

# Taxi Voucher Scheme

Survey completed - October 2002

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### Summary

This survey was carried out as a part of a six month review of the Taxi Voucher Scheme. The survey was sent to the 197 sighted users of the scheme and the survey of the remaining 66 users, registered as blind or partially sighted, was conducted by telephone. In total 68% of users completed the survey.

The survey showed that the majority of users heard of the scheme through the council, the newspaper, taxi drivers and Dial-a-Ride.

Just over half of the respondents considered the current level of information about the scheme to be good or very good though this question seems to have been a bit confusing as to what was required.

Nearly 90% of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the application process. With regard to the amount of vouchers received, some people clearly answered with regard to the first issue of vouchers, whilst others answered with regard to the current, much reduced issue. As would be expected the comments reflect a strong disappointment in the reduction of vouchers.

A very high percentage of users are pleased with the service received from the taxi companies and many of the comments reflect this. There is a high level of satisfaction with the scheme and in comparison to the Dial-a-Ride it comes out strongly as a change for the better.

The strongest suggestion for improvement, other than more vouchers, is that the users should have the envelopes to complete, this would save the drivers time and cut down their waiting time.

Though there are some who are not happy with the scheme, the results and many of the comments made reflect an improvement in the quality of life for the vast majority of users.

## Taxi Voucher Survey Results

A few people left questions unanswered, these have been assumed as “don’t know’s”.

- ❖ There are a total of 263 people on the scheme, 178 of whom replied to the survey either by post or by telephone. 68% return. All blind users with a telephone number listed were attempted to be called. 29 blind users (44%) are not listed in the telephone directory.

197 sighted users	154 replied
66 blind users	24 replied

- ❖ A number of different sources were given for information on the scheme, some people gave more than one source.

Council	54
Leaflet	16
Newspaper	43
Website	0

Other:-

Dial-a-ride	12	
Warden at council controlled premises		1
Doctors surgery	6	
BBC Essex	4	
Day Centre	4	
EDPA	1	
Taxi driver	9	
Friend/relative	16	
Rochford Access Committee	1	
Community Support Worker	2	
Library	1	
Enquiry	1	
Health visitor	1	
Crossroads	1	
Blind club	5	
Visual aid clinic	1	
Talking newspaper	2	

- ❖ When asked how they would assess the current level of information about the scheme, results were as follows:--

44 (25%) very good  
60 (34%) good  
38 (22%) fairly good  
22 (12%) poor  
14 ( 7%) did not know

❖ When asked about the clarity of the application form, results were:-

73 (41%) very satisfied  
86 (48%) satisfied  
3 ( < 2%) dissatisfied  
2 ( < 1%) very dissatisfied  
14 ( 8%) did not know

❖ When asked about the length of time taken to process the application form, results were:-

76 (43%) very satisfied  
78 (44%) satisfied  
6 ( 3%) dissatisfied  
2 ( 1%) very dissatisfied  
16 ( 9%) did not know

❖ When asked about the amount of vouchers received, results were:-

43 (24%) very satisfied  
79 (45%) satisfied  
30 (16%) dissatisfied  
9 ( 5%) very dissatisfied  
17 (10%) did not know

❖ When asked about the clarity of information issued with the vouchers....

69 (39%) very satisfied  
87 (49%) satisfied  
3 ( 2%) dissatisfied  
3 ( 2%) very dissatisfied  
16 ( 8%) did not know

Using the vouchers.....

❖ The ability to book a taxi for the time required....

119 (67%) very satisfied  
39 (22%) satisfied  
6 ( 3%) dissatisfied  
2 ( 1%) very dissatisfied  
12 ( 7%) did not know

❖ The reliability of the service.....

120 (68%) very satisfied  
44 (25%) satisfied  
5 ( 3%) dissatisfied  
1 (<1%) very dissatisfied  
8 ( 4%) did not know

❖ The suitability of the transport supplied to meet your specific needs...

111 (62%) very satisfied  
43 (24%) satisfied  
9 ( 5%) dissatisfied  
0 ( 0%) very dissatisfied  
15 ( 9%) did not know

❖ The cleanliness of the transport.....

123 (69%) very satisfied  
44 (25%) satisfied  
3 ( 2%) dissatisfied  
1 (<1%) very dissatisfied  
7 ( 4%) did not know

❖ The helpfulness of the driver.....

