

TAXI POLICY
CONSULTATION-
CARD PAYMENTS &
VEHICLE AGE

November 2023

Summary results of survey with the industry on Taxi
Policy Changes.

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INTRODUCTION

The Licensing Team consulted with Taxi Drivers and Operators on the following changes:

1. To require Hackney Carriage vehicles to offer card machine payments by the 1 February 2024 as a payment option.
2. Amending the entry age for all vehicles to 4 years and 60,000 miles and the exit age of 8 years for private hire vehicles.

The survey was open between 25 September and 12 November 2023.

It was promoted by direct email to licensed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers and operators. In addition to the survey, respondents were able to make an appointment with the Licensing Manager to discuss the changes in more detail.

There was a total of 97 responses to the survey.

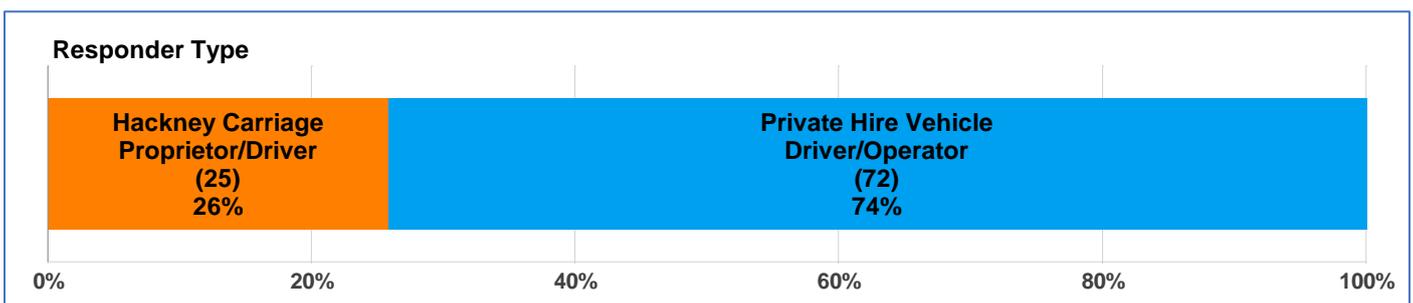
Please note not every respondent answered every question, therefore the total number of respondents refers to the number of respondents for the question being discussed not to the survey overall.

Rounding means that some charts may not add up to 100%.

RESPONSE TYPE

Survey responders were asked what type of operator or driver they were.

- A total of 97 responses were received.
- 74% (72) of responders identified themselves as Private Hire Vehicle drivers or Operators.



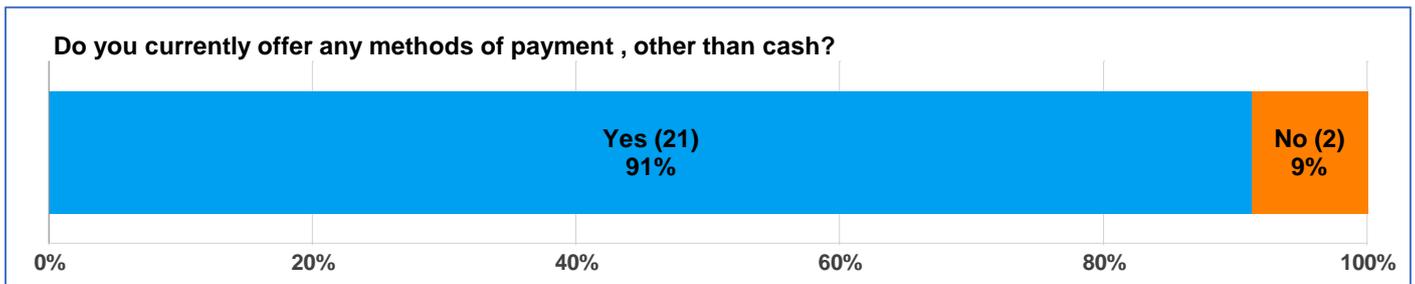
CARD PAYMENTS

- Questions about card payments were only posed to Hackney Carriage Proprietors and Drivers.

DO YOU CURRENTLY OFFER ANY METHODS OF PAYMENT, OTHER THAN CASH?

Hackney Carriage Proprietors and Drivers were asked: 'Do you currently offer any methods of payment, other than cash?'

