



Dial-a-Ride (Edinburgh): 'Quality of Life' Survey 2016

Survey Results

May 2016

v.1.0



Introduction

HCL surveyed 100 Edinburgh Dial-a-Ride passengers to ascertain their opinions on the level of service they had received. The survey consisted of 20 questions and gave customers of DAR the opportunity to express their thoughts and provide any comments on the service's availability, fares, drivers, vehicles, bookings, office staff, complaints procedure, accessibility and safety. Out of the 100 passengers surveyed, 55 responses were received¹. This report highlights the responses of those who participated along with any comments that were included. Some of the results from this year's survey have been compared against the feedback received from the Edinburgh DAR 2008 questionnaires.

Key Points

- ✚ The majority of passengers who use the service are very satisfied with the availability of trips (84%).
- ✚ 87% participants stated they were very satisfied with Dial-a-Ride fares and 13% advised they were reasonably satisfied.
- ✚ Over all, all those who responded to the survey were happy with the cleanliness of vehicles.
- ✚ The majority of passengers rated Door-through-Door and reliability as the most important aspects of the service.
- ✚ 84% felt that the DAR service enabled them to get out and about and interact with others.
- ✚ All participants were satisfied with the level of service provided by DAR drivers².
- ✚ When questioned on the courtesy of office staff, 54 responses of very satisfied were received.
- ✚ All of the wheelchair users who took part in the survey advised they felt safe and secure when using the service.
- ✚ A number of passengers found the steps in the DAR vehicles to be too high when asked about accessibility
- ✚ Some of the customer suggestions to improve the service included more buses for DAR, an increase in availability and the possibility of securing regular bookings.

¹ At the time of results collation, 55 responses to the Edinburgh DAR survey had been received.

² Please note, two survey participants did not answer this question

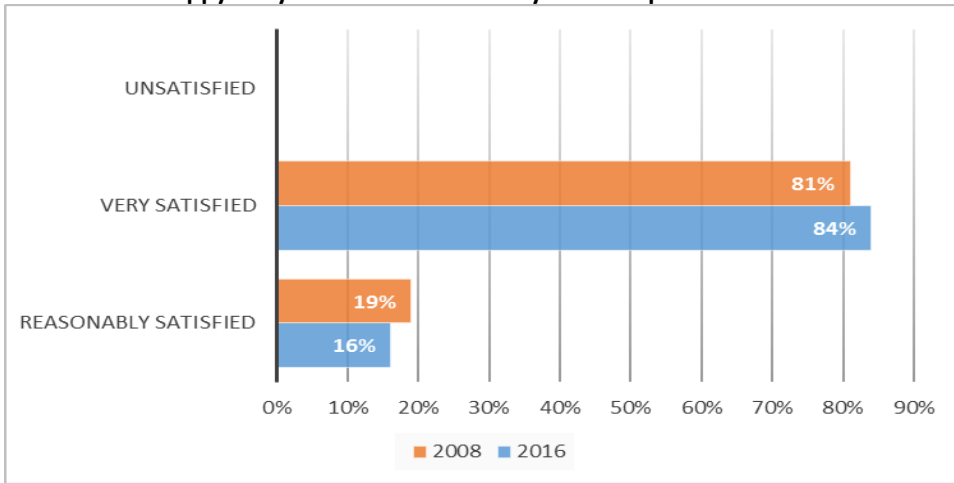


Survey Results

1. Availability (Question 1)

Passengers were asked how happy they were on the availability of Dial-a-Ride trips. The presented options were listed as Very Satisfied, Reasonably Satisfied or Unsatisfied. Out of the 55 persons who responded, 84% were very satisfied with the availability of trips, with 16% reasonably satisfied. See Chart 1 for a breakdown of the responses in comparison to the 2008 survey results.

Chart 1 - How happy are you with the availability of Hcl trips?



