

Kettering Borough Council Policy on Seat Width in Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Vehicles

The purpose of this policy is to determine the dimension of seats for fare paying passengers in hackney carriages and private hire vehicles to ensure that those passengers have sufficient space to be able to travel in comfort and safety.

While this policy does not prevent the Authority from using its discretion in this matter, the Authority does not envisage departing from this policy unless evidence of exceptional circumstances is provided.

In preparing this policy the council has had regard to the seat width requirements for minibuses in Schedule 6 of The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986, being the current legislation on this subject. They provide that no seat, other than a wheelchair, in a minibus shall be less than 400 mm wide.

This Authority will therefore require any passenger seating within any hackney carriage or private hire vehicle to be no less than 400 millimetres wide across its narrowest point, which also takes account of any parts of the vehicle which may overhang the seat, restricting the available seat space.

The council considers that all private hire vehicles and hackney carriages should comply with the seat width requirements for minibuses.

A width of 400mm per passenger should be viewed as the absolute minimum to be achieved and wherever possible operators and proprietors should seek to provide larger seats than this. The Community Transport Association currently recommends 450mm per passenger <http://www.ctauk.org/UserFiles/DocumentsSecure/Professional%20Services/Legal%20Framework/Construction%20&%20Use%20Regulations%20for%20Minibuses.pdf>

Except in the aforementioned exceptional circumstances, only seats of 400mm or more (or in the case of bench seats multiples of that dimension) will be considered in the licensing of a vehicle for the number of fare paying passengers that may be carried.

For clarity, exceptional circumstances does **not** include any vehicle model which is the same as a vehicle which is currently licensed with seats that are below this dimension.

This policy applies to all new vehicle licences after the date it comes into effect and also to all existing vehicle licences at the time of renewal.