

Hi-im hoping you can help me. My names [REDACTED] and-im a wheelchair user who lives in Morecambe. I've been having great difficulty in getting wheelchair accesable taxis from either of the two taxi companys in Morecambe-Lancaster. even tho I pre book them hours in advance im told an accesable car cant be guaranteed and this makes going out and getting home very stressful and scary I usualy go out from my flat off queen street in Morecambe on a Tuesday to the midland hotel for lunch then back home around 12-1pm then on a Wednesday to Frankie and bennys on a Saturday morning I go to Morecambe police station at 11am to get a coach to leeds where I watch football I then gtry to get a taxi from the shrimp toby carvery back into Morecambe at 7pm .im sorry to bore you with my weekly social life but im trying to highlight the problemns I face .

it doesn't seem fair to me that im not able to access a taxi the same as people who don't have to use a wheelchair. is there not a way that wheelchair taxis can be prioritised for wheelchair users ? Im trying to think of other options and thought of private hire taxis but I cant find a list of private hire taxi companys that have wheelchair accesable cars . Do the council have such a list or can you offer any advice

cheers  
[REDACTED]

Hi Wendy thanks for the quick reply. I really hope something can be done about this problem. It's very easy to see how a disabled person could get isolated very easily especially if they can't drive and have no family to help out with lifts etc. The DDA and then equality acts were hard fought for and, even though not totally successful, have helped but fall down totally if wheelchair users can't get out of their houses because taxi drivers can't or won't pick them up.

I personally think the problem is with existing wheelchair accessible taxi drivers wanting the reduced cost of a wheelchair tax plate but then don't want the perceived hassle of picking up wheelchair users. I can't see why there can't be an obligation as a condition of the licence maybe that a wheelchair user has priority for getting a wheelchair taxi over an able-bodied person who can get in any taxi.

I'd appreciate it if you could keep me informed if anything happens with this issue. I've got one of the numbers you gave me but I can't get hold of him - I'll try the other one though. I don't know anyone else that uses a wheelchair so unfortunately can't help with that one, but I'm sure that every other wheelchair user faces the same problem.

cheers

[Redacted signature]

Hi I emailed you last month about the problems I have getting wheelchair accesable taxis in the Morecambe, Lancaster area. I was wondering if youd made any progress in sorting this problem out. In the last ten days ive been to Reading, London, Bristol and used wheelchair accesable taxis with minimum waiting and hassle, I find it strange and frustrating that in my own town I cant get a taxi without having the stress and worry of not knowing wether a wheelchair taxi or an ordinary one is going to turn up

yours

[REDACTED]

Hello, I was wondering if you could look into a few problems I had with local taxi companies yesterday.

I am a wheelchair user and work from the Council Housing Office at 38 Cable Street, Lancaster.

On Wednesday 11 June (4.25pm) I rang 848848 to order a taxi to take me home at 5pm, I asked for a wheelchair taxi. I was told that I could not pre-book a disabled taxi, I explained that the office closed at 5pm so need it to be there then.

I asked why I couldn't book a disabled car in the same way of booking a 'normal' car, the reply was because you can't due to the limited number of disabled taxis. I asked what do you suggest I do, she said ring somebody else.

Is it correct that you cannot pre-book a disabled taxi?, or did they just not want to be bothered?

I then rang 32090 who did allow me to pre-book a disabled car. The mini bus (Private Hire / burgundy) arrived next to the Cable Street Office / Fire Station, the driver started to put the ramp up the side of the vehicle straight onto the cobbles.

I did not take the drivers badge number but she was a very petit lady.

As I approached the ramp she said to me 'well are you going to push?', I told her I had limited upper body strength and could not possibly push up a gradient that high. The driver then began to push me up the ramp after a few seconds it was apparent that she was not physically able to help me into the car.

The driver then asked a passer-by to help (this happened to be another Council employee, the Cleaner from Cable Street), I objected at this point as I felt unsafe with drivers capability of assisting me into the vehicle and was concerned how I would get out at home. The driver kept reassuring me that I was safe. On the second attempt at pushing me up the ramp, the front wheel of my wheelchair came over the side of the ramp at the top and left me in a very vulnerable & extremely scary position. I was only being held safe by the driver & the Council cleaner, I was on a steep slope un-balanced & peering at the pavement.

I honestly do not know how they managed to get my front wheel back over the side and onto the ramp. I think at this point I was crying & suffering from shock.

I then refused to get into this taxi.

My complaint is not directly at the driver but could you please look into:

- A) The suitability of this mini bus being used as a disabled taxi
- B) The suitability and gradient of the ramp used (as it was far too steep & I think a fully abled person would not be able to push themselves up that hill)
- C) The capability of the individual driver (should they not be assessed as to how much / long they can push a disabled customer). As I mentioned the driver did try to help but in my opinion she was a tiny petit woman and I don't think she was strong enough to assist.
- D) The drivers capability put me in a very vulnerable and unsafe position, in which serious physical injury could have happened
- E) Should vehicles of a certain height not be fitted with an electric lift or pulley system

I will not be using this company again, but would hate for another person to be in the position I was, or even worse get seriously hurt.