1.1 Comments

A number of passengers included comments with their answer to question one, these are as follows:

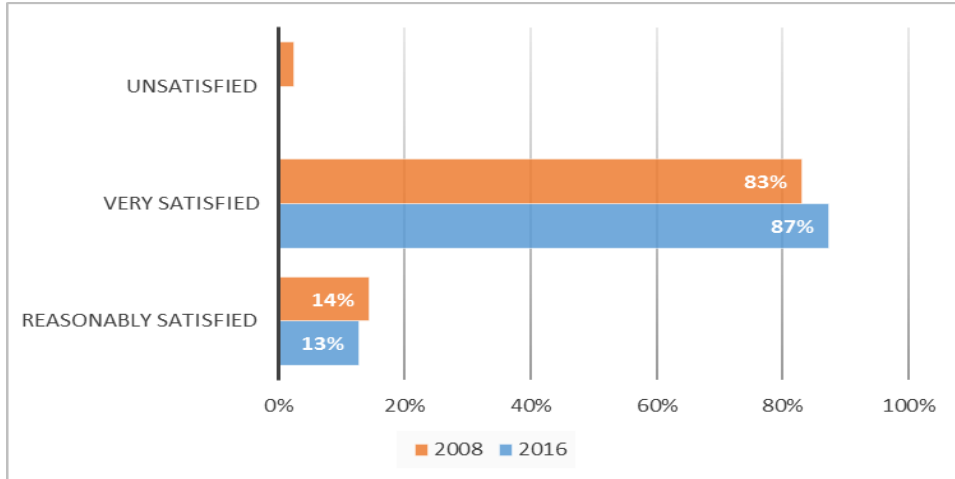
Comments	Survey Response
Excellent service with very helpful drivers.	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
Friendly and efficient booking service. Prompt timing on all journeys. Very helpful driver's in every way possible. Really good and a much appreciated service all round.	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
I always find Hcl accommodating. They always try to make a booking work when a passenger is adaptable with exact times.	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
If booked in advance I nearly always get a booking. Staff are excellent, they try their best to help (great job).	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
More availability would be beneficial.	<i>Reasonably Satisfied</i>
Sometimes if you have an appointment at short notice it is difficult to get the transport, but I suppose it is a big demand for the service.	<i>Reasonably Satisfied</i>
Sometimes they are booked up and I can't use the service.	<i>Reasonably Satisfied</i>
Sometimes when I've tried to phone Hcl I've been unlucky, so I've had to phone for capital cars (more expensive).	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
There are occasions when I cannot get booked because of availability.	<i>Reasonably Satisfied</i>
Very satisfied and always have been.	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
Would appreciate more vehicles to save having to book a week in advance.	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
Would like the ability to be able to schedule three trips in advance (not just two). Especially when we have two disabled people travelling together. Also we often have to book 2 -3 weeks in advance to get times we need. It would be great if you were able to get the times you need your booking maybe 10 days in advance.	<i>Reasonably Satisfied</i>



2. Fares (Question 2)

Passengers were asked how happy they were with the Dial-a-Ride Fares, they responded as follows:

Chart 2 – How happy are you with the fares?



As highlighted in Chart 2, all of those surveyed in 2016 were happy with fares, with 100% of passengers advising they were very or reasonably satisfied. This is consistent with the previous Dial-a-Ride survey (2008) when the majority of participants, with the exception of one, answered yes when asked if they were happy with fares.

2.1 Comments

Comments	Survey Response
Compared to other travel concessions Dial-a-Ride is excellent value especially on longer journeys where bus travel for disabled persons would be too much to contemplate.	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
Compared to Taxi's, good value	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
More comfortable and a lot less than a taxi	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
Reasonable fares, cheaper than black cabs	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
Shorter distances could be cheaper, happy with long distance fares.	<i>Reasonably Satisfied</i>
Very good value	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
Worth every penny	<i>Very Satisfied</i>

3. Service Needs (Question 3)

Question 3 asked customers what they considered to be most important to them when using the service. Their responses are highlighted in the following table, please note that some participants ticked more than one answer.

