

# Taxi Driver Code of Conduct Consultation



July 2024

## **Abstract**

The Code of Conduct consultation was answered by 59 respondents, made up of a mix of drivers, local residents, vehicle proprietors and operators. Most of whom were largely in favour of a Taxi Driver Code of Conduct. It was hoped by a decent proportion of respondents that having a set of guidelines and standards would only be beneficial for the trade.

A lower proportion were in favour of the specific proposed code of conduct, with some respondents, mostly licenced drivers, concerned about some of the stricter aspects such as dress code, the code applying outside of working hours and the overall pressure this would put on drivers compared to what is expected from customers.

Other respondents had concerns about the processes that would surround a code of conduct, how it would be enforced, the transparency of the process, what penalties could be imposed on drivers and whether there would be the right to appeal such decisions.

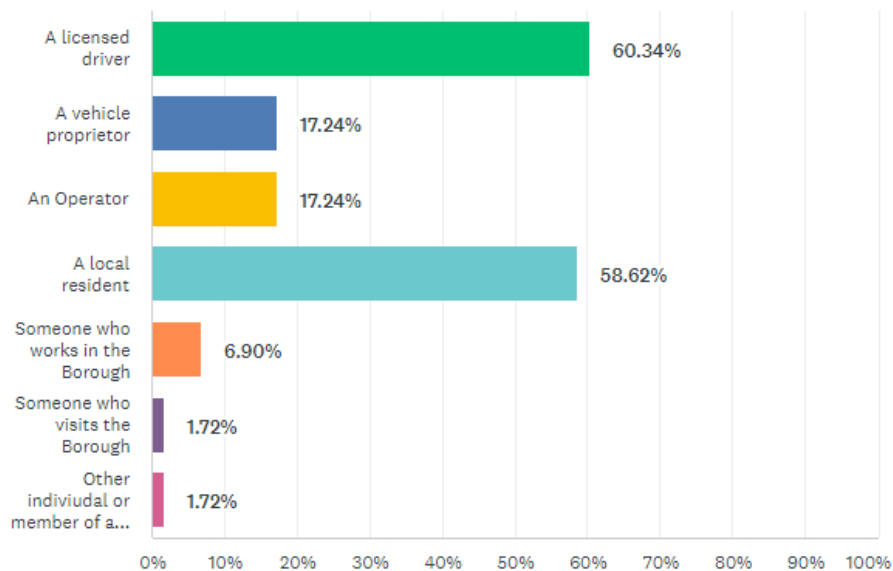
Further analysis of the survey responses can be found in this report, whilst **full** survey answers can be found in a separate excel spreadsheet available from the Licensing Manager.

## Who answered the survey? (Q5)

59 responses were collected over the consultation period, 58 of these answered Q5, which asked respondents the following.

Please tell us about yourself. Select all that apply. Are you...

Answered: 58 Skipped: 1



60% (35) of those answered were licenced drivers, and 58.6% (34) of those who answered were residents. (respondents were allowed to select more than one answer).

17% (10) of respondents stated that they were vehicle proprietors **or** operators.

Only a select number of respondents either worked in the borough (6.9%) or visits the borough (1.72%)

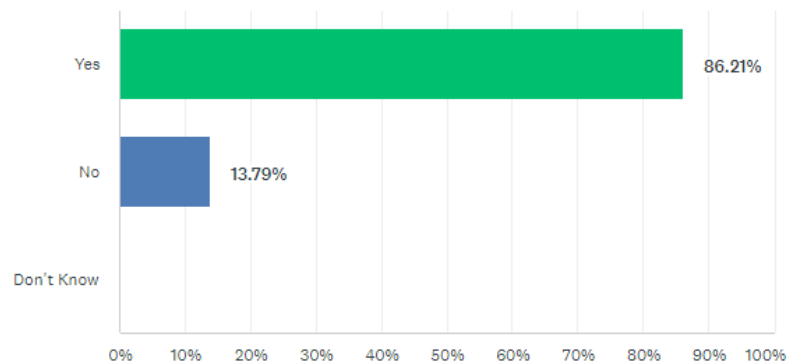
1 respondent selected other, stating they were part of a guide dogs community group.

## Q1: Do you agree with the idea of adopting a Taxi Driver Code of Conduct?

58/59 respondents answered this question.

Do you agree with the idea of adopting a Taxi Driver Code of Conduct?

Answered: 58 Skipped: 1



Across all respondents, 86% agreed with the idea of adopting a code of conduct.