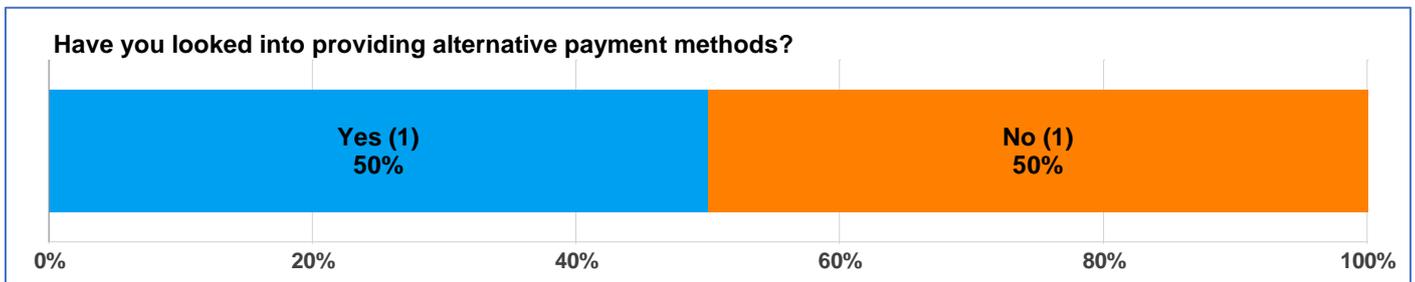
- There were 23 responses to this question.
- 91% of responders said they did offer alternative methods of payment.



HAVE YOU LOOKED INTO PROVIDING ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT METHODS?

The two responders that said they didn't currently offer any payment methods, other than cash, were asked if they had looked into providing alternative payment method.

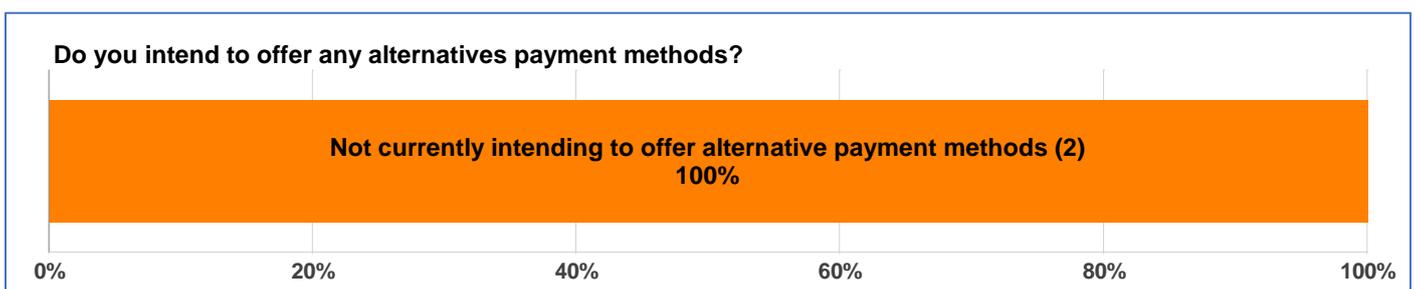
- There were two responses to this question.
- 50% of responders said they had looked into providing alternative payment methods.



DO YOU INTEND TO OFFER ANY ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT METHODS?

The two responders that said they didn't currently offer any payment methods, other than cash, were asked if they intended to offer any alternative payment methods.

- There were two responses to this question.
- 100% of respondents said they are not currently intending to offer alternative payment methods.



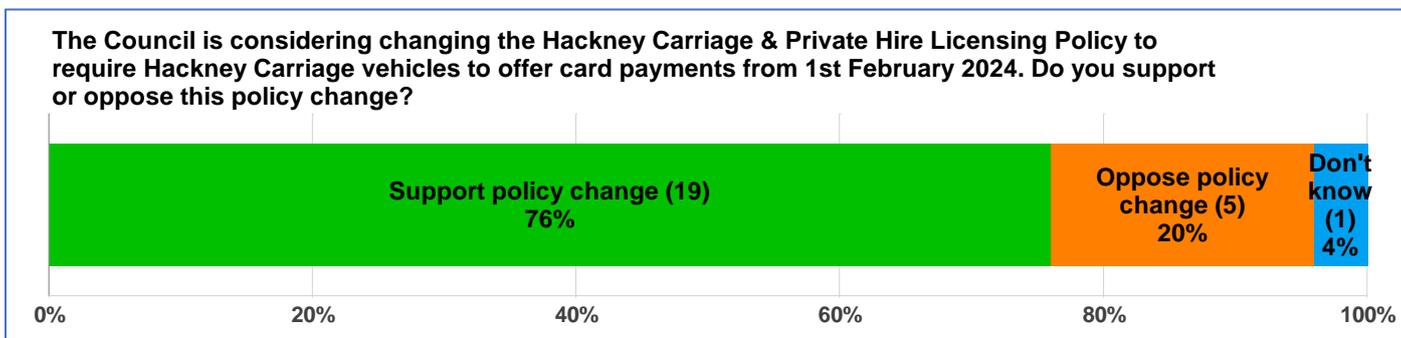
These respondents were asked why they were not considering introducing any alternative payments. Two comments were received, these are shown in full below.