Option	Total
Door Through Door	34
Reliability	11
Vehicle Accessibility	5
Vehicle Comfort	1



4. Dial-a-Ride Service Use (Question 4,5 and 6)

Customers were questioned on whether or not the service enables them to do things without having to rely on others. Out of the 55 survey responses, 75% felt that the service did help them to do things without having to rely on others, 18% felt it did not and 7% of passengers left the question blank or responded as unsure.

Question 5 of the survey asked when you use the Dial-a-Ride service are you able to get out and about and interact with others. The majority of passengers answered yes to this (84%), with 7% of passengers advising that the service did not enable them to get out and interact with others. The remainder of the participants were unsure or left the question blank.

Passengers were also asked if when they used the service they were able to do things that they would be otherwise unable to do (question 5). Out of the 55 responses, 47 answered yes, three people answered no and five passengers were unsure or left the question blank.

The comments to these three questions are listed below:

4.1 Comments

Question 4 – When you use Dial-a-Ride are you able to do things without having to rely on others?

Comments	Survey Response
Drivers are very helpful and make sure you are ok before they leave you.	Yes
Due to level of disability, I still require someone with me.	No
Especially with door to door trips, independence on planned journeys is assured and appreciated.	Yes
I always need a carer with me.	Yes
I always need a helper when I use DAR	No
It gives me the independence I want.	Yes
Most of the time	Yes
Most trips I make I need to have a key worker there to assist with my activity.	Yes
Not too sure how to answer this, my mother relies on me to get her out and about but I rely on Dial-a-Ride to take her places.	Yes
The door to door service means we are confident disabled people will be looked after and brought to and from the destination without having to use a carer.	Yes

Question 5 - When you use the service are you able to get out and about and interact with others?

Comments	Survey Response
Church trips especially	Yes
I almost always use it for hospital appointments.	No
I can visit art group, friends and cemetery	Yes
I just need your service to get me from A to B	Yes
No spare time	No
Not used for this purpose.	No
Once again door to door service with qualified, understanding drivers makes it very safe to get to a place without a carer.	Yes
Used for meetings and conferences, valued interaction with others is guaranteed. For hospital appointments this is crucial. For the occasional leisure journey it is highly enjoyable.	Yes


Question 6 - When you use the service are you able to do things that you would otherwise be unable to do?

Comments	Survey Response
Getting to some destinations would now be beyond me without the help of Dial-a-Ride. On especially busy weeks I would not have sufficient energy to take on every commitment without Dial-a-Ride.	Yes
Partly	Yes
Taxis are very expensive	No
Unable to travel any other way due to disability.	Yes
When I don't have the use of my car, DAR is the next best option.	Yes

5. Drivers & Vehicles (Questions 7 -11)

Customers were asked how happy they were with the attitude and courtesy of Dial-a-Ride drivers (question 7). 53 of those passengers who responded advised they were either very satisfied or reasonably satisfied with the drivers. Two participants did not answer this question. A number of passengers included comments with their answer to this question, these are as follows:

5.1 Comments

Comments	Survey Response
All charming and couldn't be kinder	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
All drivers are nice and friendly	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
Drivers are nice and pleasant.	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
Drivers usually satisfactory with the exception of one experience where the driver was unpleasant and unhelpful	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
Every one of the drivers is absolutely terrific there are all types of personality, interests and gender. They all support users and can brighten the dullest day. Thanks to them all.	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
Excellent	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
I would be unable to shop at all without the help of this service.	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
They are really good	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
Your chaps are always cheeky and talkative to me.	<i>Very Satisfied</i>

Questions 8 and 9 enquired if the driver was displaying identification and if the passenger was required to wear a seat belt. The results are provided in the following table:

Question	Yes	No	Not Answered
8. Was the driver displaying identification?	41	2	12
9. Did you have to wear a seat belt?	53	1	1

The majority of the passengers who responded to the survey advised that they were required to wear a seat belt whilst travelling in a Dial-a-Ride vehicle, however one passenger answered no to this question advising that they were a wheelchair user. When asked if the driver wore identification, 41 participants responded yes and two answered no. The remaining 12 advised they either didn't notice or could not remember.



