

Taxis Trade Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles and Electric Vehicles Consultation

- **Project:** Taxis Trade Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles and Electric Vehicles Consultation
- **Start:** 15 August 2024
- **Project manager:** Martin Seymour

Report summary

Brighton & Hove City Council was seeking views from drivers, proprietors and operators licensed by the council as part of a consultation on wheelchair accessible taxis and how the council can reduce taxi vehicle emissions.

The consultation was restricted to only licensed drivers, proprietors, and operators survey and covered taxis that are accessed via one of the city’s taxi ranks, hailed as they drive along or booked through a private hire operator in advance.

The consultation was available on the Councils Your Voice website and was available from the 15 August 2024 until 13 October 2024.

The results of the survey and subsequent proposals were discussed at a special meeting with the Trade members of The Brighton & Hove Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Consultation Forum on the 26 November 2024.

Consultation results

The results of the consultation can be seen below.

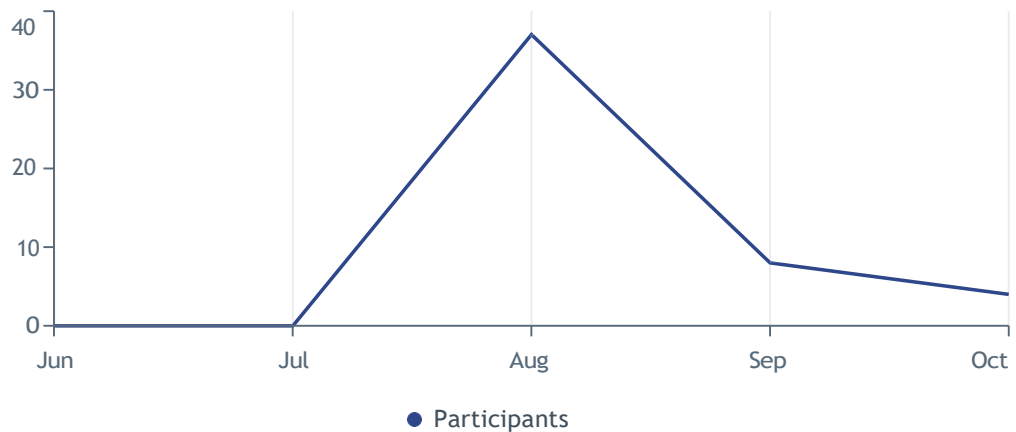
Participants timeline

Total participants

49

Participation rate ⓘ

51%



Please tell us which licence(s) you hold. Please select all that you hold

49/49 - Multiple choice - choose many - required

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver 48.6% (35 choices)



Hackney Carriage Vehicle Proprietor 36.1% (26 choices)



Private Hire Driver 6.9% (5 choices)



Private Hire Driver 5.6% (4 choices)



Private Hire Operator 2.8% (2 choices)



No answer 0% (0 choices)



What are your thoughts on the current policy that requires operators with at least 100 vehicles working for them to have at least 20% wheelchair accessible vehicles in Brighton & Hove

Respondents have mixed opinions about the current policy requiring operators with at least 100 vehicles to have 20% wheelchair-accessible vehicles (WAVs) in Brighton & Hove. Some agree with the policy while others believe it is not effective or necessary, pointing out that there is not enough demand for WAVs. Some respondents suggest that the percentage of WAVs should be lower, such as 5% while one suggests increasing it to 40%.

A common concern is that having WAVs in the fleet does not guarantee that drivers will accept wheelchair jobs and some respondents feel that drivers should not be able to refuse these jobs. There are also comments about the policy not being applied to companies like Uber and the difficulty for operators to manage the required number of WAVs.

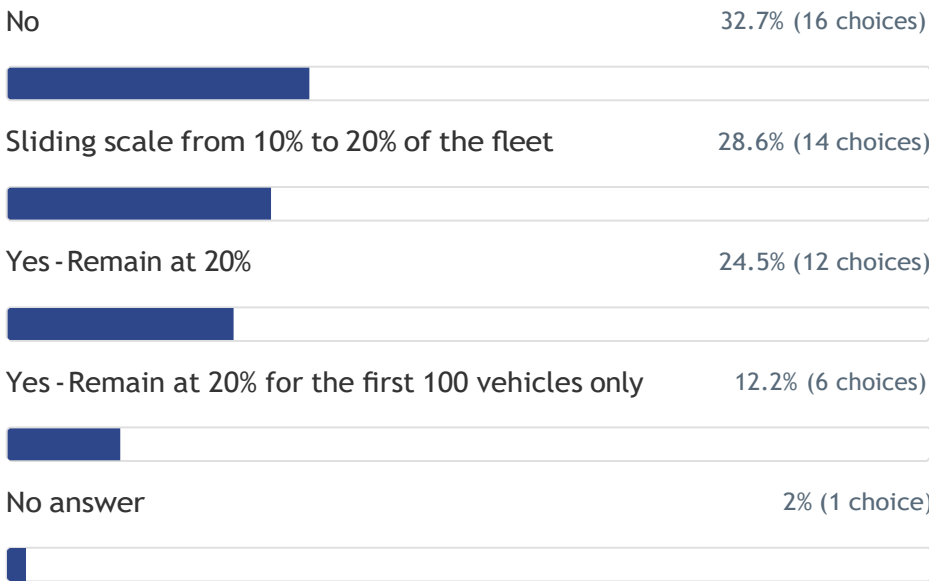
Some respondents believe the policy is unfair or nonsensical, arguing that it is discriminatory against potential drivers creates a disincentive to license in Brighton & Hove and is difficult for operators to meet due to challenges in recruiting new drivers. There is also a sentiment that the number of WAVs is not the problem, but rather ensuring that they are utilized properly.