118 (66%) very satisfied  
40 (23%) satisfied  
10 ( 6%) dissatisfied  
2 ( 1%) very dissatisfied  
8 ( 4%) did not know

❖ Overall satisfaction with the scheme.....

91 (52%) very satisfied

- 64 (36%) satisfied
- 11 ( 6%) dissatisfied
- 4 ( 2%) very dissatisfied
- 8 ( 4%) did not know

❖ Comparing the taxi voucher scheme with Dial-a-Ride....

- 81 (46%) Taxi voucher scheme
- 10 ( 6%) Dial-a-Ride
- 7 ( 3%) both the same
- 80 (45%) did not know

- ❖ 58 (33%) male
- ❖ 112 (63%) female
- ❖ 8 ( 4%) did not answer

- ❖ 169 (95%) White British
- ❖ 1 (<1%) Chinese British
- ❖ 8 ( 4%) did not answer

❖ Age

Age	No.
20	1
27	1
28	2
29	1
33	3
34	1
39	1
41	2
43	3
44	1
45	1
46	1
51	3
53	1
54	2
55	3
57	1
58	1
59	1
60	2

Age	No.
61	2
62	1
63	3
65	3
66	5
67	6
68	4
69	1
70	1
71	5
72	2
73	5
74	2
75	10
76	4
77	8
78	5
79	8
80	8
81	8

Age	No.
82	9
83	6
84	3
85	4
86	6
87	7
88	2
89	2
90	3
90	1
91	1
92	1
93	1
96	1
105	1

Comments – positive

- With the vouchers you don't need to book in advance and as we regularly use Bestax taxi's and are known to most of the drivers they are most helpful and advise on best places on a level for wheelchair use.
- This voucher scheme is marvellous as it will enable my mother to be able to visit her friends most of whom are in residential homes and not local, so would be too expensive to visit without vouchers. With her first lot of vouchers we were able to go to Basildon shopping centre which is all on a level and most areas have wheelchair access. Thank you for her vouchers.
- The main advantage of the taxi service is
  - a) straight to your destination
  - b) booking is easier if not during school pick-up times
- Generally satisfied with the scheme. It is less traumatic to travel in a taxi than a larger vehicle. It enables me to get out of the home, follow interests and maintain a healthier lifestyle. I just wish the taxi fares were less expensive in order that the vouchers would enable more trips.  
Thank you!
- I can use a taxi at anytime I need to - day, evening or later at night in an emergency. I appreciate the help given to me with the taxi vouchers, I would also like to thank the young man at the Rochford Council office for his kindness and help when I first applied for them.
- Much more convenient to use taxi voucher scheme. As a relatively new client to this service I have only used them twice as I requested them late in the quarter. So far I am happy with the system.
- I only had one months vouchers for the first, then the £48 for the next. As I never had the higher amount I was not as disappointed as others will have been, I am now in receipt of £48 and am grateful for that though it will only mean six taxi's to Rayleigh centre for shopping etc. there's a lot of the three months left at the end of three weeks, but I am grateful!
- Michael is pleased with the taxi service, being totally blind he finds the service a God-send, he was disappointed with the reduction in vouchers – I explained to him the reasons. The voucher scheme has come in handy – thank you.
- Taxi voucher scheme is a better service, runs later than Dial-a-Ride.
- Thank you for enclosed form, I think the taxi scheme is a fine idea – I find using a cab much better than using buses when the buses arrive they are often dirty and smelly – I always find kids on the bus most unkind to people who are not fit and able and OAP's like me. I find the £31 not enough, the cab fare to Southend and back is £20 each way.
- I think this is a very good idea, I am more than happy with the way things are.
- Would appreciate more tokens allowing more than one return per month to my place of enjoyment – thank you for this service.
- Taxi voucher scheme is very helpful.
- You don't have to give advance notice to order a taxi (as you did with Dial-a-Ride)
- I have found the taxi service very helpful, the drivers have all been so helpful they always carry any shopping to the door for me and are so helpful, whichever service I use from Rayleigh, Bestax or RT. I am so grateful to you all.