The survey asked if the vehicle arrived at the time requested, with participants able to answer before/after 15 minutes or before/after 30 minutes. Out of the 55 responses, all advised the service arrived before/after 15 minutes of the requested time. The comments received regarding the arrival time of vehicles are shown in the table below:

5.2 Comments

Comments	Survey Response
Always on time	Before/after 15 minutes
Always reliable	Before/after 15 minutes
He was spot on the requested time	Before/after 15 minutes
If they are running late they always phone.	Before/after 15 minutes
They normally arrive at the correct time as requested.	Before/after 15 minutes
Timing is very good	Before/after 15 minutes
Twice late, 20 mins late in arriving for my pick up, and 15 minutes late to take us home	Before/after 15 minutes
Usually before/ after 15 minutes. Occasionally longer. It would be good to get more notice when the bus is cancelled.	Before/after 15 minutes
Usually times are accurate	Before/after 15 minutes
Vehicles are often a little early, which is very much welcomed. They are often also on time. Sometimes they are a little late because of an over-run on a previous booking, much more often because of traffic congestion from numerous causes in the city.	Before/after 15 minutes

Question 11 related to vehicle cleanliness and asked customers if they would rate Dial-a-Ride vehicles as clean, very clean or dirty. None of the 55 participants were dissatisfied with cleanliness, with 84% advising the vehicles were very clean and 15% rating them as clean. Two of the passengers that were surveyed did not answer this question. There was one comment on this issue, 'They are always acceptably clean inside. In bad weather splashing and a bit of dirt outside is only to be expected'.

6. Office/ Office Staff (Questions 12 – 15)

Participants were asked how satisfied they were with the courtesy of office staff when making a booking. Fifty four survey responses advised customers were very satisfied with office staff and one person was reasonably satisfied. The comments received are shown in the table below:

6.1 Comments

Comments	Survey Response
HCL is very popular but office staff always do their best to get a booking	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
Lovely to be greeted by 'Oh it's you'. Friendly!	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
Staff are always very accommodating.	<i>Reasonably Satisfied</i>
These staff members are always cheerful and helpful when bookings are requested.	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
Very pleasant	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
Your staff are truly exceptional, sometimes I feel I am their worst nightmare but they always do their very best. I love them all.	<i>Very Satisfied</i>

Questions 13 and 14 enquired about participant’s experiences when contacting the office via telephone, asking was the phone engaged and how often it rang before being answered. The results to both these questions are outlined in the table below. Please note, some of the participants did not answer these questions.



Question	Less than Twice	More than Twice
13. Was the telephone engaged when you rang the office?	41	12
	Less than Five Times	More Than Five Times
14. How often did the telephone ring before you were answered?	37	10

6.2 Comments

Question 13 - Was the telephone engaged when you rang the office?

Comments	Survey Response
Albeit to an answer service	<i>Less than twice</i>
Calls are always returned - I have no complaints.	<i>Less than twice</i>
I never really have any bother getting through	<i>Less than twice</i>
Long time before answered	<i>More than twice</i>
On Mondays and especially after local holidays the phone can ring several times before it is answered. Under normal circumstances answers are prompt. There are times when the answerphone is in operation and callers are asked to name and number for staff to return the call. This has always been done in an acceptable time span.	<i>Blank</i>
Sometimes I have to leave my number and they call back.	<i>More than twice</i>
Sometimes it is engaged which can't be helped	<i>Less than twice</i>
Sometimes you get the answer phone, but someone soon phones you back to take your booking.	<i>Less than twice</i>
Still always get back to me	<i>Less than twice</i>

Participants were asked when they first registered to use the services when they received a telephone call or letter to acknowledge the receipt (question 15). Out of the 55 passengers who took part in the survey, 32 advised they received a response within seven working days with one person advising their acknowledgement was out with seven working days. The remaining 22 participants either did not answer this question or could not remember as it was so long ago.