Overall, the responses indicate a need for a review of the policy's effectiveness and possibly its adjustment to better match the actual demand for WAVs and ensure that wheelchair users receive the services they need.

English

Do you think Operators should continue to be required to have 20% wheelchair accessible vehicles once their fleet reaches 100 vehicles?

48/49 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional



4. Please explain your reasoning for your answer.

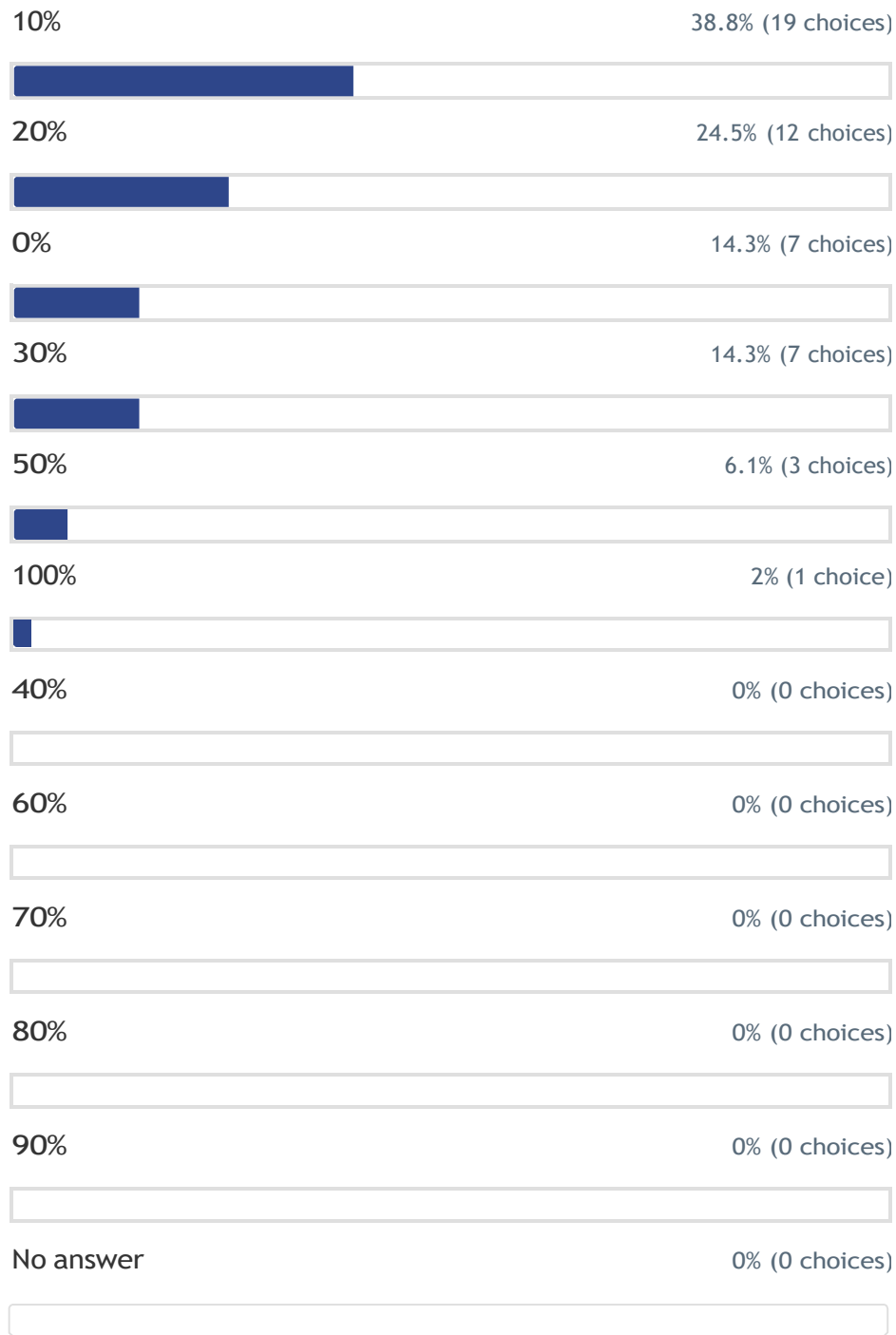
Respondents have expressed varying opinions on the proportion of wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) required in the taxi trade, with suggestions ranging from 10% to 20%. A common theme is the need to ensure that WAVs are used for their intended purpose, with some respondents noting that drivers with WAVs often avoid or refuse wheelchair jobs. There is a perception that the demand for WAVs does not justify the higher costs and maintenance associated with these vehicles. Some respondents believe that there is a shortage of WAV drivers while others argue that the demand for WAVs is as low as 1-2%.