- Am very grateful for all the help given by all parties, I received enough to take me into Rayleigh twice and bring me home, which allowed me time to get my eyes done and new glasses. I have £2 vouchers left which I will use to help the fare to the Dentist.  
Thank you very much for all your help.
- As this is my first time of using the voucher scheme I am very satisfied with everything.
- It is easier to book a taxi – but Dial-a-Ride is cheaper.
- Taxi's always on time and all drivers helpful.
- I do not think that , how I have been treated, that the service could be any better. Thanks for everything your people have treated me to.
- Generally this is a very good scheme and I commend your forethought in providing such a service.
- I only used Dial-a-Ride twice and was asked for money the same as a taxi would cost me to get to hospital! Never used it again.
- Dial-a-Ride needed a much longer time period between booking.....instant transport is much more suited for me.
- Some drivers are very helpful.
- I phoned Bestax twenty minutes before I needed a taxi and they were on time and I was able to go out, whereas before I had to stay at home.
- I have not had to use this system as yet, but the help will be useful in certain circumstances – these circumstances have not arisen yet.  
Thank you for your assistance.
- Taxi voucher scheme is very easy to manage.
- I am able to call when needed, even at short notice. I also get a door to door service.
- Able to state your own time.
- You can choose your own day and time, also it is the convenience of the scheme.
- I consider it a very good idea as you can book a taxi whatever time you require, also you are taken door to door. I would like to mention that I have had a couple of remarks from taxi drivers regarding vouchers, “not them again”, they forget those slips are money.  
So once again thank you for a very good scheme
- Dial-a-Ride not suitable for me, unable to be out on my own for any length of time, taxi is much quicker if I only need Doctors appointment. A bus picking up several people makes it too long.  
Bestax will always find me a people carrier any time and drivers are so helpful. The rank is in a very convenient place now. Using the taxi so frequently enables me to get out, do my own shopping and be independent, so I would like to thank the council for this scheme, don't think I could be helped better by any other scheme.
- I find this taxi voucher service most useful as due to my disablement I am unable to use public transport and rely on taxis for short journeys, so needless to say saves the money that is so necessary in retirement.
- Taxi voucher scheme is more simple (than Dial-a-Ride)  
Keep it going.
- Overall I am satisfied with the service, but I do feel not enough vouchers are supplied to cover my needs

- (prefer taxi voucher scheme) we use the Dial-a-Ride service – booking was one week in advance only, sometimes cancellations due to vehicle/driver problems. We now use mainly one taxi service who most times are able to be flexible and meet travel dates and times.
- Taxi office is near, drivers are very pleasant
- Can book a taxi quickly and for any time. With Dial-a-Ride they need several days notice – not always convenient.
- My husband is totally disabled and unable to stand so he requires a taxi where the wheelchair can be pushed in, he is unable to leave the chair. I (his wife) am his carer . the scheme is great , enabling us to get out together for a few hours ie, Hyde Hall, Danbury Lakes.  
A request I have to make is that you extend the facility so that we can use AC taxis (or another larger taxi company). Bestax only has about three taxis that have the facilities we require whereas AC taxis have 30! Also there is the time factor. Bestax has the “school run” so no taxis are available before 10am and they have to be back in Rayleigh by 2;30pm. My husband had a hospital appointment at 9.30 am so I had to make alternative arrangements for the journey. It would be good if we had a taxi available from say 9am – 6pm which would cover any medical journeys and enable us to extend our days out.

Thank you so much, my husband and I really appreciate the taxi voucher scheme.

- Very satisfied. Drivers are very polite. Most grateful.
- With taxi vouchers you can get a taxi anytime, but with Dial-a-Ride you had to phone up three days before you needed it.
- I know I can order a taxi for precisely when I need it.
- (prefer taxi voucher scheme) because you can get taxi when needed, Dial-a-Ride was a very poor service
- This is an excellent scheme which has given me a lot more mobility. Whilst I have been very happy with the service provided by the taxi company it was rather a disappointment to find that the second issue of vouchers was greatly reduced.
- I am very grateful for the taxi vouchers which have enabled me to take my husband out shopping and visiting – a thing that he has not been able to do for the last 9 years.
- Taxi scheme – because you can get out at short notice, Dial-a-Ride – because it was cheaper per journey.
- One is sure of getting to ones destination, the Dial-a-Ride had to be booked days if not weeks in advance and one was never sure you would get on. With taxis you phone when needed and the taxi is available.
- I can now arrange outings, shopping etc, at times suitable to myself without having to book days ahead. Can also go direct to appointments without a long journey collecting others by Dial-a-Ride.
- No notice needed – can just call and have a taxi when needed.
- Able to book in little time
- I am able to phone for a taxi for immediate response not a week in advance.
- The taxi vouchers are best for us. Thank you very much for the vouchers.

