



## Department for Transport

Caroline Lucas MP  
House of Commons  
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From the Minister of State  
**The Rt. Hon. John Hayes CBE MP**

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Our Ref: MC/204610  
Your Ref: ML.N0091.MR.17.08.17

06 SEP 2017

Dear Caroline

Thank you for your letter of 17 August, about the Disability Training Bill and what steps the Government will be taking to introduce disability equality training for taxi and mini cab drivers.

The Government is committed to building transport networks that work for all, including ensuring that disabled people have the same access to transport services as other members of society. I know that guide and assistance dogs can be vital for many people's access to transport, and that the refusal to carry them can seriously inhibit their owner's ability to live independently. To be clear, the Government expects all transport operators and authorities, including the drivers of taxis and private hire vehicles, to play their part in ensuring that nobody is excluded from services on account of being disabled.

I understand how distressing the refusal of assistance dogs can be for their owners, whether in a shop, restaurant, taxi or private hire vehicle. Not only can it be inconvenient, it puts at risk the confidence that disabled people have in their ability to go about their lives with dignity. As you are likely aware, the Equality Act 2010 already makes it a criminal offence to refuse the carriage of an assistance dog or to charge extra for doing so. It is unacceptable that drivers without medical exemption certificates continue to refuse assistance dogs and I strongly encourage licensing authorities to take robust action against those who are unwilling to comply. Courts already have powers to impose fines up to £1,000. TfL alone have successfully prosecuted 21 minicab drivers since 2015, with fines imposed totalling £7,055.

In responding to the Disability Equality Training (Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Drivers) Private Members Bill debate in the House of Commons on the 18 November 2016 I committed to bring forward a package of measures to support access to taxis and PHVs for disabled passengers.

Later this year I plan to consult on revised best practice guidance for local authorities, which will include strengthened recommendations relating to the provision of an accessible taxi and PHV service.

In the meantime, please be assured of Government's interest in this issue, and it's commitment to see the barriers that still inhibit some people's ability to travel, challenged and overcome.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'John Hayes', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right and a vertical line crossing it.

**THE RT. HON. JOHN HAYES CBE MP**