Environmental concerns were also raised, with some pointing out that larger WAVs are less fuel-efficient and not good for the environment. The financial burden of operating WAVs is highlighted, with the costs of purchasing and maintaining these vehicles being deemed not viable by some drivers.

There is also mention of the impact of ride-sharing services like Uber, which operate with out-of-town cars. A few respondents suggest that a certain percentage of WAVs should be mandated to ensure service availability for wheelchair users. However, there's an indication that some drivers would prefer to switch from WAVs to saloon cars due to the challenges associated with WAVs.

What % of the Hackney Carriage fleet do you think should be wheelchair accessible?

49/49 - Multiple choice - choose many - optional



6. How do you think the current policy impacts the availability and accessibility of wheelchair-accessible taxis in Brighton & Hove compared to private hire vehicles operating in other local authorities without similar requirements?

Respondents generally feel that while there is a sufficient number of wheelchair-accessible vehicles (WAVs) in Brighton & Hove, the main issue lies with drivers who are reluctant to take on wheelchair jobs. Drivers cite reasons such as the additional time required, potential for injury, and lack of financial incentive as deterrents. There's a sentiment that the current policy financially burdens drivers due to the higher costs of WAVs compared to standard vehicles. Some suggest that the policy should be revised to either not force drivers to have WAVs or to provide financial assistance to cover the extra costs.

A few respondents believe that Brighton & Hove's approach leads to better service and that if drivers complied with the terms and conditions for WAVs, the situation would improve. However, there's also a perception that the policy may deter new drivers from entering the trade due to the high cost of WAVs.

Some respondents did not comment on the comparison with other authorities or simply affirmed the presence of enough vehicles without further detail. There's also a suggestion that major towns and cities should have WAVs available, especially for public gatherings.

Overall, while vehicle availability does not seem to be a major concern, driver willingness and financial implications of the current policy are significant issues that respondents feel need addressing.

7. How do you think the council can work with taxi operators to improve the overall quality and availability of wheelchair-taxis services in our community?

Respondents suggest that the council should enforce penalties for taxi operators who refuse wheelchair jobs. Collaboration between the council and taxi operators is recommended, with a focus on working together rather than the council imposing regulations. Monitoring companies to ensure they meet requirements and provide good service is also mentioned. There is a suggestion to standardise the vehicles used for better service while another respondent points out the economic challenge for operators due to the cost of vehicles and low demand. One respondent is unsure about the solution and another suggests offering drivers discounted subscriptions for taking wheelchair jobs. There's also a mention that multi-seater vehicles should be wheelchair accessible.

Do you think there should be standardised accessibility requirements for wheelchair-accessible vehicles across different authorities to ensure consistency and equal access to transportation services for individuals with mobility impairments?

42/49 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

Yes 61.2% (30 choices)



No 24.5% (12 choices)



No answer 14.3% (7 choices)



English

Do you think proprietors of Compulsory Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles should be allowed to change the licence type to Compulsory Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle or Fully Electric Vehicle?

47/49 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

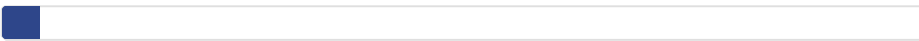
Yes 55.1% (27 choices)



No 40.8% (20 choices)



No answer 4.1% (2 choices)



10.If yes, how could the % of licensed wheelchair accessible in the fleet be maintained?

Respondents to the 'Taxis Trade Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles and Electric Vehicles Consultation' have expressed concerns about maintaining the percentage of licensed wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) in the fleet. Some suggest that new licenses should be restricted to WAVs to meet demand while others believe it may not be feasible to maintain the current percentage. There are comments on the comfort and suitability of smaller WAVs, with a preference for multiseater vehicles.

Financial incentives are mentioned as a way to encourage the use of WAVs, such as making the compulsory wheelchair licence more financially viable or funding WAVs through the council. Some respondents feel that the focus on percentages is not as critical as ensuring minimum coverage while others suggest that drivers with a long history of using WAVs should be allowed to switch to saloon or electric vehicles.

There is also a sentiment that maintaining the number of WAVs may not be possible due to the high costs associated with these vehicles, which discourages replacement when they become unusable. The idea of standardising the fleet is briefly mentioned but without detail on how this could be achieved. Overall, respondents highlight financial challenges and suggest various incentives and changes to licensing as potential solutions to maintain or improve WAV availability.

Do you think proprietors of Compulsory Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles who are unable to drive a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle due to a medical or physical reasons should be allowed to transfer their Compulsory Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle and then be allocated a new Compulsory Fully Electric or Plug in Hybrid plate?

48/49 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

Yes 73.5% (36 choices)



No 24.5% (12 choices)



No answer 2% (1 choice)



English

Do you think the council should continue to restrict the number of Hackney Carriage Vehicles?

