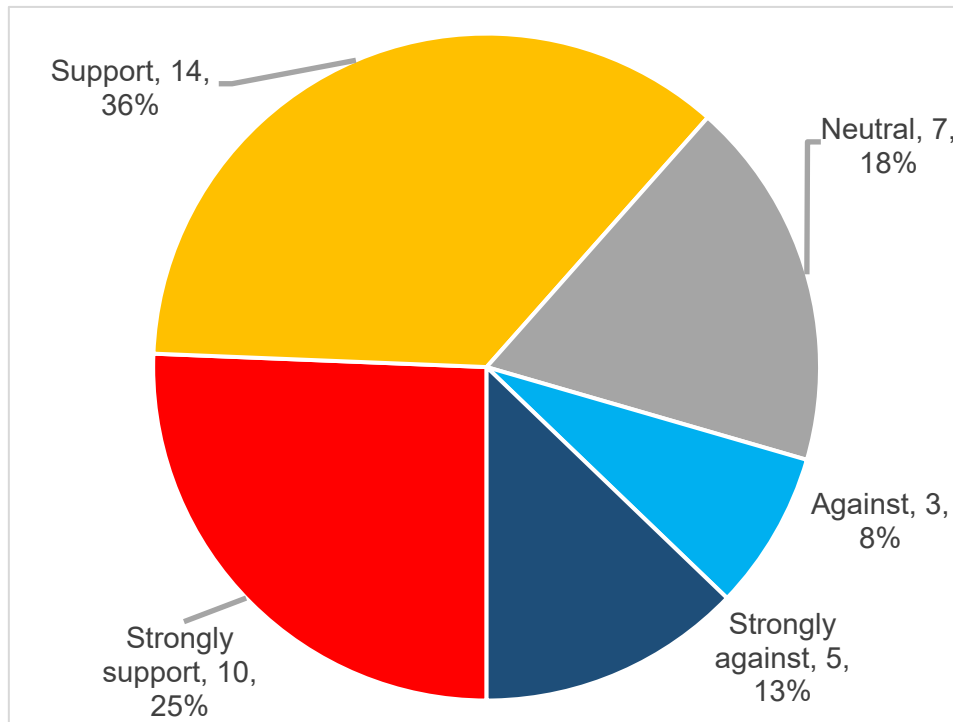


## Appendix 10 – consultation responses

Each person that responded to the consultation

### Proposal 1: Safety and suitability test

Standardise the test that all taxis and PHVs receive, by introducing the 'Vehicle suitability inspection' which would be carried out by nominated test stations, in accordance with the Somerset Council VSI manual and VSI form.



#### Strongly support:

1. "Hopefully we will have a test station in Burnham-On-Sea or HIGHBRIDGE." David King
2. "One test is sufficient." William J Richards

#### Support:

1. "Having one test every 12 months take place in one test centre for all hackney and private hire will ensure that we are all following the same set of requirements and policy's that are being put in place. One nominated are so everyone knows the routine and regulations. So, no confusion or hopefully any chances of mistakes or misunderstandings being made. Allowing for an easier booking service." Abdul Kalam
2. "I agree with the VSI, However strongly disagree that no meter tests are currently undertaken. The VSI is asking tester to double test items that if it has just been mot'd they would of checked. i.e fuel cap sealing device etc.

As usually they are done together or atleast within the same couple days of eachother i don't see the need in double testing items.” Sebastian Toon

3. “The vehicles should be tested once a year.” Malcolm Green
4. “We would like to add our garage to the list of nominated garages to do these checks as we currently mot a large number of taxis and are a authorised meter supplier and fit but are unable to currently do the part 2 test which would benefit our customers.” Steve Toon

Neutral:

1. “Being a driver will leave the changes to my owner of Locks.” David Mogg
2. “I disagree with the 30 days mot before renewal as on some cases we would be having 2 mots within 2 months of each other also with this we pay for the plate once a year are licence and now we have if this goes though it will be costing even more then before I gree with the vsi test as this is what we used to have many years ago . But the council need to come out and do vehicles inspection more often not just nights but days as well checking on state of taxis and private hire cars.” Dawn Hurford
3. “If the test centre is local and easy excisable with the hours and ability to book the tests, then it would make sense. But once a year not every 6 months if the car is not over 5 years.” Abdul Mukul Wadud
4. “One test and one test centre are the best way to keep it. Then everyone knows where and when. And that all vehicles are going under the same tests and screening process. As long as the test centre has the ability to do the testing on the day and easier booking system.” Faizan Ali

Against:

1. “I think section 4 is way to harsh given the state of the roads in the area.” Dawn Miller

Strongly against:

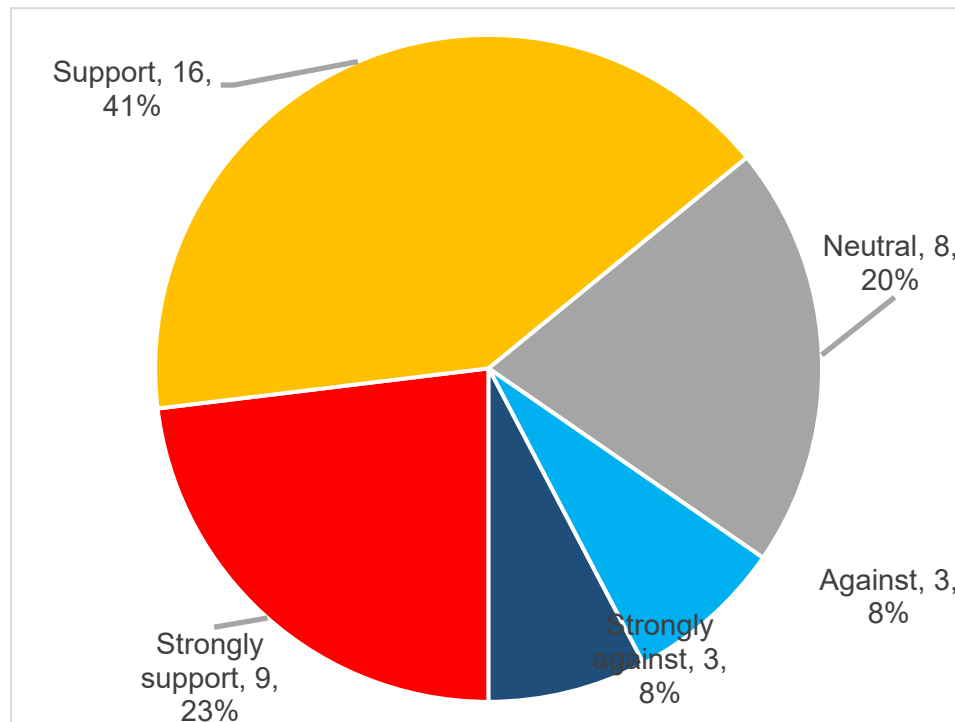
1. “Section 4 of the vsi manual. Given the state of somersets roads, the road to verge edges, loose chipping works, over growing hedges, pot holes and the general poor condition of the road surface I think some leniency and common sense should be applied to section 4, as far as eight stone chips and small scratches are concerned. Unless of course Somerset Council are prepared to pay for the damage there mismanagement causes to our cars.” Justin Miller
2. “I don’t support the forced use of nominated garages for an MOT, taxi inspection yes but not an MOT, this allows car to much monopoly, owners should be allowed to choose who does there MOTs, at the end of the day - each mot tester is still required by law to ensure a uniform safety test. You have zero reason to restrict who does our MOTs. Some people have

mechanics we have used for years because we value given them our work, and know they won't rip us off with unneeded work." Jared Colclough