- When looking specifically at how licenced drivers responded, 89% (31) answered yes and 11% (4) answered no.
- Local residents had a similar proportion to their answers. 88% (29) answered yes and 12% (4) answered no.
- Operators and Vehicle proprietors were unanimously in favour of adopting a code of conduct, with 100% (15) answering in favour.

### Comments (Q1)

Across all respondents, 34/58, left a comment alongside their answer to this question. **3 of these comments were left by those who answered 'No' to the question.**

One answer stated that they didn't agree with over regulation, and whilst they believed in excellence, saw nothing in the code of conduct that would "naturally enhance this".

Another answer stressed their apathy towards the subject, stating that they thought for now, things were "all right".

The third response stated that customers exhibit unreasonable behaviours and expect drivers to remain intimidated/silent and can lead to mistreatment of drivers by the public.

### **The other 31 comments were left by those who agreed with adopting a code of conduct.**

Many respondents referred to how having a defined code of conduct would allow for reasonable standards to be maintained, provide assurance of quality/safety to customers and provide a benchmark for what is expected. Over half of those who voted yes, 16/31 referenced standards or customer expectations of driver conduct in their answers.

Some answers (7/31) spoke about how some drivers are below the standard one might expect and hoped that such a code of conduct may address this.

*“This should eventually eliminate rogue drivers”*

*“The standards are abysmal particularly for private hire”*

Some answers highlighted that many drivers are courteous and helpful, whilst others can be rude or inconsiderate towards customer needs/health issues. Reference was made in one instance to “weeding out” drivers who give the profession a bad reputation (this comment was made by a licenced driver).

Multiple answers also made it clear they hoped that a new code of conduct would be emphasised to new drivers, and help raise standards, such as dress code and general attitude.

Other answers (11) made it clear that such a code of conduct made sense when they are licenced by the council and are serving the public. Would mean customers, drivers and licensing authorities are on the same page with what is expected.

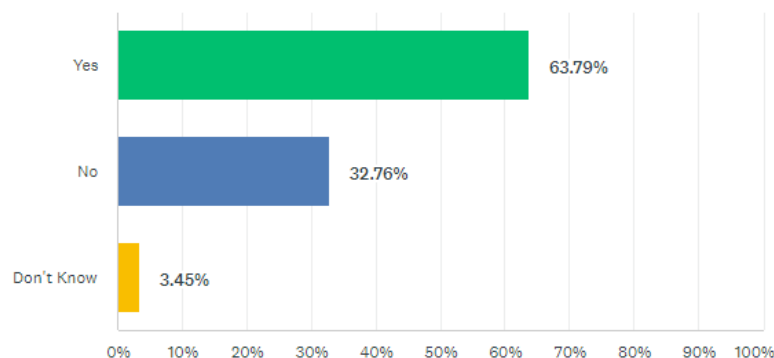
## Q2: Do you agree with the proposed content of the Code of Conduct?

58/59 respondents answered this question.

There was less agreement over the proposed content in the code of conduct. With only 64% answering yes, as opposed to the 86% who answered yes in Q1. 11 respondents who answered yes in Q1 “changed” their answer to “No” in Q2.

Do you agree with the proposed content of the Code of Conduct?

Answered: 58 Skipped: 1



32% (19) answered “No”, this included all 8 respondents who answered “No” to Q1 as well.

The remaining 3% answered don’t know.

### Comments (Q2)

12 responses left comments. All of these were left by respondents who answered “No” to Q2.

3 responses gave in-depth answers reference specific parts of the proposed Code of Conduct.

The first of these focused on Clause 22 and wished for there to be additional guidance on how fares are calculated. The answer made reference to drivers abusing their apps to take longer routes and thus increase their fares in the same way a meter can be abused in a Hackney Carriage Vehicle.

The second long response made reference to clause 68, where the respondent, who specialises in the transportation of SEN children, explained that they have a separate code of conduct with HCC who they are contracted with.

*“All our vehicles are always kept to a high standard for work so i don't feel i should be restricted in what I use my vehicle for in my own ---- The vehicle is my own property and as long as its clean for work it should be no one's concern what its used for when not working.”*

The third long response made a similar argument with respect to their role in transporting SEN children and clause 68. As well as reaffirming their right to use their property as they like when they are not transporting passengers, which was also agreed with by another short comment (*“If we didn't eat in our vehicle we wouldn't eat at all”*). Concerns about a dress code were raised, thinking it may be too strict.