49/49 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional



13. Please give reasons for your choice

Respondents are expressing concerns about the current number of Hackney Carriages and the impact of out-of-town taxis on the local taxi trade. A recurring theme is the belief that there are already too many taxis in the city, which is making it difficult for drivers to earn a living, especially without working excessive or antisocial hours. Respondents highlight the financial hardship due to over-supply, high fuel, and maintenance costs.

Many suggest that the issue of out-of-town taxis needs to be addressed, with calls to stop cross-border hiring. There is also a concern about the lack of rank space and the competition from ride-hailing apps like Uber. Some respondents feel that the council should control the number of available vehicles more strictly and suggest that unrestricted numbers would lead to a deterioration in service quality.

A few responses touch on the cost of running a taxi and the investment required for new vehicles, with one suggesting that licenses should only be given to those willing to invest in new cabs. Another respondent proposes that anyone presenting a suitable Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) should be allowed to license it as a Hackney Carriage.

Overall, the sentiment is that there needs to be better control and regulation of taxi numbers to ensure drivers can make a viable living and maintain service quality, with particular emphasis on addressing the issue of taxis from outside the area operating locally.

Do you believe there should be stronger enforcement mechanisms in place to ensure that operators comply with the wheelchair-accessibility requirements in Brighton & Hove, especially considering the impact on accessibility for local residents with mobility impairments?

48/49 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

Yes 51% (25 choices)



No 46.9% (23 choices)



No answer 2% (1 choice)



15. What suggestions do you have for improving the current policy regarding wheelchair accessible vehicles to make it more effective and enforceable, taking into account the challenges associated with operators working across different authorities?

Respondents have expressed a variety of opinions on the current policy regarding wheelchair-accessible vehicles (WAVs). Some believe the current system is sufficient and that no further enforcement is necessary. However, others suggest that there should be consequences for drivers who avoid WAV jobs, such as forfeiting their plates or licenses or being banned for a period.

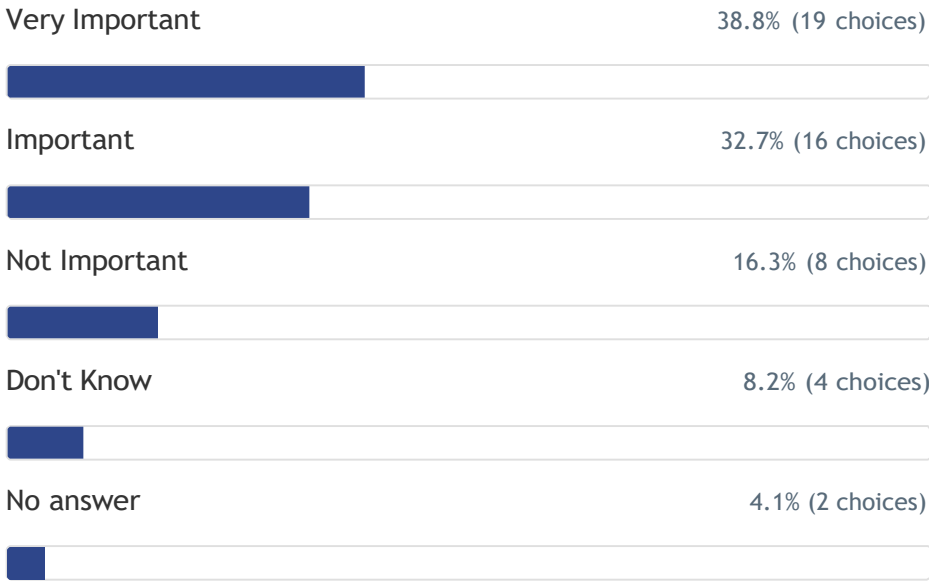
A few respondents recommend monitoring systems to track the number of WAV jobs each driver is doing to ensure accountability. There are also suggestions to make operating WAV licenses more financially attractive and to ensure a certain percentage of WAVs in each company's fleet.

Some respondents highlight the need for control, especially for out-of-town cars, and penalties for drivers who cherry-pick or overcharge. There is also a mention of the ineffectiveness of training courses, as drivers complete them only to obtain a license without the intention of serving WAV passengers.

Lastly, one respondent suggests that drivers should be encouraged rather than forced to take on wheelchair jobs. Overall, while there are differing views on enforcement and the necessity of policy changes, there is a common theme of ensuring that WAV services are provided effectively and that drivers are held accountable for serving passengers with disabilities.

How important do you think it is for all operators, regardless of their base location, to contribute to improving wheelchair accessibility in transportation services within Brighton & Hove?

