

WHEELCHAIR AND ASSISTANCE DOGS EXEMPTION GUIDELINES



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Introduction

The Council is committed to an accessible public transport system in which disabled people can enjoy the same opportunities to travel as other members of society. Hackney Carriages are a vital link in the transport chain.

In formulating these guidelines the Council has had regard to the Equality Act 2010.

The Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy states that the hackney carriage fleet will be 100% wheelchair accessible and a condition of the grant of a licence is that a licensed hackney carriage driver must give assistance to wheelchair users and to allow access to guide, hearing or other assistance dogs users.

The Council recognises that in some instances licensed hackney carriage drivers will not be physically fit enough to comply with this requirement in which case the following exemption policy will apply.

The applicant can obtain a medical exemption application form from the Taxi Licensing website www.plymouth.gov.uk/tellusanychanges. All costs associated with obtaining a medical exemption certificate are to be met by the driver. The Council will not accept any signed medical exemption form that is more than one month old.

Temporary Exemption Certificates

A temporary exemption will be available to any driver who has suffered an acute injury, illness or medical condition in which recovery is a reasonable outcome, having regard to the nature of the work required in transporting wheelchair passengers safely.

Where a driver wishes to apply for a temporary exemption the applicant is required to submit an assessment form signed and authenticated by that persons GP stating the precise reason for the exemption.

The completed form will only be accepted if it is completed by the driver's own GP or a GP within that practice who has full access to their medical records.

A temporary exemption certificate will be short term and will be issued for a period up to 6 months.

Prior to expiry of the temporary exemption certificate, the driver will contact the Council to either:

- (i) Declare themselves fit, return to normal duties and return the temporary exemption certificate; OR
- (ii) Arrange a further medical assessment to be submitted for the Licensing Manager to consider extending the exemption certificate.

Any costs will need to be met by the applicant.

Drivers must not display their temporary exemption badges after expiry and must return these to the Council within 14 days of expiry.

Exemption Certificates

An exemption will be available to any driver who is suffering from a degenerative injury, illness or medical condition which prevents the driver from loading and securing wheelchairs.

Where a driver wishes to apply for an exemption the applicant is required to submit an assessment form signed and authenticated by that persons GP and supported by a specialist consultant confirming that in their professional opinion an exemption should be granted, having regard to the nature of the work required in transporting wheelchair passengers safely.

The completed form will only be accepted if it is completed by the driver's own GP (or a GP within that practice) and a report from a specialist consultant with full access to their medical records.

Any costs will need to be met by the applicant.

The Council reserve the right to contact the applicants GP to discuss any part of the evidence supplied and will expect the applicant to sign a mandate for this purpose.

The length of an Exemption Certificate will be issued on a case by case basis and for a period determined by the Officer depending on the GP and consultant's advice.

The Council reserves the right to request a review of the medical exemption at any time from the date of issue.

The Council reserves the right to withdraw a medical exemption at any time where the driver has not supplied the relevant information or not complied with stated timescales to consider or review an exemption, or any other information is received that would call into question the on-going necessity for such an exemption to remain in place.

If the driver declares themselves fit to return to normal duties, the exemption certificate must be returned to the Council.

Assistance Dogs

The same exemption guidance will also apply to assistance dogs.

Assistance dogs include guide dogs trained by Guide Dogs, hearing dogs trained by Hearing Dogs and assistance dogs trained by Dogs for the Disabled, Support Dogs or Canine Partners or similar organisations.

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