Comments
Maidstone and surrounding area mobile signal is very poor. So it is difficult to take the card payment. If passenger pays by stolen card later payment will be charged back and driver will lose money.
payment card machines rely on phone signals, and these can be unreliable

POLICY CHANGE SUPPORT

It was outlined that the Council was considering changing the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy to require Hackney carriage Vehicles to offer card payments from 1 February 2024. Hackney Carriage Drivers and operators were asked if they supported or opposed the proposed change.

- There were 25 responses to this question.
- 76% of respondents were in favour of the policy change.



Comments

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide additional comments about the proposed policy change to make it a requirement for all Hackney Carriages to offer card payments from 1 February 2024.

A total of 10 comments were received, these are shown in full below.

Comments
The change of payments options should be applied as soon as possible as all Hackney drivers have their sum up card reader with them. Most of them had this since 3 years. Because of no clear guidance from licencing authority, they just use for long fare and refuse for short fare. I mean honest driver like are always cheating be get on fare job.so please don't wait till 1st Feb just advise to use as soon as possible. I will salute you.
It's needed now as most people don't carry cash
Most if not all Hackneys have card machines, but some drivers mysteriously forget them when a short fare comes along. Compelling a card machine is meaningless.
As long as the council regularly checks that all have them do work because it's been used to turn small jobs away.
I am with all the changes
I think it's necessary for everyone to be able to take card and cash payments
It gives the customer a choice
Card payments incur a fee so you are losing money on every transaction.
I believe that card payment should be available as a payment method in any taxi, as many people can only use card payment due to their needs. It can save time and reduce waiting times for customers. Offering card payment as an option, in addition to cash, provides a more comfortable and relaxed experience for passengers whenever they need to use a Hackney Carriage.
It's Our Right to Make decisions to handle cash or card machine, it's not right when taking control of people decisions, Cashless society isn't the right society as to give more control to government that cannot be trusted

VEHICLE AGE

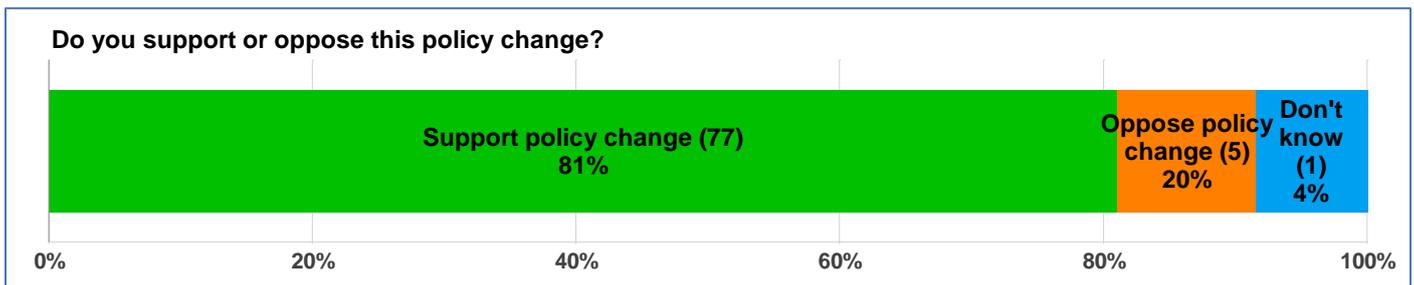
- Questions about vehicle age were posed to both Hackney Carriage Proprietors and Drivers and private hire vehicle operators and owners.

POLICY CHANGE SUPPORT

It was outlined that the Council was considering changing the new vehicle entry level requirements to increase the maximum age of new vehicles to four years with a maximum mileage of 60,000 mile and an exit age of eight years for private hire vehicles.