47/49 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional



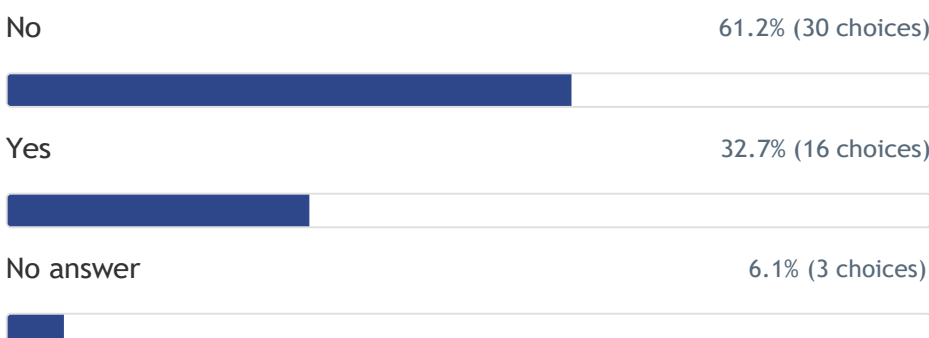
17. Are there any alternative approaches or solutions you would recommend to address the disparities in wheelchair-accessibility requirements for operators between Brighton & Hove and other authorities, while ensuring consistent access for all?

Respondents suggest that there should be a standardisation of policies across different authorities to ensure fairness and consistency in wheelchair-accessible vehicle (WAV) requirements. Some believe that a set number of WAVs should be mandated while others question the necessity for all taxis to be wheelchair accessible, suggesting that non-WAV drivers should not be compelled to have a WAV. There is a call for more cooperation from WAV drivers and a willingness from at least one respondent to discuss solutions with the council.

The difficulty of implementing changes is acknowledged and there is a suggestion for a collaborative hub for operators. One respondent believes that the requirements should apply only to private hires, not hackney carriages. Concerns are raised about the impact of regulations on taxi operators and drivers, with a call for more support and less frequent compliance tests for WAVs. Finally, there is a suggestion for guaranteed contracts for operators licensed by Brighton and Hove as an incentive.

Should the council allow any applicant on the Hackney Carriage Waiting List to licence a fully electric vehicle (EV)?

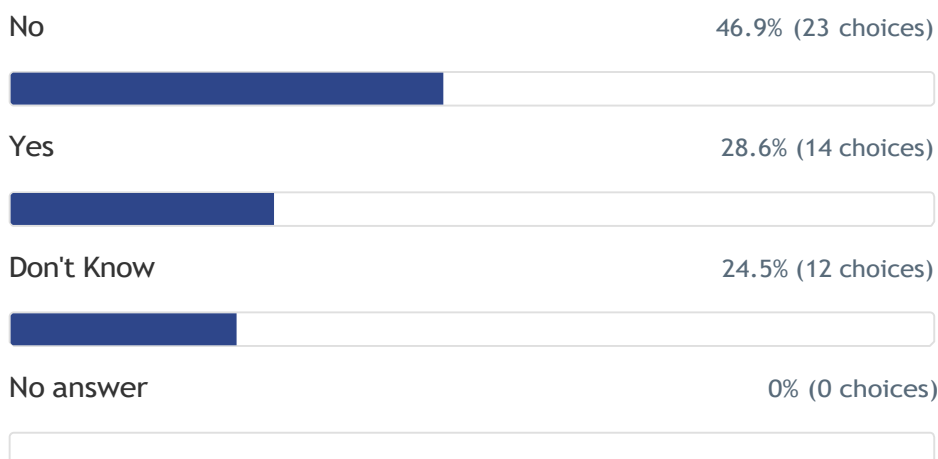
46/49 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional



English

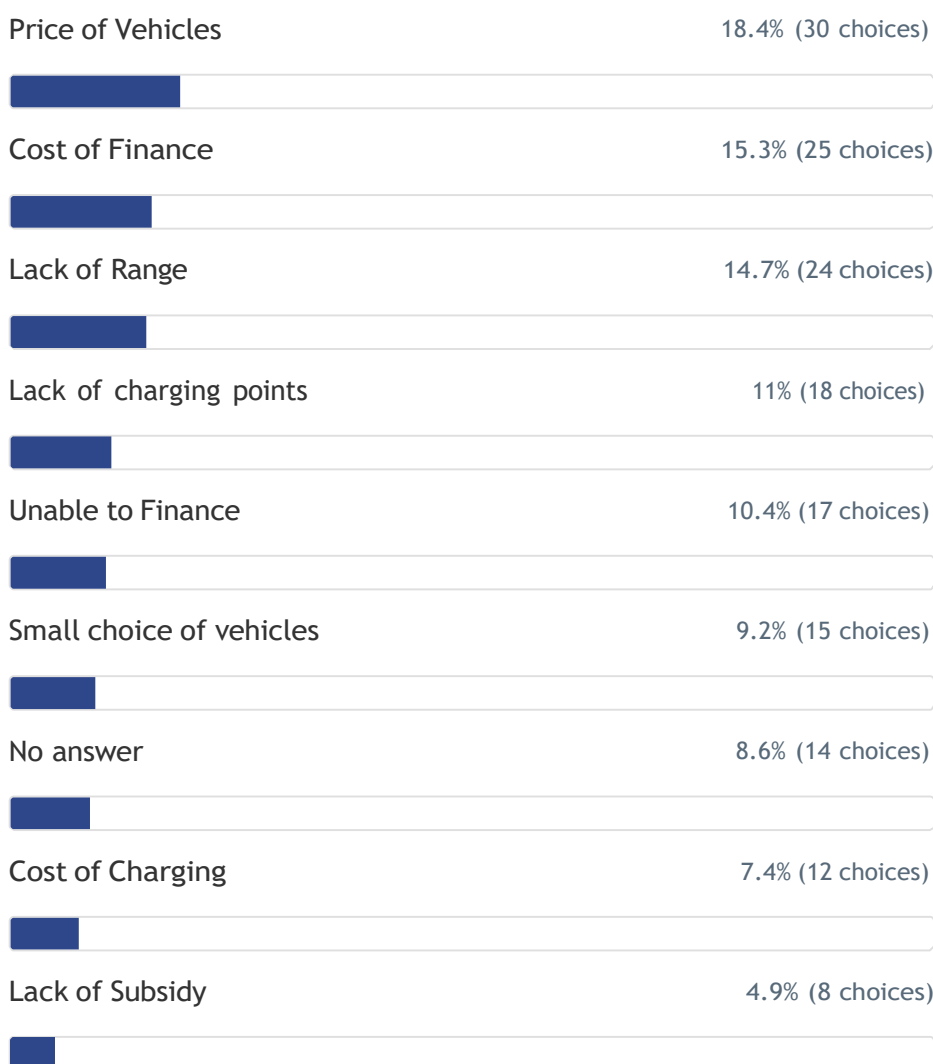
Are you considering switching to an EV?