- Think this is a good scheme for people of my disposition – disabled. Needed for visits to Doctors, shopping etc.
- The taxi service we most use is the local Bestax, with whom we are very satisfied. My carer (wife) has to use electric scooter as well as myself and efforts are being made to see if a taxi large enough can be adapted to take two electric scooters. The scooters kindly available, I believe, from Dial-a-Ride for free hire, are not always suitable, so the efforts of Bestax are greatly appreciated.  
In all the voucher scheme is highly regarded by us both.
- I can pick up the phone and give a time to pick me up and also take me back.  
I should receive more vouchers next time, as I didn't fill the form in right. It is nice to be able to choose a time to be picked up and to be taken home again. Also to still be in your wheelchair in comfort.
- I could never get a Dial-a-Ride when needed, I have always had to use taxis, so to get some help with vouchers is good for me.
- I joined Dial-a-Ride but on the only occasion I requested it they couldn't help as I can't walk far, so sitting me in the Royals until they would pick me up at 4pm was not practical for my limited abilities. This was quite a few years ago – never tried it again. I can now meet a friend at Spa Court every now and again.
- The voucher scheme is a good idea but not enough vouchers, have found that most taxi drivers only give lip service to voucher scheme and openly moan about wheelchairs and having to fill in forms.
- Very satisfied with the service but disappointed that the amount of vouchers have gone down as the taxi fares have now gone up.
- (prefer taxi voucher scheme) - you do not have to book so much in advance and can always get a taxi. With Dial-a-Ride you couldn't always get a place.
- I am very satisfied with every aspect of the service.
- Taxi voucher scheme is 100 times better as you can book on the day and time to suit and also you can go anywhere eg appointments at hospital/Doctors/Dentist which you could not on Dial-a-Ride.
- Not much waiting time with taxi
- I think this is a wonderful thing, I use taxis all of the time, my breathing is very bad. I would like to thank you very much, the vouchers help me out very much, where I live it's very hilly.
- My husband is now unable to use public transport so the vouchers are a great help – thank you.
- Door to destination service better than Dial-a-Ride, more time to spend on whatever you are doing, no waiting time. Response very good.
- I have to say that I have not used any of my vouchers, as at present I have a friend who takes me where I wish to go. But I will still pay to belong because I may be glad of it in the future.
- Up to now the new scheme has been very reliable and is there to the minute and you don't have to book up a week in advance. On the other hand the men doing the other scheme were always very helpful in walking with customers to the taxi, giving a hand in etc, none of which we get now – but the service was not reliable.

- More ease and comfort.
- Can get transport at anytime day/night, always on time, no waiting, very helpful, very clean, never any bother, nothing is too much trouble. Dial-a-Ride nine times out of ten could not get at all, never helpful.  
A very good idea well thought out – thank you.
- In emergency taxis are available – important if you are housebound and disabled plus elderly. Dial-a-Ride had to book in advance, not always reliable, plus emergencies not covered.
- Taxis on time, can get them anytime, drivers helpful, go straight to the place needed, clean. Dial-a-Ride eight times out of ten could not get when needed, never on time, not helpful.  
Best idea the council ever had – thank you for it, well done.
- I joined Dial-a-Ride nearly six years ago.....I could no longer get about on my own. The amount of vouchers received the first month was very good but dropped by half the second month which soon went, but I prefer the vouchers to Dial-a-Ride as I always had a job to get booked on the times and days I wanted.
- With the taxi vouchers scheme I can come and go at my own convenience. Dial-a-Ride are nearly always late and they pick up several people – you have to travel all around town before you get where you want to go.
- Under the taxi vouchers I have always, so far, been able to get a taxi, particularly being a wheelchair patient. Dial-a-Ride very difficult to get booking, but the fare was a fixed price.
- The ability to book a taxi as and when required – to go where you want.
- The voucher scheme has the advantage over the Dial-a-Ride scheme because of its individuality. Dial-a-Ride tends to collect several people at one time so it is not always punctual, the same applies to the return journey – waiting at both the start and end of my trips tends to be a bit too much for me.
- The taxi voucher scheme was instant compared to Dial-a-Ride.
- With taxi vouchers I know that if I felt unwell during a journey then the taxi driver would be there for me and also if I had an attack then a taxi would be close to hand if I was out shopping. Also I could not use Dial-a-Ride and take my young children out with me as they are not insured for this, also I can roughly choose at which time I can use a taxi, Dial-a-Ride has to be booked so far in advance.
- Overall pleased with the scheme but disappointed with the cut in vouchers.
- Of course I was disappointed on receiving the second issue of vouchers as they had been reduced to such an extent. However, I am extremely grateful for the taxi voucher scheme which not only helps financially and owing to such a poor bus service along Hockley Road to the town, namely 7A. I am now unable to board a bus or go out alone, the taxi not only gives me confidence, my wife too, knowing I am in safe hands. Thank you for the thoughtful scheme, which all in all makes life easier.
- Seldom able to book Dial-a-Ride, phone was either engaged, no reply or operator said they were booked right up, even five or ten minutes after the office opened a week before required.