3. "The council have provided us with a suitable place for us to get our vehicles tested for the last 40 years, this may affect when we can book vehicles in the future." Joshua Saturley
4. "If you want 2 mot a year fine but vosa testing station is going to be difficult as they carry out hgv and all other vehicles,so are you saying all mot service stations are not fit for purpose. we have used these for years and i dont know of one mot test centre will let it pass if its not road worthy, it cost a lot of money to set these up they are not going to throw it all away for 1 taxi. i disagree with your survey that all the people contested it were in Taunton and west somerset 59 companys and owner drivers through the somerset area there must be 60 owners and company in Taunton and west somerset." Brian Fouracre
5. "Leave things as they are sick and tired of all this messing about still got people driving around not following procedures too many sets of rules for different people." Barry Pinkawa

### Proposal 2: Application procedure

All applications for the grant and renewal of a hackney carriage or PHV licence to be accompanied by VSI form and MOT pass certificate issued within the last 30 days, regardless of vehicle age.



Strongly support:

1. "Both Hackney and private hire taxis are classed as public transport so inspection of the interior and ensuring all restraints and safety straps are in fully functioning and in good condition is a case of health and safety which we have to follow as drivers also. Also ensuring the inside of the vehicles are clean and maintained is not only for the comfort of the customer. But yes, it comes under the heading of health and safety which as a public service we need to be aware of. I think it is good to also carry a first aid box and fire extinguisher. One you never know as a driver when out on the road what you may come across and may offer assistance, even basic first aid. And sometimes these days we do pick up more and more customers that ambulances are unable to get too. Providing a bandage or gauze can offer passengers much needed help till they get to hospital. Fire extinguishers is a safety precaution that you never know when it may help us as drivers or other drivers. It doesn't take up a lot of room. It's not a lot to maintain or learn to use safely. But it's down to the question are taxis classed as public transport or not. As all public transportation are required to carry them. As a health and safety precaution. The only issue that any of the drivers have with the implemented mot policies and standards are the Section 4. D: More than 8 stone chips visible on a bonnet/grill that has not penetrator to the metal or more than 4 stone chips that have penetrator to the metal. E: More than 8 stone chips on any panel including door edges, provided the base coat has not been penetrated. F: More than 4 stone chips on any panel where the base coat has been penetrated. F. More than 4 stone chips on any panel where the base coat has been penetrated to the metal and is untreated (with the inspector's satisfaction choice of product). What do these pieces of the inspection has to do with the running of the car. The members of the public's satisfaction of safe journey in a clean safe vehicle. With the state of the roads no car has no chips, and if you are driving as many miles as us taxi drivers especially if we are doing long journey like airport runs, on the motorways. you have all sorts flying up at hitting the car. To fail a car over this has cause a lot of unsatisfied drivers with the way these little things costing them business and a big cost to sort to some of the inspector's satisfaction." Rafaqat Shah
  
2. "I agree MOT's and VSI' (part two in old money) is done within 30days of application. However i feel if a vehicle is stopped roadside by licensing &/ DVSA, Police ETC. The VSI and potentially MOT Should be re taken within a time limit (i.e such as a PG9 issued by police or dvsa requires MOT to lift) the council should then barr that vehicle from being able to work whilst these defects have not been rectified. hence the requirement for a new VSI. &/ MOT if suitable. BUT THIS MEANS THE COUNCIL WILL ACTUALLY HAVE TO DO THEIR JOB AND DO STOP CHECKS ON THESE VEHICLES GOING ROUND WITH OBVIOUS ISSUES!!!"  
Sebastian Toon

Support:

1. "A vehicle under 3 years old should be exempt." Malcolm Green
2. "I believe that if one really wanted to ensure that vehicles don't deteriorate between tests, then the interval of said tests should be dictated by mileage, not time. Even a 6 monthly interval could allow a vehicle to do 25-30k miles

between tests, which is more than enough (especially considering the current state of local road surfaces) to wear out suspension components, tyres and more. However, as pointed out in the introductory email, this could become prohibitively expensive.” Richard Maya

