

## Policy on the Carriage of Persons Accompanied by Assistance Dogs in Gedling Borough Licensed Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles

What responsibility does the Council have regarding persons accompanied by an Assistance dog and their use of taxis and private hire vehicles?

Gedling Borough Council is responsible for licensing taxi drivers (both private hire and hackney carriage drivers), their vehicles, and private hire operators within its area. The Council, under powers given to it by the Equality Act 2010 (the Act) is responsible for enforcement of drivers responsibilities with respect to the carriage of a person(s) accompanied by an assistance dog, and for exempting drivers from such responsibilities on medical grounds.

### What are Assistance Dogs?

Assistance dogs are dogs that have been trained to aid or assist people who may be physically or mentally disabled. The dogs can support either adults or children in their homes and in the community. As the dogs not only provide a specific service to their handlers, but also greatly enhance the quality of life of the handlers, the dogs are allowed, by law, to accompany their handler into public places such as shops, restaurants and also permitted to travel on public transport.

There are three types of assistance dog:

Guide Dogs – for the blind and visually impaired.

Hearing Dogs – for the deaf and the hard of hearing.

Service Dogs – for people with disabilities other than those related to vision or hearing.

What responsibilities do drivers of licensed vehicles have when hired by or for a disabled person accompanied by an assistance dog?

A driver of any licensed vehicle must:

- carry the disabled person's dog and allow them to remain with that person,
- not make an additional charge for carrying a person accompanied by an assistance dog.

## Exempt Drivers

The Act allows the Council to exempt drivers from their responsibilities to carry a person accompanied by an assistance dog on medical grounds. The driver may submit to the Council an application for exemption by completing the prescribed application form accompanied by medical evidence in support of the exemption application.

Any driver who holds a valid exemption certificate is required to display the valid exemption notice in clear view within the licensed vehicle, until such time the exemption notice expires.

Until the driver has been issued with a valid exemption notice, the driver will continue to be recognised as a driver who must continue to carry persons accompanied by an assistance dog for fulfilling the responsibilities specified above.

### What do I do if I think a driver is not fulfilling their responsibilities as a driver of a licensed vehicle in relation to the carriage of a person accompanied by an assistance dog?

If you have a concern about a driver not fulfilling their responsibilities as a driver of a licensed vehicle licensed by the Council, in relation to the carriage of a person, accompanied by an assistance dog, we ask that you report your concerns to the Council as soon as you can. We need to be able to identify the driver, so information from you about the registration number, the licence number of the vehicle and/or the name of the driver/operator is essential. It will also help if you can give us the names and addresses of any other witnesses.

### What sort of things should I report to you?

We want to know about anything that may make a driver non-compliant with the responsibilities of a driver of a licensed vehicle. For instance:

- refusal to carry a person accompanied by an assistance dog,
- refusal to carry an assistance dog,
- reluctance by the driver to assist a person accompanied by an assistance dog,
- overcharging by way of adding an additional charge for the carriage of a person accompanied by an assistance dog,
- incorrectly displaying of an Exemption Notice within the vehicle, and
- displaying an expired, fake or counterfeit Exemption Notice.

### How do I make a complaint?

- By telephone – 0115 9013971
- Via our web site – [www.gedling.gov.uk/complaints/](http://www.gedling.gov.uk/complaints/)
- In person at Civic Centre Arnot Hill Park, Arnold Nottingham NG5 6LU
- Write to us at Licensing Section, Civic Centre, Arnot Hill Park, Arnold, Nottingham NG5 6LU

Whichever way you contact us, please make sure you give the information above.

## What will we do?

We will investigate every complaint made. If the complaint is upheld, we have the power to take action which, in very serious cases, may mean that the driver's licence is revoked.

## Any questions?

If you have any questions, or wish to have information about the investigation procedure, please contact us on 0115 9013971 or by email at [licensing@gedling.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@gedling.gov.uk)