- Specified times of Dial-a-Ride were not convenient, although cost was less expensive. Taxi does not detour to pick up other passengers therefore the journey is quicker.
- With the Dial-a-Ride you could not always get the day or the amount of time you required.  
I use Andrews taxis, they arrive within minutes of my telephone call, all the drivers are very helpful as I use two sticks they carry any bags I have to my door.  
Obviously with the reduced amount of the second issue of vouchers you are restricted in your journeys eg from Rochford to Tescos, Prince Avenue it costs £12 return – you would be unable to do this journey every week.
- Although taxi voucher scheme is much better, Dial-a-Ride was cheaper.
- Disappointed with the amount of vouchers, but taxis are very convenient. Some drivers are very good, others not so.  
Thank you for the scheme
- Hope it continues in the same format.
- Nice of council to start the scheme. Very pleased with the vouchers – size and clarity are good for the blind.
- Mainly use them for the hospital – Andrews taxis are brilliant!
- Very satisfied with the scheme, ideally would like some more vouchers
- Good idea – gives you the freedom to go where you want when you want. Service is brilliant, only improvement you could make would be to give a few more vouchers.
- Could never get on Dial-a-Ride. Able to go out more now, service is 100%.
- Taxis are much more convenient – would like a few more vouchers. It is nice to be asked about the scheme.
- No complaints – thank you for the scheme.
- Very grateful for the scheme.
- Very pleased with the scheme
- Abandoned Dial-a-Ride because it was hopeless. First lot of vouchers were probably too much for my needs, subsequently not quite enough – somewhere in between would be ideal.

#### Comments – negative

- The taxi voucher scheme has one fault – since reducing the amount drastically from £250 to the present it will now enable a wheelchair user living in the Hockley area 4 journeys to Southend or equivalent mileage,

return taxi fare £24! It is also not viable to have vouchers dated, if ill or on holiday dated vouchers are lost.

- The first three months just lasted, but the last six months I ran out after a few weeks.
- I found in the first three months the amount of vouchers about right, but the last six months a few weeks.
- The initial supply was very satisfactory, as you doubtless appreciate the second supply was disappointing.
- I have a scooter which Dial-a-Ride used to take me into Southend anytime I wanted, also I like to go to bingo and other social events but £16 a month takes me to Tesco and back with £2 over so I am not able to get out much at all. It leaves a very bleak outlook for me as winter is closing in now so I shall be stuck indoors.
- Taxi drivers do not treat old people very nice when using a voucher.
- I would have been able to use this scheme much earlier if I had known about it.
- I was disappointed to find I could not use my taxi vouchers to return to Hockley from Southend.
- When you booked Dial-a-Ride you knew they would turn up at the right time and not keep you waiting, if they said 3:30 it was 3:30!
- My husband, who looks after me, is 85 years old but does not receive the vouchers owing to the fact that he does not receive attendance allowance – although he does all of the shopping and pushes me around in a wheelchair. Buses do not run up our road either and if he does catch one at the bottom it does not stop in Rayleigh High Street.
- Need more vouchers for a better quality of life.