3. “I’ve always been against an age policy, because the main four points of contact with the road are changed quite regularly and if the vehicle is regularly serviced so is the brakes suspension and any other regular worn components.” Justin Miller
4. “In some case some cars may need the extra safety checks for example cars that are providing regular transportation for wheelchairs, which the ramps or wheelchair lifts. Need regular Maintenance along with the harnesses and straps ensuring they are being maintained and safe to use. These vehicles should carry fire extinguishers. For these vehicles it's not just a case of driver and passenger's get out to a place of safety. If the passenger is strapped into the back of the vehicle the driver may need the extinguisher to ensure they can help the passenger to exit the vehicle as well.” Faizan Ali
5. “It shouldn't matter what age the vehicle is as they all are of different qualities some wear mileage better than others.” Dawn Miller
6. “Little bit concerned about the ! In certain cases ?maybe you can explain this factor more openly.” Martin Saye

Neutral:

1. “A valid mot document is any age should still be valid.” Jared Colclough
2. “Can we have a list of the stations you are proposing and how many will be in our area and how are you picking them and cost. mot test 98 percent cover this only the presentation of the inside and outside of the vehicles is the difference.” Brian Fouracre
3. “Certain vehicles within the hackney and private hire probably would need 6 monthly checks, to ensure that their extra adaptations to their vehicles or the equipment that they have on their cars are in good service and safe. Eg. Disabled taxis, as these need regular Maintenance due to wear and tear from use. But these drivers shouldn't be penalised for this. As some of the drivers had no choice in buying these cars it was down to council policy. But also, these cars should have to carry a fire extinguisher. It's not so easy for them and their passenger to exit the car to get to safety. And they are carrying extra electrical parts to allow the ability of a wheelchair to get in the taxi. And these can overheat but can be prevented turning into a fire by using an extinguisher that's carried in the vehicle.” Abdul Kalam
4. “If a car is from a rural area, then it could need more checks as driving in rougher roads. And more than often these cars are the older cars.” Abdul Mukul Wadud

5. "Seems slightly complicated given the 30 day MOT requirement. This might give rise to 2 or even 3 MOT tests within a 12 month period." Ram Joung Neupane

Against:

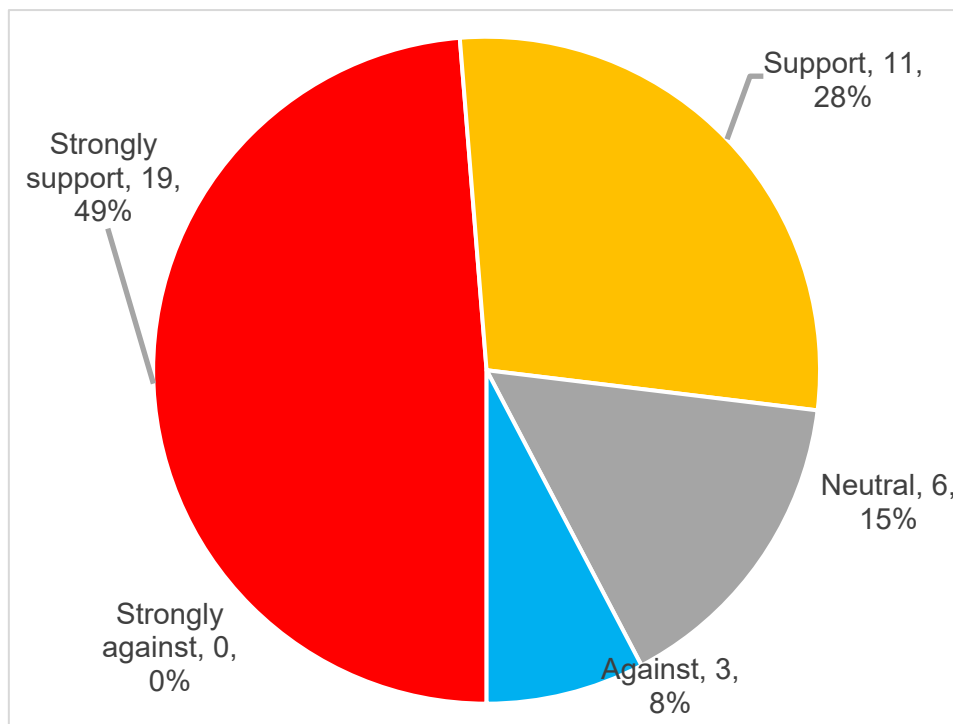
1. "As said in previous comments". Dawn Hurford
2. "You would be adding extra costs for vehicles that the MOT dates aren't inline with plate renewal, would require an extra test for the 1st year if this was bought in." Max Bishop