Regards

Sent from my Windows Phone

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**From:** Peck, Wendy

**Sent:** 11/05/2015 14:51

**Subject:** FW: Wheelchair taxis

Good Afternoon

I have looked into this and at the moment it is very difficult to deal with as we cannot be sure whether the companies have a wheelchair accessible vehicle working at any given time. I will however prepare a report for future consideration by our Licensing Regulatory Committee in relation to the quantities of accessible vehicles available. I last took a report in 2010 at which time the Committee determined that we did not need to take any action to increase the numbers of wheelchair accessible vehicles as there had not been many complaints in relation to the lack of them. I would therefore urge you to continue to report any incidents like this to me and I will endeavour to try and improve the situation.

In the mean time I will take the unprecedented step of recommending a proprietor to you who is well known for doing wheelchair work and is usually very obliging. His name is [REDACTED]

Regards

Wendy Peck  
Licensing Manager  
Lancaster City Council  
01524 582317

**From:** licensing  
**Sent:** 05 May 2015 17:05  
**To:** Peck, Wendy  
**Subject:** FW: Wheelchair taxis

Wendy Peck  
Licensing Manager  
Lancaster City Council  
01524-582317

[REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 04 May 2015 05:31  
**To:** licensing  
**Subject:** Wheelchair taxis

Hello

I am writing to ask if you can do something about the number of wheelchair taxis and when they are available.

I use a powerchair. It cannot be lifted.

The first complaint is when I was left stranded in Morecambe town center. I rang 3 firms for a wheelchair taxi. First, 424424. I was told none were available until after 5pm, and that depended if the driver came back on duty. The time I rang was 2pm. So I rang 848848 and also 32090 with both I was informed all their cabs were in Lancaster and they would not be travelling to Morecambe. I eventually got back home after paying another taxi to take my shopping home while I went him on the main roads in the traffic. I cannot use the pavements, they are uneven and my wheelchair does not climb curbs.

Another time was at night, I wished to prebook a taxi to and from the emergency doctors as I was very ill. I was told by 2 I could not prebook disabled cabs, the third, 848848 refused outright to travel to Morecambe from Lancaster. I was taken, 3 days later by ambulance with blue lights to A&E and admitted.

And again this bank holiday weekend. I wanted to go to the food fair at Lancaster leisure park. Once again I could not prebook disabled taxi or to take me and pick me up by 424424 & 32090 and 848848 totally refused to come to Morecambe.

I have to admit, I do not go out as its too much bother trying to even arrange anything regarding transport. I am not always well so can only go outside when I feel strong enough so booking something ages in advance is not possible. That's why I would use taxis if I could. Obviously I still attend hospital even when very ill as its passenger transport ambulance that takes me and the professor needs to see me at my worst. I just wish taxis were as easy to get as ambulances.

I don't know if you can help, probably not, but I felt I needed to write regarding my problems. Many thanks-

[REDACTED]

Hi,

Sorry to bother you but I have yet again had bookings refused. I am sending the email in a reply to the original email then you can follow the thread and see what has happened before.

Long story short:

I was very pleased to ring [REDACTED], he is a nice man but is currently sick and has been for a couple of weeks, he cant help that and I wished him well.

I have to go to RLI twice next week for scans on my tumour to map its progress and see if it has spread to my spine.

I tried to book a wheelchair taxi, for the Wednesday and Friday next week. Firstly I rang 424424. The lad who answered said he could not take any wheelchair taxi bookings at all. He said the drivers were all self employed and he couldn't force them to come into work. I asked his name, he was very reluctant to give it but I explained that I couldn't prove I had rung if I didn't get it. He said it was [REDACTED] I know it is not his fault that he cant take wheelchair bookings, ever, he is just the lad who answers the phones and its the bosses who decide what goes.

I rang 848848 to ask if I could book transport and guess what?? No was the answer. They do not take bookings for wheelchairs and all their wheelchair taxis are doing school contracts so are very limited with the times they can work anyway. He refused to give me his name but did say that if more wheelchair taxi plates were given out there wouldn't be as much of a problem. To which I answered that all the new wheelchair taxi plates would immediately go get themselves a schools contract so that would not solve anything. He hummed a grumble so I don't think he was impressed.

I did also ring North West Ambulance transport (I know nothing to do with you) but I was hoping to get locally under my own steam, as I use them for appointments to Christies, Manchester. But according to them I don't exist, so I am not able to get transport from them either.

I think it has been one of those days but taxi firms refusing to do any wheelchair work certainly is not making life easy. I am going to cancel my appointments at RLI, if its spread its spread, noting anybody can do about it so might be better off not knowing anyway.