I was unaware that I could use more than one £2 voucher per journey, consequently was unable to afford more than two very important journeys per week. I learnt from a taxi driver that I could pay the full taxi fare using as many vouchers as I needed to. I did read the form several times but still did not fully understand. The benefits of the vouchers means I can travel more pleasurably, but rural areas such as Paglesham, Canewdon are expensive. I have family and friends out there, I would be more independent with adequate vouchers.

Paglesham has a taxi bus service, but they moan and I feel uncomfortable asking for one, it is not worth their while, they say Alpine Taxis cover this service. Why don't Rochford taxis give a taxi bus service?

- Not enough vouchers supplied for one day a week at the club.
- I would like to use my vouchers on a return journey from Southend. I understand the Southend taxi drivers are unable to accept them and I am unable to travel on the buses.
- On 13<sup>th</sup> September I phoned Bestax to book a wheelchair taxi for the 16<sup>th</sup>. The booking was accepted for 2pm. At 2:15pm the taxi had not arrived. I rang Bestax to be told they could not find any trace of the booking. A taxi was free but they could not contact the driver, I missed an important meeting thanks to their incompetence.
- Amount of vouchers was good in July/August – not enough in September.
- Need a few more (vouchers)
- (Prefer Dial-a-Ride) I have to pay for a taxi to Southend, Dial-a-Ride is free.

- Please don't think I am ungrateful for this help, but when the vouchers were first issued I was able at times to get to Rayleigh twice a week. With the latest I had less and as the taxi fare to Rayleigh is £3.80, sometimes £4, I only go once a week and pay cash coming home. I am not moaning, I am stating a fact and do appreciate the £4 a week. It has been a God-send.
  - I was disappointed when the number of vouchers supplied was halved particularly as I live on the Stambridge Road and our bus service is now almost non-existent. The distribution of vouchers could perhaps be allocated with this in mind.
  - Would like a few more vouchers next time please. Southend Taxis refused to accept them – very awkward , so had to pay money.
  - (suitability of the transport) – 8 seaters are far too high to step up. Majority of drivers will not get out of the cab to even open the door – they can see how we're struggling to get out of the taxi. Some do not even offer the change from the journey. This does not apply to all as some are very helpful.
- Although I appreciate all the help I get with the scheme, the amount hardly covers my taxi fares. When you take into account it costs me over £10 to visit my Doctor and £4 each way to get into town for any shopping or club activity.
- Have found that some of the independent taxi drivers refuse to accept taxi vouchers.
  - When I first received the vouchers, the amount I had was very generous. But when I got my second batch I have had to restrict myself in their use, Because it was cut down a considerable amount – other than that it has been a very helpful service.
  - The vouchers when first issued were very good, unfortunately the second supply did not cover my needs as a visit to the Doctors surgery costs approximately £8 return from this address and I am unable to use public transport as I have severe walking difficulties. Hopefully an increase will be made with the October issue.
  - There are problems with availability on both schemes. Taxis not available due to school runs during school terms, taxis not available during school holidays due to airport transport. Taxis not available on Sunday mornings due to drivers working late Saturday night. Although satisfied with original allocation of vouchers the second greatly reduced allocation was not adequate. I am totally wheelchair bound and cannot get out without special transport, the criteria for people receiving vouchers should be more closely monitored.
  - (prefer Dial-a-Ride) – availability of suitable transport to take a scooter. Often when I telephone I'm advised that there is no suitable transport available, that most of the suitable taxis are engaged on school runs for children and I detect a "couldn't care less" attitude from the receptionist.
  - I strongly disagree with people getting taxi vouchers who seldom use them, who walk and use bus passes!! Also, people who have vouchers left should return them to the council, not give handfals to the taxi drivers!! No wonder you have to cut down on the amount issued. It costs me almost £10 (including a tip) to go to Rayleigh for a loaf of bread and food shopping. I use taxi vouchers twice a week, seldom for pleasure trips!