Strongly against:

1. "I am strongly against having an inspection so close together to the mot, having them 6 months apart only leaves limited time without a vehicle being inspected for safety and roadworthy." Joshua Saturley
2. "Leave it as it was surely the council have more problems to deal with than all this Dorset do not have half the restrictions even the euro 6 doesn't apply why are we do different." Barry Pinkawa

### Proposal 3: Vehicle testing frequency

Remove all existing requirements for taxis and PHVs to have twice yearly VSIs.



Strongly support:

1. "A yearly check to ensure that the car is safe and following all health and safety protocols at the same time as the mot, would be more efficient. As a taxi driver it is my job to make sure my passenger is happy and gets into my car feels comfortable, and i get them to where they are going to safe. So, to do this i have to make sure my vehicle is well maintained and clean otherwise, passengers won't use my taxi. And i be out of a job. All vehicles that members of the public use have to make them feel safe and secure. We are in the service industry. Carrying a fire extinguisher is just being safe, taxi drivers get flagged down by stranded motorist or even at accidents as people see taxi and think they must carry things encase of an emergency. Extinguishers are not only for putting out fires but preventing them. Overheated electrics these days with cars becoming more and more computerised. And the distances some of us drivers do especially at night when the roads are quiet and there's only. If the council are still planning on carrying out random checks on the cars. Then why is there need for more resources being spent on doing an extra check and yet more money we can't afford on extra safety checks. Especially if it's to count how many scratches i have on my bumper or chips i have on my bonnet from the poorly maintained roads around the area." Abdul Kalam
2. "I support this as vehicles regardless the age can be in much better condition as some only being 5 years old, also with the prices of new vehicles it makes it very difficult to find one suitable for use as a taxis at a reasonable price." Joshua Saturley
3. "This should be enough and one Mot a year should be enough with one for the plate whenever applicable. Please note we feel if one person has to have side panels and plates so do all no separate rules or exceptions no wonder it's all a mess." Barry Pinkawa
4. "It's enough." William J Richards
5. "As a taxi driver i see it as my job to ensure the safety of myself and others on the road so carrying a fire extinguisher and first aid kit, is there when and if needed. The first aid kit has come in handy many times picking up passengers after a night out and had a fall or worse taking to hospital. So having something to hand to offer them to put on themselves. Till they get home of seek medical help is common sense and the right thing to do. Fire extinguisher is not only helpful for putting out fires but preventing them. Like the overheating of the engine and sensors in the cars these days everything is electronic and if it goes wrong and overheats. Fire can be prevented by using the extinguisher. So not just for putting out fires but prevention. But these can all be checked at the 12 monthly check. once a year should be enough to check the taxis are safe and following the rules and protocols. We as hackney drivers are subject to spot checks throughout the year anyway. so, this serves as extra checks as well surely. Maybe the private hire should be called for a spot check as they don't work from a designated area." Faizan Ali

Support:

1. "The 6 monthly checks serve no purpose except, conflict with the drivers as they have already had everything checked on their 12-month check. And throughout the year we get spot checked at the rank. Our business is to transport our customer's safely and comfortably to their destination. So, it's in our interest to ensure that the car is well maintained and safe to travel in. Carrying a first aid kit and fire extinguisher is there for safety. For us as drivers and our customer's but also other vehicles on the road. we travel a lot and often can offer assistance or help to others that see us as public transport so must carry basic safety supplies." Abdul Mukul Wadud
2. "This makes more practical sense as taxis are meant to be randomly spot checked regularly anyway. The county has the records of each car and drivers, so you know what cars would need to be checked and the driver and their experience from their records if they are good at their checks and Maintenance. With the new text message system that is meant to be in place now. It will be easier to get hold of any of the drivers to arrange a spot check if felt needed. instead of calling everyone in taking up resources at the garage." Rafaqat Shah
3. "I currently believe that the system in place for two tests a year, one of them being an MOT is sufficient for any vehicle regardless of age. Some vehicles are of better quality than others. Although personally I've never had one fail in 30 years but I do have the advantage of my own garage to do our own servicing." Justin Miller
4. "I support 6 monthly checks but this should also include councils, and the volunteer fleet." Dawn Miller
5. "Again certain individual cases ? you suspect a driver has a faulty car ? You need to clarify this point again ?" Martin Saye

