

Mr Chair and Members

As a representative of the BCP Taxi & Private Hire Association I am submitting this request for a review of the current (2024) chart of maximum fares that may be charged by Hackney Carriages for journeys within this licensing area.

Such requests are normally for a percentage increase to be applied to both the first and subsequent miles. The charge for the first mile is higher as this recognises the time the driver often waits for jobs. Extra fees may also be charged for each additional passenger over one, items of luggage, and a prebooked or 'running in fee'.

However, this year we are aware of the continuing pressure on the cost of living and the fact that on a league table of fares compiled by a trade magazine we are placed near the top and certainly above surrounding licensing areas. We would therefore like to take the opportunity to simplify and modernise the fare structure whilst only increasing fares over a two-hour period.

Our first request relates to rate 1.

We would suggest an increase in the first mile charge from £5.66 to £6.66 to be achieved by increasing the initial charge or 'flag'. However, we are also suggesting the abolition of all extra fees. As extra fees are currently added to the fare at the end of the journey, they are frequently the cause of disagreement between driver and passengers. For many journeys the effect would be that the increase in the flag would be totally offset by the abolition of the extra charges.

We can now look at rate 3.

This rate is currently only applicable from 1830 on 24 December to 0630 on 27 December and from 1830 on 31 January to 0630 on 2 January. It is effectively a 50% uplift of the rate 1 charge, not the double that most customers believe we charge at Christmas. We are seeking to maintain the same differential going forward so the first mile charge would rise to £8.49 from £9.49. However, linking to our proposed changes to rate 2 the rate 3 supplement would now cease at 0600 on 27 December and 2 January.

Rate 2

This is the nighttime or anti-social but unlike in all surrounding licencing areas and others nearby it is only operational from midnight to 0630. We would like to take this opportunity to synchronise the timings in our area with those in surrounding areas. This would mean changing the times of our nighttime rate to 2200 to 0600. We recognise that this would be a substantial increase for anyone travelling between 2200 and midnight and to offset this would suggest a reduction in the subsequent mile rate from £3.82 to £3.50.

The availability of taxis is an important part of women's safety, especially at night. Our fares should be set so that vulnerable passengers are not encouraged to take alternative unlicensed, and therefore uninsured and illegal transport options, but high enough for the drivers to earn a living wage which is reflective of the unsocial hours they are working. It is our opinion that the policies recently agreed and introduced set some of the highest standards for drivers and vehicles in the country. However, not enhancing the rate until midnight runs the risk of, fewer BCP drivers being available and the shortfall being made up by drivers from other licensing areas who are not subject to such rigorous standards and are earning the enhanced rates approved by their LA.

## Multi Seat Vehicles.

The provision of vehicles suitable for the transport of between 5 and 8 passengers requires a substantially greater investment than for those which are only able to transport a maximum of 4 passengers. Up until now this has been somewhat recognised by allowing an extra £2.00 to be charged in addition to the standard fare. The higher investment has increased following the changes to the style of vehicles that can be licensed to carry more than 4 passengers as vehicles such as the Peugeot 5008, Ford Galaxy or VW Sharan are, rightly, no longer able to be licensed to convey 6 passengers. We would like to take the opportunity of this review to introduce three new rates **only** applicable when 5 or more passengers are being transported and these rates would be 50% higher than the appropriate standard rate. This would mean that a party of 5-8 passengers could travel together for 50% less than in two standard taxis. Again, this is already common practice in other LAs.

## Pre-Arranged Bookings

Although this chart of fares strictly only applies to Hackney Carriages which are normally hired from a rank or hailed in the street, an immediate booking. There is nothing stopping a Hackney Carriage driver agreeing to pick up a customer at a pre-arranged place and time. The current chart allows the charging of £1.00 / £1.25 as a booking fee for each pre-arranged booking. As this level of fee was set at the time that the fares were standardised across the three towns when BCP Council was formed our final request is for it to be increased to a maximum of £2.00 across the board.

Whilst the approved maximum fares only apply to Hackney Carriage journeys wholly within their zone, it is also a requirement for Private Hire Vehicles equipped with a meter, or equivalent charging device, to not charge more than the maximum meter fare. A £2.00 charge is only equivalent to less than that charged for the first 600 yards of an immediate booking and the driver could have travelled up to 5 miles within a zone in order to be on time to honour the booking. A PH driver could have to travel even further as their 'zone' is the entire BCP area.

Currently this is regarded as an extra and we would suggest that this continues with the button being set to charge this in one press.

Thank you for receiving this request, I am willing to answer any questions you may have.