7. Complaints

Question 16 of the survey asked customer's if they had cause for complaint how they found the procedure. Out of the 55 participants, 11 people had previously had cause for complaint. Ten of these persons advised that they found the procedure satisfactory. One of the participants commented that they were unsatisfied with the complaints process.

8. Vehicle Accessibility (Questions 17 -20)

In question 17, survey participants were asked does the Dial-a-Ride service meet your needs. Forty eight passengers answered yes to this question, 2 passengers advised that the service did not meet their needs and five declined to answer. One of the participants who answered no, commented 'Not always'. The other comments received in answer to this question are shown in the table overleaf:



8.1 Comments

Comments	Survey Response
Doesn't do fish and chips though!	Yes
I don't know what I would do without it	Yes
Not always	No
Very much appreciated at all points of contact.	Yes
Yes, but please put more resources on so we can get out more.	Yes

Questions 18 and 19 of the survey focused on vehicle accessibility. Out of the 55 participants, 49 advised they were satisfied with the accessibility of Dial-a-Ride vehicles. Two people advised they were unsatisfied commenting that lower steps would be helpful and sometimes the vehicles were difficult to get into. Participants were also asked what aspects of the vehicles they find to be problematic, the results are as follows:

18. Did you find any of the following a problem?	
Steps	9
Ramp	1
Seating	4
Seat Belts	3
None	41

As highlighted in the table, nine participants found the steps problematic, commenting that they were too high or steep. This feedback is consistent with the 2008 survey when similar feedback was received. The participants who had difficulty with the seating advised that the seats were too high or too close together. It was also commented that the drivers are very helpful when assisting with these issues.

Question 20 concentrated on wheelchair users and whether or not they felt safe and secure whilst using the Dial-a-Ride service. Out of the 55 participants 26 advised they did feel safe.



8. Suggestions

Participants were given the opportunity to provide further comment on the service or offer suggestions. The following comments were received:

Comments/Suggestions:
As I have never had any problems with the service, I see no need for improvement. I only wish people would donate more, if it wasn't for DAR I would be stuck in the house.
Booking staff are extremely helpful and personable - it is a pleasure to deal with them.
Drivers having change, so payment can always be paid
Hopefully get the funding to increase transport - keep up the good work
I would be obliged if I could get booked more easily.
If possible be able to get a booking in without having to do so a good period in advance.
If two disabled persons are in one family (e.g. Husband and Wife), we would like to be able to have access to booking more than two trips at any time. At the moment, when both travel it counts as one trip. Also the service should be for severely disabled people. It is very difficult to transport disabled persons in a taxi, DAR is the best option.
It is difficult to hire DAR later on, it's been a while since I've managed to book.
It would be great to have more than two journeys booked.
It would be helpful to have more drivers available for evenings and nights
It would be useful to have a regular booking so that we don't have to phone every Monday.
Make it more widely known, carry a supply of leaflets with the new address. Put leaflets into GP surgeries, hospital waiting rooms, disability centres and libraries. Talk to groups of potential users about your excellent services.
More availability would be beneficial
More vehicles. Councillors take note, you may need this service one day!
No issues, apart from the price of short distance journeys.
Online booking system. You urgently need to clarify airport arrangement, current drop off point is very unhelpful. There is no call point for assistance, it is unsheltered and the driver is not allowed to leave their vehicle to assist. Picking up from airport also needs a clearer arrangement in terms of location.
Perfect service, only wish we could have more time to shop it is not long enough. It takes some of us longer to get on and off the bus and this takes time off our shopping - although I am not complaining.



