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**Margaret James**

**From:** Glyn Constant [glyngina@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** 21 July 2011 12:32  
**To:** Margaret James  
**Subject:** taxi/private hire consultation

Dear Mrs James

Your letter of 1<sup>st</sup> June (Ref ENF.MEJ) asked for feedback on a couple of matters.

a) The use of Bedford Transport Depot for vehicle inspections.

In the 5 years that I have been operating I have had my vehicles tested at 3 different locations

I) The Luton transport depot. Lead time for a test was anything from 2 to 4 weeks and the downtime for a vehicle, including traveling time, was in excess of 3 hours.

II) ASG Motors of Biggleswade. Very efficient garage who were strict but fair. Lead time for a test was 2 to 5 days and the downtime for a vehicle, including traveling time, was 1 hour.

III) Bedford Transport Depot. Efficient, strict but fair. Tests on Central Beds vehicles are only carried out on Wednesdays but lead time is 1 to 3 weeks. Downtime for a vehicle, including traveling time, was up to 2 hours..

In order of personal preference's they would be: ASG, Bedford & Luton

b) New driver requirements.

From my own experience the DSA driver assessment or driver competency test is a total nonsense. My son, who has 20 years of accident free driving, took this test in Winchester a few months ago and failed on several issues - the majority of which were concerned with the use of mirrors. After this failure I telephoned the DSA to seek clarification on the test. Their answer - that it is a full practical driving test, identical to that given to a first time driver who has just learned to drive, with a few additional manoeuvres applicable to taxi's. 3 weeks later, my son booked an hour's tuition with a driving instructor and former examiner in Stevenage who took him around the favoured routes and gave him tips on passing. These included moving all mirrors so he would have to turn his head to see them. The following day he passed his second test without any problems.

I would be very surprised if any driver, no matter how experienced or competent, could pass this test.

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Although too late to have my views on the issue of Wheelchair accessibility/ Hackneys taken into account I would still like to record them.

Three years ago I was quite keen to expand my operation to include 2 Hackneys but was put off when I discovered that; a) Mid Beds had a policy of 100% wheelchair accessibility for Hackneys and b) a further policy of insisting that there be no extra charge for this service. Having spoken to London taxi drivers I found they were allowed to turn the meter on before extending the wheelchair ramps and loading the passenger, and turning it off after unloading the passenger and stowing the ramps. From personal experience of picking up from a Nursing home in Biggleswade

08/08/2011