Neutral:

1. "We haven't had to do them so i have no feeling against or for it. I believe sometimes they need to be inspected regularly as people don't seem to look after their vehicles. But as we have our own workshop i'd like to think our vehicles are tip top." Sebastian Toon
2. "See my answer for proposal 2. Frankly, my belief is that the safest cars are those owned by conscientious, mechanically sympathetic drivers, and these cars will be kept safe by the owners, regardless of testing regimen. Some owners aren't so inclined, and unless the testing were stepped up significantly (which would become costly to the owners) there will still be poorly maintained cars running around." Richard Maya
3. "depending the vehicles age." Ian Chinnock

Against:

1. "I believe we are providing a service, and regular inspections will encourage drivers & operators to ensure the vehicles are kept to a high standard at all times, frequent checks by DVSA, police & the licensing



department MUST at the top of the licensing departments agenda. Unfortunately the operators that stick to the rules and regulations feel let down by the council & lack of random spot checks.” Max Bishop

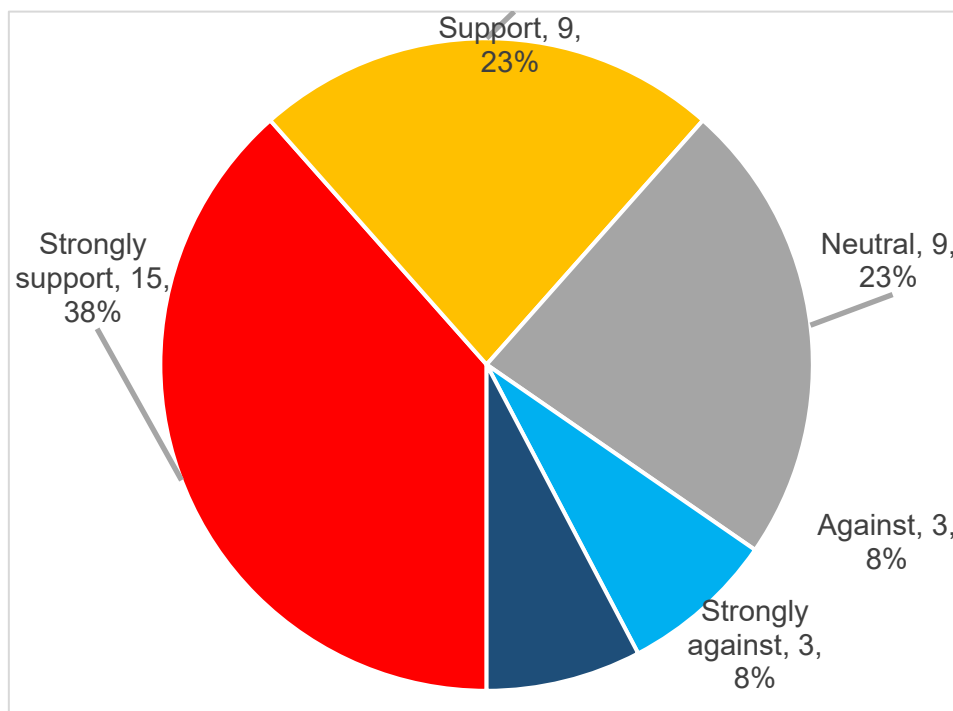
2. “I support that vehicles over 10 years (and/or a mileage threshold i.e. 200,000 miles) should have twice yearly inspection.” Philip Turley

Strongly against:

None.