49/49 - Multiple choice - choose one - required



What factor/factors are preventing you from buying an EV?

35/49 - Multiple choice - choose many - optional

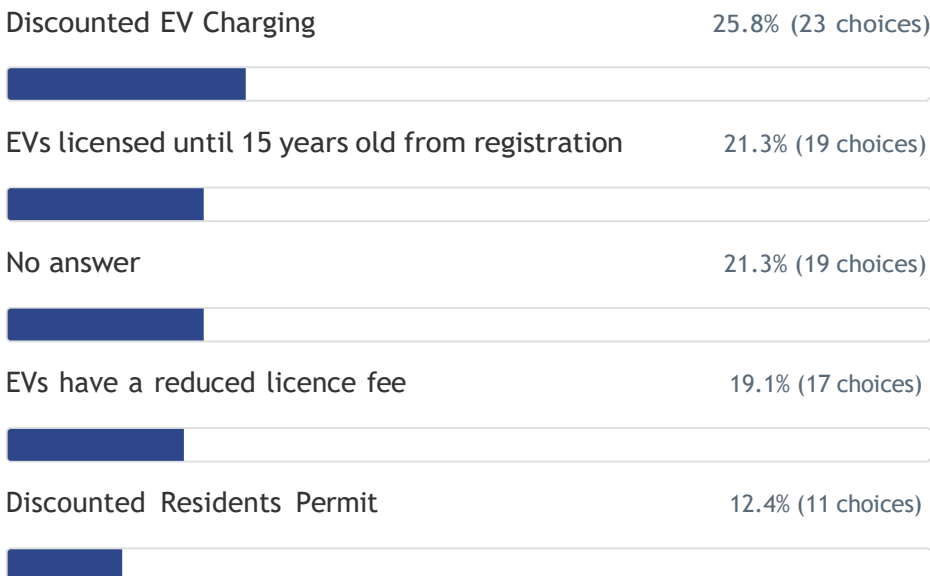


21. Are there any other reasons preventing you buying an EV?

Respondents have expressed several concerns about purchasing electric vehicles (EVs) for their taxi services. The most frequently mentioned issue is the limited range of EVs, with concerns that a single charge would not be sufficient for longer jobs such as airport runs, and that using heating or air conditioning could further reduce mileage. The cost of EVs is another significant concern, with respondents finding them expensive to purchase and maintain, particularly due to the high renewal cost of batteries. Charging infrastructure and the time required to charge are also seen as barriers, with availability and convenience being questioned. Safety concerns, including the risk of fire, were noted as well as environmental skepticism regarding the true benefits of EVs. Some respondents also highlighted the difficulty in finding suitable EVs for specific needs, such as wheelchair-accessible or larger eight-seater vehicles. Additionally, insurance costs and general maintenance concerns were mentioned as disincentives with some respondents feeling uncertain about the technology and its future. Overall, there is a sense of reluctance to transition to EVs based on financial, practical, and technological grounds.

What would incentivise you to purchase an EV?

30/49 - Multiple choice - choose many - optional



23. What other incentives would encourage you to purchase an EV?

Respondents have highlighted several key incentives that would encourage them to purchase electric vehicles (EVs). The most frequently mentioned factors include a reduction in the costs of EVs, improved battery life and range, and faster charging points. Grants or financial assistance to lower the purchase price of EVs were also commonly suggested as significant incentives. Some respondents are interested in technological advancements such as self-charging technology and the possibility of having wheelchair-accessible EVs. Other considerations include the impact on the environment, insurance and licensing costs, and the availability of larger vehicles like 8-seaters. However, there are also respondents who express no interest in incentives or purchasing EVs at all.