- I am unable to use the taxi vouchers as I use a power chair. I wrote to Mr Clarkson on 23<sup>rd</sup> August, I also sent a petition to try and get the Dial-a-Ride reinstated as there are a lot of people who are not entitled to taxi vouchers and miss Dial-a-Ride.
- One time when I got a taxi from Bestax I was charged £4 for a trip that was always £3.60.
- When booking with Dial-a-Ride we were always picked up and brought home at the times we booked. With the taxi service we have to wait almost an hour for the return service.  
It would be much better to be picked up at 3.30 or 3.45, where it is always about 4.30. I have an electric wheelchair and they have to pick up the disabled school children first.
- Only complaint would be safety. I do not feel that the seatbelts to be adequate, they only go round the waistline. Really need two safety belts one round the waist and one over the shoulder.
- Most wheelchair taxis seem to be run by people who find wheelchairs a pain, which is surprising even when booked a week in advance taxis don't arrive. Drivers make it very plain that they find the scheme not to their liking and don't seem to think wheelchairs should be allowed.
- With Dial-a-Ride I could go for a ride out to Southend on Sea for £2.40 or anywhere else, but with the taxi voucher scheme costs normal taxi fare wherever I go. £21 to Southend and back, £10 to Asda and back.
- I have only used the taxi voucher scheme, but found a big difference when the amount of vouchers were cut as I am unable to go out so much.
- Are the vouchers likely to be reduced any more? Taxi fares are expensive and it reduces the times you can use them.
- See my letter of 25<sup>th</sup> July. There was a muddle and I rejected until I spoke on the telephone to enlighten the officer concerned.
- Dial-a-Ride was more helpful and friendly, easier to get in and had help getting in and out to front door, Dial-a-Ride was a lot cheaper so I could get out more.

I am very dissatisfied with this service and I am now very depressed as I cannot go out like I used to with Dial-a-Ride. I used to go to my day centre club in Southend twice a week or more. But since the new taxi scheme I can only go out now once a fortnight as it costs me £26 return to Southend and I don't get enough vouchers to go any more times. But with Dial-a-Ride it cost me £2.40 return.

- I feel that Dial-a-Ride is a far superior scheme for the disabled as they understand the disabled persons individual needs and is more of a community atmosphere on the Dial-a-Ride which a housebound person appreciates and it is more affordable.

The very small amount of taxi vouchers I get does not cover the basic cost to obtain the weekly shopping. To go out socially cost so much that I am nearly housebound. As Dial-a-Ride only charges £2.40 per return journey which enables me to go to clubs and social events as I am only on a very limited income being of working age but I am very disabled and I feel that the council does not listen to the disabled persons needs. I feel it is about time the council looked into the disabled persons income as it is not enough to live on and ride everywhere by taxi.

- The first lot of vouchers enabled me to visit a friend in Leigh and also one in Prittlewell socially as well as hospital – this has now to be hospital only.
- A lot of taxi drivers don't like taking the vouchers because they have to wait until the end of the month or more to get payment. The drivers take the vouchers but you can tell the ones who don't like them.
- Not satisfied with the cut in numbers in the last issue of taxi vouchers.
- I do not have enough vouchers and sometimes have to pay more.
- In the first instance April to July I was issued with about £140 for 3 months. This allowed for hospital visits (not as a patient as this would be covered by hospital transport) Taxi cost £4.98 each way, Doctors surgery £3.98 each way, shopping £10 return Southend plus a little left over for social pleasure now and again. Now – next issue July to September £48, where can I go. This only allows me one visit to the Doctors surgery once a month with one shopping trip in three months. Taxis are expensive, public transport is a no go for me so I have to stay put.  
It is a pity there is no social club available to Rochford elderly – since 1944 I have lived here. Southend has a stroke club back of the Kursaal with transport transport for local residents. Pensioners association, Balmoral Road and many other outlets. What can Rochford offer its elderly and disabled pensioners? Day centre, Back Lane, no transport – lunches and bingo only? Or stay housebound, or is there anything I am not aware of with regard to a little social outlet to break the monotony!
- The taxi vouchers I last received lasted for one month but previously when I first received them they lasted a lot longer due to the amount allocated. Each one way journey for me at home to the High Street in Rayleigh costs an average £3.60 so therefore the return journey with shopping costs extra around £3.80 - £4.50 so one shopping trip costs about £7.60 or over, so over four weeks , just one days shopping would cost about £30. That doesn't leave many vouchers to cover the other two months or any other journeys
- I was very pleased with the first issue of vouchers, it enabled me to go out more often and attend my health specialist in Leigh. It was very disappointing that the last issue of vouchers was less than half the amount of the first. I can only go to Rayleigh six times in three months, eg Doctors, shopping. I cannot go to Leigh it doesn't stretch to it. Also some taxi drivers make it clear to me that they don't like the vouchers which causes embarrassment. I am for the most part housebound with many health problems and on a low income, I cannot afford taxis, the first issue of vouchers was such a big help.
- Service is a good idea but it hasn't been thought through properly. Disabled people like to be treated as normal people. Taxi drivers have to fill in a form for the council which states where the passenger is going – this information could be collated and used for other reasons! Normal taxi customers don't have to sit and wait whilst forms containing personal information are filled in – too much paperwork!
- Amount of vouchers did not extend the given dates to be used, although I used them for one journey per week (which were short). Therefore using taxis as a whole became expensive.  
There were not enough envelopes and some drivers complained that as I had not got the information needed, their time was taken up filling