### Proposal 4: Emergency equipment

Remove all existing requirements for taxis and PHVs to carry a fire extinguisher and first aid kit.



Strongly support:

1. “i agree its to dangerous for drivers to try and put a fire out get out and stay away funny though you have insisted it for the last 25 years.” Brian Fouracre
2. “I've been saying to john rendell for years that we are not trained for first aid or fighting fires so therefore technically we shouldn't use it unless the council mandates/provides training. Although i beleive originally it wasn't neccarully a requirement for drivers to use but as a public point for first responders i.e police could hail a taxi and steal it from them as they knew they would be carrying one.” Sebastian Toon

3. "I have always thought this was a somewhat redundant requirement. Glad to see it go. Can we please also do away with the requirement to have No Smoking signs? It has been decades since people could smoke in a taxi legally, and should be obvious to everyone, since the law has prohibited smoking in shops, restaurants etc for so long that it is now common knowledge. It would be lovely to buy a nice new car and not have to fill it with pointless stickers." Richard Maya
4. "Totally we are not first aid trained and not. fireman therefore think all this a waste of our money and time" Barry Pinkawa
5. "I have never needed to use my fire extinguisher and the first aid kit should be carried, although not essential." Malcolm Green
6. "The fire extinguisher and first aid kit being dropped is a good idea. On smaller vehicles the fire extinguisher is not an easy item to fit that isn't in the way. Both the first aid and extinguisher has to be replaced because the used by date runs out before getting used. I've been an operator for 8 years and not used either in that time." Barry Ford
7. "I've said for years we ain't firefighters or paramedics. Not needed so get rid." Jared Colclough

Support:

1. "We can't administer first aid so seems pointless." William J Richards
2. "First aid kits are insufficient and fire extinguishers cause more problems than they save" Dawn Miller
3. "In 30 years, I have known four instances where fire extinguishers have gone off accidentally or prematurely when they are contained within the cabin space when they do that, it's quite dangerous for everybody because they are powder and they fill the cabin space with fine particulate dust which can be as bad as smoke. There is a rule where we can keep them in the boot, which is much safer, but given the fact that most crashes are from rear end shunts it would be more than likely you wouldn't be able to get to the extinguisher anyway. In my experience most first aid kits are insufficient for most rtc's anyway those that are don't really fit in vehicles that well either." Justin Miller

Neutral:

1. "These days most responsible drivers would carry emergency or safety supplies. Encase of an accident anyway so if it wasn't compulsory. But let the drivers know that it would be up to them or their boss if they carried them." Faizan Ali
2. "Carrying a fire extinguisher and first aid kit, could possibly be down to the drivers own choice or the company they happen to work for." Abdul Mukul Wadad

3. "I would prefer a 'recommendation' that First Aid kits are still carried - as a public benefit, as taxi drivers are out and about a lot and their FA kit or training may come in useful." Ram Joung Neupane

Against:

1. "Have had the need to use both in the past and was glad i had access to both you dont know if ul be first on a scene could mean the difference between life and death situation." Sebastian Toon

Strongly against:

1. "This should be mandatory, and in proven occasions this equipment is crucial. The fact that this is even being considered to absolutely absurd. For example, we had a driver before Christmas who dropped a passenger to Curry Rivel - the passenger was intoxicated, she hit her head on the curb when getting out of the vehicle. Baring in mind the location it is very rural, and an ambulance took almost 40 minutes to get to her and the driver. Luckily the driver had a first aid kit and used it. She was bleeding, had the driver not had this equipment it could've been much worse." Max Bishop
2. "It is health and safety issues here we need to keep these in place but make sure all drivers are aware of the risk if they use them." Dawn Hurford
3. "Common sense says anybody should carry these items , no training needed just COMMON SENSE ! That's what we all used to have before the internet came along !" Martin Saye