24. What year do you think that all newly licensed vehicles should be EV, given that from 2035 it will not be possible to purchase a petrol or diesel vehicle?

Respondents to the 'Taxis Trade Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles and Electric Vehicles Consultation' provided a range of opinions on when all newly licensed vehicles should be electric (EV). A few respondents believe that all newly licensed vehicles should never be mandated to be EVs with one suggesting that hybrid vehicles are a perfect solution. Others expect changes or reversals in policy before the 2035 deadline.

Some respondents are aligned with the 2035 timeline while others suggest later dates such as 2040 or 2045. One respondent indicated a preference for an earlier transition by 2028 while another suggested 2030. A couple of respondents expressed indifference or resignation to the 2035 target and one was unsure but suggested maybe 2040. One response was unclear, simply answering "Yes".

Overall, there is no consensus among respondents, with opinions varying from never transitioning to EVs to adhering to or even accelerating the proposed 2035 timeline.

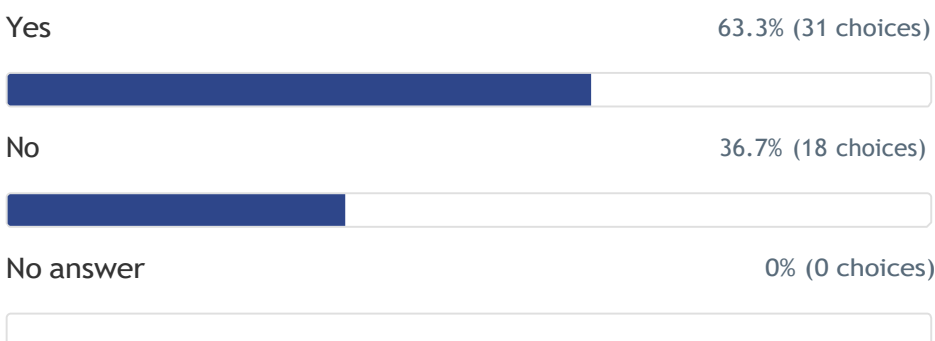
Do you think some ranks should be solely for EVs, with dedicated charge points?

46/49 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional



Do you want to answer the following equalities monitoring questions?

49/49 - Multiple choice - choose one - required



What gender are you?

30/49 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

Male 61.2% (30 choices)



No answer 38.8% (19 choices)



Female 0% (0 choices)



Non-binary 0% (0 choices)



Prefer not to say 0% (0 choices)



Other 0% (0 choices)



Do you identify as the gender you were assigned at birth?

12/49 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

No answer 75.5% (37 choices)



Yes 24.5% (12 choices)



No 0% (0 choices)



prefer not to say 0% (0 choices)



What is your age?

31/49 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

No answer 36.7% (18 choices)



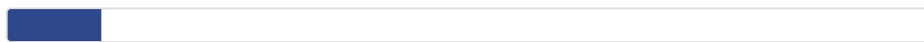
45 to 54 28.6% (14 choices)



55 to 64 16.3% (8 choices)



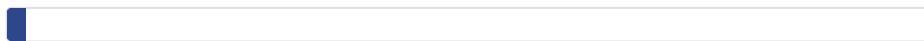
35 to 44 10.2% (5 choices)



25 to 34 6.1% (3 choices)



65 to 74 2% (1 choice)



0 to 15 0% (0 choices)



16 to 24 0% (0 choices)



75 to 84 0% (0 choices)



85 plus 0% (0 choices)



Prefer not to say 0% (0 choices)



Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

31/49 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

No 53.1% (26 choices)



No answer 36.7% (18 choices)



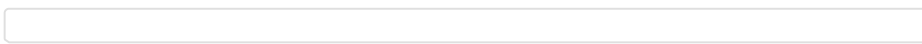
Yes, a little 6.1% (3 choices)



Prefer not to say 4.1% (2 choices)



Yes, a lot 0% (0 choices)



If you answered 'yes' to the previous question please state the type of impairment. If you have more than one please tick all that apply. If none apply, please mark Other

2/49 - Multiple choice - choose many - optional

No answer 95.9% (47 choices)



Physical Impairment 4.1% (2 choices)



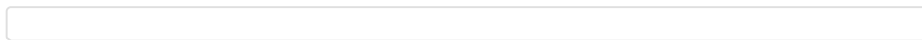
Long-standing Illness 0% (0 choices)



Mental Health Condition 0% (0 choices)



Learning Disability / Difficulty 0% (0 choices)



Sensory Impairment 0% (0 choices)



Developmental Condition 0% (0 choices)



Autistic Spectrum 0% (0 choices)



Prefer not to say 0% (0 choices)



Other 0% (0 choices)



Are you a carer?

