

**Equality Screening Form**

Question	Response
Q1) Name of the strategy, policy, programme or project being assessed.	Consultation on Changes to West Suffolk Taxi Licensing Policy 2020.
Q2) In no more than five lines and using Plain English, summarise the purpose of the policy or proposal, and its desired outcomes.	<p>To update and consult on the current West Suffolk Taxi Policy Handbook and agree long term licensing requirements following harmonisation of predecessor council policies in 2019.</p> <p>This EQIA considers the impacts on all groups who use, drive or own taxi vehicles throughout West Suffolk.</p>
Q3) Who should benefit from the proposal and in what way?	West Suffolk Council will have a single harmonised policy for hackney carriages and private hire businesses and users, that includes updated proposals to improve passenger, driver and vehicle safety as well as supporting environmental improvements.
<p>Q4 Is there any evidence or reason to believe that in relation to this proposal, there may be a difference in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Levels of participation</li> <li>• Uptake by different groups</li> <li>• Needs or experiences of different groups</li> <li>• Priorities</li> <li>• Other areas?</li> </ul>	<p><b>i) <i>Impact on Private Hire and Hackney drivers</i></b></p> <p>Depending on the outcome of the consultation, the following impacts may affect some businesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There may be a small negative financial impact on Private Hire and Hackney businesses who have vehicles that are above or approaching ten years of age as they will need to replace these vehicles under new conditions, unless they are classified as low emission vehicles.</li> <li>• Depending on the outcome of the consultation on taxi livery, there may also be a financial impact on some or all drivers (see details in summary of proposals).</li> <li>• Meanwhile, there is a positive benefit to hackney carriage and private hire businesses as the maximum age for initial licensing is increasing to five years.</li> </ul>

Given the demographic of Private Hire Vehicles and Hackney drivers, the changes to the policies should not disproportionately impact on those with a protected characteristic in West Suffolk. While data on drivers' protected characteristics is not recorded, local evidence suggests that the majority of taxi drivers are male; and that the ethnicity and disability profile of West Suffolk taxi drivers broadly reflects that of the wider population. There would appear to be a higher than average proportion of taxi drivers for whom English is a second language. This is dealt with in question 7.

***ii) Taxi users***

- Data from the Department of Transport found that, in 2015 (the latest dataset on mobility), those with mobility difficulties used Taxis and PHVs more than people who do not (16 trips per person versus ten trips per person). These figures have remained stable since 2010. Taxis and PHV usage made up 3% of their trips, compared to just 1% without mobility difficulties.
- Further, in 2016, on average, women made more Taxi or PHV trips than men since 2002. Although this suggests women are more likely to use Taxis and PHVs, the proposed harmonisation of the taxi policies will not disproportionality affect this group.

A small number of responses to a previous West Suffolk Council survey on proposed changes to taxi policy (2018) (9 out of 63) thought the changes would have an impact on those with a protected characteristic. The comments made were as follows:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One respondent felt that if the existing zones were retained this could mean that hackneys refused to pick up those with a disability in some areas of the council. <i>(NB continuing with zones would mean that the arrangements from the last nearly 50 years would continue and so there should be no change in the supply of accessible vehicles in any area of West Suffolk. Meanwhile, refusal to pick up disabled passengers is against the law)</i></li> <li>• Not all disabled persons need a disabled access vehicle</li> <li>• Encouraging use of smaller cars could make it harder for disabled persons to get an accessible taxi <i>(NB Proposals encouraging use of smaller vehicles over larger wheelchair accessible vehicles are not included in this review.)</i></li> </ul> <p>In terms of the availability of accessible vehicles, all newly plated hackney vehicles must be wheelchair accessible.</p>
<p>Q5) Using the evidence listed above, fill in the table below to highlight the groups you think this policy or proposal has the potential to impact upon:</p> <p>(i) Is there any potential for negative impact? Yes or No</p> <p>(ii) Are there opportunities for positive impact or to promote equality of opportunity?</p>	
<p>Q6) Considering your answers to questions 1-5, do you believe a Full Equality Impact Assessment is needed?</p>	No.
<p>Q7) Considering our duty to proactively tackle disadvantage and promote equality of opportunity, list the actions required.</p>	See table below.