Respondents were asked if they supported or opposed the proposed change.

- There were 95 responses to this question.
- 81% of respondents were in favour of the policy change.



Comments

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide additional comments about the proposed policy changes to new vehicle entry requirements and exit age of vehicles from 1 February 2024.

A total of 25 comments were received:

- 12 of the comments ask for the Council to go further with the policy with suggestions to extend the exit age to 10 years and lower new vehicle requirements.
- 6 comments were broadly positive with one commenting that this brings MBC in line with other Local Authorities. Three comments related to condition of vehicles.

The comments are shown in full below.

Comments
In this current day and age we are fortunate to have cars that are built very well and that have very low emissions. I believe that cars older than 4 years or with higher mileage that 60,000 should be allowed for entry. We all service our cars much more regularly than ordinary cars as we want to keep this fit and roadworthy for work. It would make it easy for drivers to service the town/local people if they could buy a car that is less expensive because the age is 5/6 years old or the mileage was below 90/100,000.
This has been Much needed and makes it far more accessible for people wanting to join the industry. It's give people greater opportunity and a sense of ownership. The days of old cars breaking down and as long as the compliance is strictly adhered to this is a fantastic and progressive policy change.
In any other councils, the vehicle age is up to 7 years and can be used for 10 years. If Maidstone council could change vehicle age from 5 and exit age of vehicles 10 years of age
This should be increased. As a PHV driver it is far too expensive to purchase a car of those specifications. Other neighbouring councils have lower age restrictions such as 8 years and no mileage cap with it being licensed up to 10 years. Please consider something similar as 4 is still too expensive.
Given the enormous expense of new vehicles for high HC and PH, especially electric vehicles, the entry requirements should be relaxed to 5 years at first licensing and 10 years for the oldest for PH and 15 years for HCs.

Comments
It should really be about the mileage. I don't see how the date of registration affects a cars ability to be useful for the purpose. You could have a car first registered 4 years and one day ago with a mere 2000 miles on the clock. Conversely a car with 59000 miles on the clock but only 3 years 364 days would be deemed suitable. Cut offs are great but perhaps limit it to miles only as this is a better indicator as to the condition of the vehicle, at least from a wear and tear perspective. It makes a bit of a mockery of the car is then allowed to be on circuit for 8 years. Either a car is mechanically sound and fit for purpose, or it isn't
I support entry time but I oppose Vehicle exit time. It should be Vehicle exit time for 10 years not 8 years
I support the policy change because of the ever-increasing cost of changing a vehicle and it also brings it more in line with other local boroughs
Long overdue policy updates. I think 6 years and 70000 start and 10 years end providing good condition
Provided the standard of the cabs is maintained
Private hire drivers should not be forced to receive payments by card machines
6 years- maximum age of new vehicles / 10 years- exit age of vehicles.
As the car modern vehicles are very reliable respectively the mileage limitation should at least be 100000,
These age and mileage limits are irrelevant. If a vehicle can pass its MOT test it should be possible to license it. Do away with them completely.
I believe this is still very strict considering how economical and safe car are made nowadays.
If the taxi is electric, they should not be limited mileage for the vehicle. As the electric taxi. Is emission free so they're for. They should be exempt from the mileage requirement
Gives the customer a Choice.
I think age of new vehicles should be increased to at least 5 years as it's absolutely unfair to Maidstone badge holder as lots of Tonbridge and Malling can drive in Maidstone and making joke of Maidstone badge holder since they can plate older vehicles and also be able to work in Maidstone.
The new the car the better. To older cars are unreliable.
Allowing a higher mileage could result in taxis looking rundown.
3 years to 10years
As you may know, we have compliance tests every year alongside the MOT test. These measures ensure that the Council's taxis are consistently in excellent condition to serve our customers. New cars are more expensive and tend to remain roadworthy for a longer period compared to the past. Moreover, some other Councils offer licenses with longer durations. Consequently, many drivers may obtain their taxi licenses from other authorities and work for Maidstone companies. This could result in a significant loss for MBC, as they would need to pay licensing fees to other jurisdictions while still serving within our Borough.
Electric vehicles are expensive and costly as they always have to go to manufactures to be repaired and manufacturers costs are up the roof and they don't carry out works on vehicles when they've been touched by other mechanics
I think 60,000 and an exit age of eight years for private hire vehicles. is a great decision
I think a ten years period for PHV is absolutely acceptable.

SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