✚ What does the service mean to you...?

Finally passengers were asked what the service means to them, the responses received are as follows:

'As a wheelchair user, I can get out with ease to meet people and do shopping'

'As I am in a wheelchair the service is vital for me as I don't have my own transport'

'Brilliant service, no more needs to be said'

'DAR gives me independence, taking me to places I otherwise couldn't go. I am very happy with the service'

'Excellent service - very helpful, friendly staff!'

'For me DAR has been a great service. It enables me to go to my computer class and gets me out of the house for a few hours. Drivers are very helpful. I cannot fault this service at all - keep up the good work'

'Gives me independence which keeps me sane. Allows me to interact with others and experience outside world'

'Great, affordable service. Great help in getting to the airport'

'I am able to visit certain places, without it I couldn't. I also make a point of saying this when asked by people enquiring from me'

'I am partially housebound and sometimes HcL is my only outing in a week. Without this service I would be unable to get my shopping'

'I live up a hill and cannot carry my shopping, I also have no other transport. Dial-a-Ride has been a great help to me.'

'I think it is a great service and use it regularly. You are picked up at your door and arrive at the appointment relaxed and calm'

'It enables me to travel in a safe environment to places I would prefer not to have to travel alone, especially when the weather is bad'

'It is an excellent service. Staff are excellent both in the office and the drivers. I can't fault anything'

'It is the best service offered since I became wheelchair bound. I have lost count the number of times I have been left at a taxi rank in the pouring rain because taxi drivers refuse to leave the vehicle to fit ramps etc. The only drawback is your popularity and having to try and book two weeks in advance. Thank you for all your hard work'

'Much of this will be evident from the foregoing questions and suggestions. I greatly value the service, using it in conjunction with other travel possibilities in Edinburgh. For me, it fills a niche which nothing else can fill in anything like the same way and I appreciate everything it and the helpful, caring staff provide'

'My husband and I rely on HcL to take my mother to visit family and shop. My mother feels secure and safe while travelling on Dial-a-Ride, she does not get that from black taxis. We feel taxi drivers do not have the training that the HcL drivers have. We think the office staff and all of the drivers are fantastic. We are very grateful to have the use of HcL'

'Provides a safe and secure method of transport, helps to face forward as opposed to backwards (taxis)'

'The difference of being confined to four walls, you can get out where required and feel safe'

'The service gives my son the opportunity to go to his activities without me, giving him independence. It also provides me with more free time for myself. Wonderful service'

'The service gives me independence. I use it for the hospital, shopping, meals with friends - taxis are very expensive'

'The service is always very good and allows me to get out and about when I otherwise would be isolated at home alone. I very much appreciate the help, care and kindness of both drivers and office staff. Many, many thanks for a worthwhile service'



'The service is wonderful, I would not be able to get out without it!'

'The service you provide to me gives me the freedom and independence which I require to live a good life'

'This is a truly wonderful service. Most of us feel inadequate in ourselves but with all of your help we feel like humans again. It's good to get fresh air as at home one feels a prisoner'

'This service is very good for my daughter, taking her to appointments at the doctor. She is a wheelchair user and your service is excellent'

'This service means I can get out and about. It lets me continue to do things I couldn't do otherwise'

'Using HCL makes life a lot easier. The service is much appreciated'

'Without DAR sometimes I would be housebound. The chaps are always welcoming and I feel safe and secure at all times. I look forward to them coming to get me, no matter where I am going. Thanks a lot to your drivers and the service'

'Without Dial-a-Ride I would be stranded for getting to appointments, friends, holidays and stations'

'You are doing well'

'You have taken us to church and home again every Sunday, since my wife returned from hospital. It means a great deal to us to still be able to worship together. It is my wife's only outing apart from the odd trip to the foot clinic. You do a great job!'