all members of the trade, changes to policy approved included:

- Removal of age / emissions restrictions for all new and existing wheelchair accessible, hybrid and electric vehicles
- Changes to wording around window tints
- Annual refresher training for existing drivers
- Removal of vehicle specification for new Hackney Carriage vehicle (HCV) applications.

Request for Change

Members of the hackney trade and members of the Stockton Hackney Carriage Drivers Association (SHCDA) have made repeat requests for the vehicle specification for new hackney carriage vehicles to be reintroduced, meaning all new to fleet hackney carriage vehicles are required to be wheelchair accessible.

Additional Info

Since the policy change in November 2022 57 applications for HCV have been processed, of this number 10 were transfers of existing vehicles. In the same period 13 HVC licences have been surrendered or expired and 2 have been revoked. This means that since November 2022 the HCV fleet has increased by 32 vehicles in total. Of the 57 applications 24 have been hybrid/electric vehicles, 3 have been for new or replacement wheelchair vehicles.

In the same period 78 PHV applications have been processed, of this number 3 were transfers of existing vehicles. In the same period 62 PHV licence have been surrendered or expired and 6 have been revoked. This means that since November 2022 the PHV fleet has increased by 7 vehicles in total. Of the 78 applications 21 have been hybrid/electric vehicles, none were for new wheelchair vehicles.

The numbers suggest that the policy change has been successful in increasing the numbers of hybrid and electric vehicles onto fleet, but less successful in increasing wheelchair vehicles, this is a problem right across the North East.

The latest Department for Transport Statistic can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-statistics-england-2023/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-statistics-england-2023

- Between 2022 and 2023 the total number of licensed vehicles and drivers both increased compared with the previous year, but they remain below pre-pandemic levels.
- Across England only 13% of all licensed vehicles were wheelchair accessible in 2023.
- 67% of authorities require all or part of the hackney fleet to be wheelchair accessible, a small increase from 64% in 2019.
- 5% of authorities require all or part of the PHV fleet to be wheelchair accessible.
- 94% of authorities maintain a list of wheelchair accessible taxis in accordance with section 167 of the Equality Act 2010 (an increase from 72% in 2019), while 91% maintain a list of wheelchair accessible PHVs (an increase from 62% in 2019).