31/49 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

No 44.9% (22 choices)



No answer 36.7% (18 choices)



Yes 12.2% (6 choices)



Prefer not to say 6.1% (3 choices)



English

If you answered 'yes' above please state who you care for. If you care for more than one person please tick all that apply. If none apply, please mark Other

5/49 - Multiple choice - choose many - optional

No answer 88% (44 choices)



Parent 8% (4 choices)



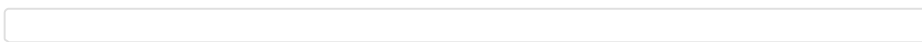
Other family member 2% (1 choice)



Partner/ spouse 2% (1 choice)



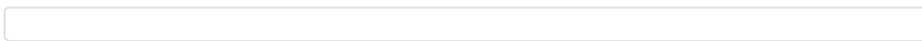
Child with special needs 0% (0 choices)



Friend 0% (0 choices)



Other 0% (0 choices)



What is your religion or belief?

31/49 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

No answer 36.7% (18 choices)



Christian 26.5% (13 choices)



I have no particular religion or belief 14.3% (7 choices)



Muslim 14.3% (7 choices)



Prefer not to say 4.1% (2 choices)



Agnostic 2% (1 choice)



Athiest 2% (1 choice)



Buddhist 0% (0 choices)



Hindu 0% (0 choices)



Jain 0% (0 choices)



Jewish 0% (0 choices)



Pagan 0% (0 choices)



Sikh 0% (0 choices)



Other philosophical belief 0% (0 choices)



Other 0% (0 choices)



Other 0% (0 choices)



English

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

31/49 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

Heterosexual / 'Straight' 51% (25 choices)



No answer 36.7% (18 choices)



Prefer not to say 8.2% (4 choices)



Bisexual 2% (1 choice)



Gay man 0% (0 choices)



Lesbian / Gay woman 0% (0 choices)



Queer 0% (0 choices)



Other 2% (1 choice)



How would you describe your ethnic origin?

31/49 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

No answer 36.7% (18 choices)



White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British 20.4% (10 choices)



White: Other 8.2% (4 choices)



Other Ethnic Group 8.2% (4 choices)



Prefer not to say 6.1% (3 choices)



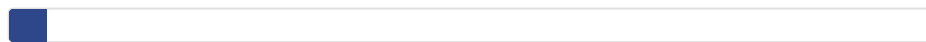
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi 6.1% (3 choices)



Asian or Asian British: Other 6.1% (3 choices)



Arab 4.1% (2 choices)



Mixed: Other 2% (1 choice)



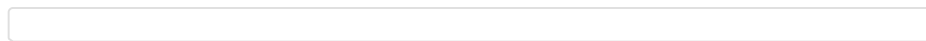
Asian or Asian British: Chinese 2% (1 choice)



Asian or Asian British: Pakistani 0% (0 choices)



Asian or Asian British: Indian 0% (0 choices)



Mixed: Black African and White 0% (0 choices)



Mixed: Black Caribbean and White 0% (0 choices)



Black or Black British: Other 0% (0 choices)



Black or Black British: Caribbean 0% (0 choices)



English

Black or Black British: African 0% (0 choices)

White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller 0% (0 choices)

White: Irish 0% (0 choices)

Are you, or have you been, looked after by a local authority for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14?

31/49 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

No 61.2% (30 choices)



No answer 36.7% (18 choices)



Prefer not to say 2% (1 choice)



Yes 0% (0 choices)

Don't know 0% (0 choices)

Are you currently serving in the UK armed forces? (this includes reservists or part-time service, e.g. Territorial Army)

31/49 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

No 63.3% (31 choices)



No answer 36.7% (18 choices)



Yes 0% (0 choices)

Prefer not to say 0% (0 choices)

Have you ever served in the UK Armed Forces?

19/49 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

No answer 61.2% (30 choices)



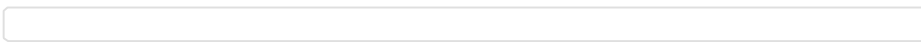
No 38.8% (19 choices)



Yes 0% (0 choices)



Prefer not to say 0% (0 choices)



Are you a member of a current or former service personnel's immediate family/ household?

16/49 - Multiple choice - choose one - optional

No answer 67.3% (33 choices)



No 32.7% (16 choices)



Yes 0% (0 choices)



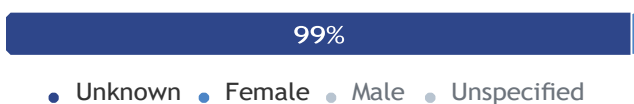
Prefer not to say 0% (0 choices)



Participants

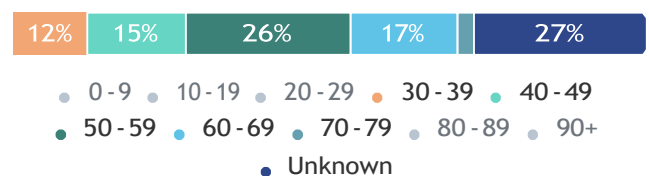
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Gender



● Unknown ● Female ● Male ● Unspecified

Year of birth



● 0-9 ● 10-19 ● 20-29 ● 30-39 ● 40-49
● 50-59 ● 60-69 ● 70-79 ● 80-89 ● 90+
● Unknown

Visitors

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English