<b>Impacts Table</b>				
	<b>Is there potential for negative impact? YES or NO</b>	<b>Are there opportunities for positive impact? YES or NO</b>	<b>If YES, please provide details of the impact below</b>	
			<b>Positive Impact</b>	<b>Negative Impact</b>
<b>All groups or society generally</b>	YES	YES	<p>As outlined above, the proposal to review our convictions policy should increase public safety, thus benefitting all users of PHVs.</p> <p>Mainly consistent policy across West Suffolk could contribute towards make taxi licensing more accessible and easily enforceable.</p> <p>The proposals relating to vehicle age should also result in a lower emissions fleet, contributing to improved air quality.</p>	<p>There is the potential for a small financial impact for some Private Hire and Hackney businesses with the age of vehicles now being restricted to a maximum of ten years and other potential impacts on vehicle replacement, depending on decisions on livery.</p>
<b>Age - Older or younger people</b>	NO	YES	<p>The proposed tighter criteria for the maximum age exemption for vehicles in good condition will apply to private hire vehicles up to eight passengers commonly used as school buses, so should further ensure the safety of these vehicles for school children</p>	

<b>Disability</b> - People with a disability	YES	YES	The proposed introduction of rear loading private hire vehicles will increase the fleet mix and increase the range of available vehicles for people with disabilities.	Any changes to the current regime have the potential to change the way in which the taxi industry in W Suffolk operates, which will particularly affect those who rely on taxis due to disability. It is proposed to mitigate this risk through including representatives of disability groups in the consultation, and through ongoing monitoring.
<b>Sex</b> - Women or men	NO	YES	Given the higher proportion of women who use taxis, the proposals relating to safety will have a positive impact	
<b>Pregnancy or maternity</b> - including expectant or new parents i.e. pregnancy and maternity	NO	NO		
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b> – including same sex couples	NO	NO		
<b>Race</b> - People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME)	NO	NO		
<b>Religion</b> - People with a religion or belief (or who choose not to have a religion or belief)	NO	NO		

<b>Sexual Orientation</b> - People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) or in a Civil Partnership	NO	NO		
<b>Gender Reassignment</b> - People who are transitioning from one gender to another	NO	NO		
<i>Families and those with parenting or caring responsibilities (The Families Test)</i>	NO	NO		
<i>Individuals on low income</i>	NO	NO		
<i>Those suffering rural isolation</i>	NO	NO	The proposed changes should not change the availability of taxis in rural areas, as either existing zones will be retained and supply be unaffected, or the zones will be removed and supply and demand will be regularly monitored.	
<i>Those who do not have English as a first language</i>	YES	NO		By making changes to the policy, it is possible that current drivers for whom English is not a first language will not fully understand the consultation. This can be mitigated by: ensuring documents are in plain English; and that any drivers needing assistance

				with understanding the proposals can be offered support.
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<b>Action Plan</b>				
<b>Equality group/ characteristic</b>	<b>Action/milestone</b>	<b>Responsibility</b> (Project manager or partner organisation)	<b>Achievement date</b>	<b>Monitoring arrangements</b>
Disabled users of hackney carriages or private hire vehicles	Undertake a further unmet demand survey after 3 years to review the number and proportion of wheelchair accessible vehicles across West Suffolk	David Collinson	April 2023	Ongoing monitoring of licence application numbers  Work with the disability forum to ensure we are notified if there is a noticeable reduction in availability of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles as result of any of the policy proposals.
Drivers with English as a second language	Ensure changes are communicated effectively to those for whom English is not their first language	David Collison	April 2020	Ongoing engagement with taxi businesses

**Sign off section**

This Screening Level EqIA was completed by:

**Name**        **Liz Barnard**  
**Job Title**    **Service Manager, Corporate Policy**  
**Signature**   **E H BARNARD**  
**Date**         **19 Dec 2019**

**On completion, please submit this document with the policy or proposal. Guidance and advice on draft and final versions can be obtained from:**

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