

Chorley & South Ribble Disability Forum
Registered Charity No.1092380

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**Chorley & South
Ribble
Disability Forum**

To: Simon Clark
Head of Health Environment and Neighbourhoods
Chorley Council

24 January 2011

Dear Mr Clark,

Re: Conditions for granting of Taxi Driver licenses

Chorley & South Ribble Disability Forum was very pleased to learn that Chorley Council has introduced a condition for Taxi Driver applicants to undergo training on wheelchair accessibility and loading of wheelchairs/users into taxis.

We often hear of wheelchair users' bad experience when using taxis. Chairs not being positioned/secured properly, and people almost being tipped out when disembarking, are particularly common complaints. Only last week a colleague described how, as a passer-by, she'd felt obliged to intervene because she feared that a Taxi Driver who was 'helping' someone into his cab was, in fact, about to tip her out. (The wheelchair user him/herself is usually the expert but not all taxi drivers take kindly to advice from their passengers and, with disabled people still reporting problems in booking accessible taxis, they are often reluctant to risk being labeled as an 'awkward' customer.)

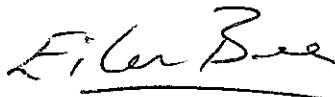
It is unfortunate that Taxi Driver applicants locally are experiencing delays in accessing the training, but hopefully the situation should be eased if the Driver Standards Agency does introduce a course based in Chorley from April this year. I suspect that this may be a 'chicken

and egg' situation – taxi drivers will not seek to attend the course unless they have to, and without the demand more courses won't be made available.

Whilst the Forum is not unsympathetic to people who experience delays in obtaining a Taxi Driver license because of the shortage of training places, we would certainly consider it a retrograde step for the Council to remove this condition – and one which could put the safety of disabled people at risk.

Please let me know if there's anything else we can do at this time to support the Council in improving this important service for disabled people.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eileen Bee". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

Eileen Bee
Co-ordinator