envelopes in, whereas I could have saved them this if I had already done so.

- Disappointed in the cut in vouchers

#### Suggestions for improvement

- Taxi drivers said they would like an envelope to put the vouchers in.
- As the taxi voucher money does not seem to be increasing, is it possible for the vouchers not to be used by a certain date – I would not be returning my last few vouchers if not for a two week illness.

- I personally would prefer an efficient Dial-a-Ride scheme, I could then save say for a long journey and could choose when to go.
- I think there should be more publicity of the scheme, as it is surprising how many people don't know about it.
- Very little information publicly known.
- It would be helpful to be informed where to return any unused vouchers.
- Please could we have more vouchers than we already get.
- I think the amount should be regulated between different customers.
- Being very severely disabled and winter coming on I find I cannot use all of my vouchers. I returned some last time and wonder if you would cut them from £90 to say £60 for 3 months. This will give others a chance who are able to go out more often. I think it is a very good scheme.
- I have enclosed unused vouchers. These were not used because I was taken in hospital. It would have been very helpful if my wife could have used them to visit me. (no vouchers enclosed)
- Any vouchers over one month, could they not be transferred/carried over to the next month.
- Would like time limit of vouchers made longer as periods when I am not well enough to go out and vouchers expire. Would like extra 2-3 months longer date on them so I can enjoy going out more when feeling a bit better – I'm sure this applies to a lot of other users.
- Would like more transport for 4 weeks electric pavement buggies.
- Could it be suggested that £5 be charged per quarter for £50 of vouchers so that £50 of vouchers lasts 3 months.
- I think it would be very helpful to have the envelopes back as it takes less time for the driver, we can then fill in half of it ready.
- You should come up with a way to check when we are given change for our fare as it should not be used to tip the driver or a cuppa/newspaper as a few drivers have told me happens. I keep my change in a money bag, not in my purse and only use it towards my next fare. These vouchers or change belong to the council not for our shopping. Please keep up the scheme.
- Need more envelopes, sometimes taxi driver runs out.
- It might help the users of vouchers if when we go to Southend hospital the taxis there could take them.
- I would prefer the envelope to be issued to the user instead of the taxi driver
- I would like to have some envelopes with the vouchers that I can fill in during the journey to save taxi drivers time.
- I think the scheme could be improved if the fare came to just over the voucher value then hand the rest over in coinage, otherwise the scheme could be abused.
- Taxi drivers should be surveyed.  
How do we check on the level of disability – some drivers have said that they can't work out what's wrong with some users – they seem "perfectly alright".  
Unused vouchers should be returned to the council so that you can see who is using the service.

Dial-a-Ride was much cheaper but the taxi scheme is much more accessible and easy to use.

The only problem is the amount of vouchers issued.

- My wife thinks that if us, the passengers, had the envelopes instead of the drivers we could practically complete the details wanted, saving the taxi drivers
- Would like envelopes sent direct to user.
- RT are very good – a few more vouchers for those who live further from town centres.
- Would have preferred to have less vouchers in first issue rather than so many followed by so few. Otherwise, very happy with the scheme.
- Better to send envelopes to the service user rather than expect taxi drivers to fill them in.
- Drivers could do with more paperwork. Carry over vouchers would be useful so that you could be credited with those not used in previous quarter.
- More vouchers

Comments were taken from the survey forms verbatim