**General comments**

1. "I agree with 6 month testing regardless of age. I think the vsi is to strict on stone chips and scratches, some common sense is required. I agree with dropping fire extinguishers and first aid kits, been in the industry over 30 years and never used either however Ive had fire extinguishers, go off prematurely. there should be an even playing field and all council and the volunteer fleet should have to be treated the same." Dawn Miller
2. "I feel given the standards of vehicles licensed over the last few years, the age of vehicles now being licensed given the age restriction being removed. There should be more stringent testing done by people that actually know and understand the handbook. For instance, here at TLC we have over 20 years of being taxi operators and would be a perfect partner for VSI's given we are a DVSA Approved test bay and hold valid taxi licenses. This means that because we are licensed, we can actually drive the vehicles and conduct meter tests etc. Something i feel strongly should be tested as who knows what people are charging... There are some horror stories for sure!" Sebastian Toon

3. "I think the way policy needs review and amending its 20 years out of date as myself and John have had many discussions on this matter" Steve Toon
4. "If taxis are classed as public transportation. Then as such isn't it mandatory for all public transportation and public areas to provide fire extinguishers. Then going through all checks that are done to meet the criteria for the health and safety part of our checks. How does the way the body work on the car look got to have anything to do with safety of our passengers. A few scratches on my bumper or door are not going to put my passengers in any harm. You see buses driving a round covered in dirt and in bad condition. Their public transport. Also why is it that Taunton dean gets different standards to the rest of Somerset boroughs. surely, we need to be under one policy and standard throughout Somerset." Faizan Ali
5. "In summary, I think section 4 of the VCI is a bit too stringent and the testers need to use some common sense and rather than worry about stone chips just worry about the look of the vehicle and whether it's safe and fit to use as a taxi or private hire. There needs to be more places to have your vehicles tested and Taxis from all areas should be able to book in at any test station, whether they're in their own area or in somebody else's. There should be no kind of age policy at all I could accept there would be a mileage policy and there should be two tests a year regardless of age mileage. I would be inclined to agree with dropping the fire extinguisher and the first aid kit only because the first aid kits available to the general public are in sufficient in a Road collision, fire extinguishers can cause more problems than the fires they're likely to put out." Justin Miller
6. "Nobody listens to us so no point its hard to speak to people at Taunton deane to get any answers Taxi drivers are treated like something on the bottom of your shoe and always have been , council subsidise the buses and our cost are going through the roof and you want to cut fares especially on 6 and 8 seeters when they cost a lot more to buy and run." Brian Fouracre
7. "Only what has been said. Need to make it easier for taxi drivers and companies keep rules the same across the board otherwise you are just going to get people doing g it with licences which are happening all the time." Barry Pinkawa
8. "Open policy with the drivers when it comes to the mot and service information. An explanation for the reason for section 4 Exterior body work inspection and why this is needed. Also, how any of D,E,F, can warrant a fail." Rafaqat Shah
9. "Please see comments on No Smoking signs. I really believe that this requirement is also out of date. Who needs to be told that you can't smoke in a taxi? Occasionally I have to remind a customer who has had a drink or two, but the stickers in my windows never made a jot of difference!" Richard Maya

10. "The first point of call is in case the car starts to smoke pull over some were safe. Then get your passengers out of the car. And ensure that the passengers are in a safe place away from the car. Then you can return to the car to retrieve the extinguisher and investigate if it's safe to tackle or need to call for assistance. A simple leaflet explaining the safety protocols if concerned drivers don't know and may put them self's and passengers in danger." Abdul Kalam
11. "We run a 7/8/9 seat minibus and have looked at Japanese imports because they're generally low mileage and in very good condition due to the climate. A big plus is they're ulez compliant because the government can't get any emissions data. Any scope for implementing this?" Barry Ford
12. "With all the safety checks which we all agree need to be done, but why are we being checked and being failed at these extra unnecessary tests you are making us do every 6 months for body work. The council has already made us lose a lot of money with all the road works. which also contribute to the chips that we are being picked up for in this check. Then you want us to go a get a paint job that costs hundreds. Other areas are not being treated like this." Abdul Mukul Wadud
13. "You don't need to make this harder than it needs to be. Yearly mot at a station of our choosing Yearly vehicle inspection just before renewal of license. Done." Jared Colclough