I hope you will consider todays problems and maybe take it further up the managerial ladder so things can be done as being told they cant refuse is not the answer sadly

Thanks

[REDACTED]

Sent from Windows Mail

From [REDACTED]  
Sent: Tuesday, 12 May 2015 08:57  
To: Peck, Wendy

Hi,

Thank you, that's very useful.

The nature of my illness means I don't usually know until the day if I am going to be well enough to go out or not.

Thank you very much for your help

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]  
Sent: 08 June 2015 21:46

To: Peck, Wendy

Subject: Re: Wheelchair taxis

hi,

Sorry I haven't been on my mails until this evening due to health matters.

My brother asked his supervisor for the day off on Wednesday so he could take me to the hospital since I was upset that I couldn't get transport. His boss agreed so he can take me on Wednesday, he works at the Westgate depot for LCC, but he couldn't get Friday off or any time at all that day. I was not told until Sunday that he had been given the time off work.

A friend is going to take me, but both days it means I am going in the manual chair and being pushed. I have an electric chair which I prefer to use as it gives me that little bit more freedom but it is 40 inches tall and will not go in any but an adapted vehicle.

Thank you very much for speaking on my behalf to [REDACTED]. Is there any way in which I can prebook a taxi anywhere in the area?

Part of Cushings Disease is severe anxiety and I won't go out of the house if I can't be certain I will be able to get home again without too many problems, but I never know until the day if I am going to be well enough to go out or not. But I have to admit it would be nice to have a trip out to the shops or something, anything, rather than sitting in the house 24/7 except for hospital visits.

Thank you one again for your help and if there is any way I could get to prebook I would be grateful, and I could also pass the word around because there are many wheelchair users like me who don't drive who would like to know they could get home if they do manage to go out.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

To Wendy Peck

Hi Wendy,

Thank for all your help in the past.

However over the past few weeks/ months I have had the same, awful problems trying to get a wheelchair taxi.

It has come to the point now that I have HAD to buy a car that will take my chair. I have also had to insure it for any driver over 25 so I have a better chance of a friend being able to take me places.

I need to ask you to inform the councillors' that their so called policies are only good on paper, they do not work in real life. All the taxi firms refuse bookings for disabled taxis, you have to take a chance on getting one and if one isn't there you cant get one, and if they are all in Lancaster they refuse to come to Morecambe. The taxi drivers and taxi firms have no respect for me needing a taxi, they out right refuse, saying its alright the council saying they have to provide it, but the council are not the ones providing the cars. Basically they have no reason to obey any rules set because you never take any action against them.


I am inches away from reporting the problem to my MP and contacting the Lancashire evening newspapers.

So my idea of reducing road traffic, causing minimal problems, putting money into the local economy via local work people (taxi divers) has all gone to pot.

I have had to buy a car and so add to major traffic problems and take money from the local economy.

So I thank you for your help, but find the lack of response and interest from the so called powers that be to be really bad, burying their heads in the sand has worked well for them. Lancaster and Morecambe is only a suitable place for healthy, able bodied people to live, obviously disabled people who require help and public transport are not welcome or encouraged.

I am bitterly disappointed but cannot fight any longer, I am too ill.



June 2015

015

Dear Madam/Sir,

I am writing to you concerning the treatment myself, and various other persons have received, from staff of wheelchair taxi companies (and also people who work privately ~ they do tend to be more reliable when you are trying [often struggle] to, sometimes urgently, find a wheelchair taxi).

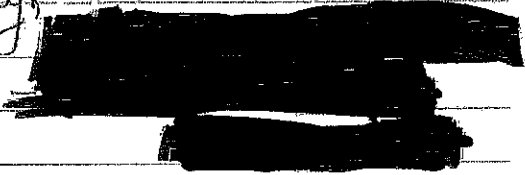
I am seriously and chronically ill and disabled (with several various different problems ~ I am literally a medical - and physical - mystery, in various ways) and do require, and receive (very gratefully) much help, assistance, etc. from many great people in the NHS, social services, and similar organisations, etc. However there are often times (mostly on weekday evenings) when I urgently require transport (I am usually stuck at a GP's surgery, after an appointment, needing to be returned to the house where I live as the 'doctors' in door to close down). Most taxi companies do seem not at all keen on providing transport for any disabled persons during weekday evening weekdays, etc. (very unfair if you are disabled but not ill and perhaps wish to spend an evening out with some friends, etc. ~ whether ill or not, the more time you are forced to spend away from social activity and similar, the more likely you are likely to develop, increase further psychological, emotional problems).

Please can some actions be taking regarding what I am mentioning here. These <sup>taken</sup> are very important issues to me. Thank you so much for... (PTO)

CONTINUED...

all your time and efforts ~ very much appreciated. I look forward very much to receiving your reply.

Yours respectfully,



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REGION 213	
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Housing