This was also a concern of some other comments to Q2. Clause 60, regarding baseball caps was taken issue with by 2 separate responses. With one stating that they are often worn with a view to assisting with road/weather glare. Another highlighted an instance of a driver with “halipishia” (hair loss), who was embarrassed by it and as a result wore a hat without being untidy or offensive.

Another response thought that shirts needing to be tucked in and be the same colour as the rest of clothing was “excessive”.

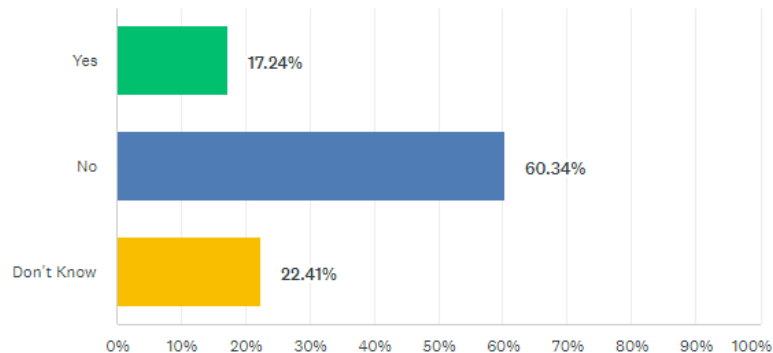
Generally, the comments left on this question viewed the code of conduct as being too strict on the driver's personal freedoms such as eating or dress code within their own vehicle.

### Q3: Do you think there is anything missing which should be included in a Code of Conduct?

58/59 respondents answered this question.

Do you think there is anything missing which should be included in a Code of Conduct?

Answered: 58 Skipped: 1



The majority of respondents, 60%, answered “No” to this question. A further 22% answered “Don’t know”.

10 respondents, 17%, answered yes.

#### Comments (Q3)

12 comments were left on this question.

9 were from respondents who answered “Yes”.

There were some responses where it was apparent that they had not necessarily read the proposed code of conduct, with 2 responses speaking about cracking down on dress code/baseball cap wearers when this is already included.

2 more responses spoke about drivers being “educated” not to park in Blue Badge spaces without displaying the required badge.

1 response, from a driver, spoke about complaint handling or raising concerns.

Another response detailed some guidance on drivers assisting passengers in and out if required and being capable of accommodating walking aids.

1 response provided some specific feedback on wording

*“Section 2 I would recommend wording “TVBC reserves the right to review your behaviour is in line with standards and behaviours of a licensed driver including conduct in your private life.” Section 2 - producing documents should be in person at location stipulated by the driver. Section 16 Horn - why include this as it is covered under RTA and Highway Code? Section 30 - Remove “taking law into your own*



*hands" rubbish, clunky, unnecessary and not legally correct. Section 37 remove the brackets section Section 39 badly worded"*

2 were from respondents who answered "No".

One answer simply inputted N/A. The other stated, that if anything the code of conduct may be too detailed. Stated that general guidelines on behaviour and courtesies are reasonable, but telling drivers what they can and cannot do in their own car when not working is "too much".

1 was from a respondent who answered, "Don't Know".

- *"Can't think of anything off the top of my head"*

#### **Q4: Do you have any additional comments you would like to make regarding the proposed Taxi Driver Code of Conduct?**

25/59 respondents answered this question.

9 of these answers were either a “no” or an answer that amounted to “n/a”.

Some who left comments expressed support for the benefits of a code of conduct, such as maintaining a good image and standards within the trade.

Others though had concerns about how such a code of conduct would be monitored and enforced. Details as to the process for alleged breaches need to be “fair and transparent”. Need to have available appeals and thorough investigations.

There was a clear divide between some comments left on this question from another set.

Some (7) responses were concerned about the code of conduct being unfair on drivers.

Reasons for this included, limiting their freedom to use their personal property as they wish, drivers are not being protected well enough already as well as dress code restrictions being too strict.

Makes drivers a target for the public, “drivers are humans too” and are beholden to a code of conduct, could put pressure on what can already be a stressful job whilst customers are not accountable in any way no matter how they treat drivers. A misbalance of power between drivers and customers.

Other responses (3) were in favour of the code of conduct and were clear in wanting strict standards on drivers.

One response wanted the code of conduct implemented quickly and touched on enforcement as some other responses had, stating they hoped there would be “substantial” penalties if breached.

2 other responses hoped the code of conduct would help increase the checks/scrutiny carried out on drivers to ensure they have the required licences and abilities. Would help to make customers “feel safe.”

The rest of responses made points surrounding the rates drivers are allowed to charge, referred back to points they had made in previous paragraphs or talked about taxi apps such as Uber.