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Chair of the Transport Committee

Ruth Cadbury MP
Chair of the House of Commons Transport Committee

(Sent by email)

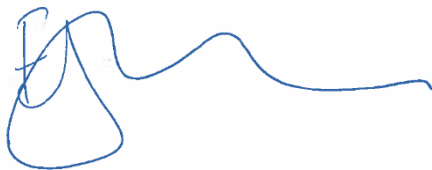
2 October 2025

Dear Ruth,

London Assembly Transport Committee submission to House of Commons Transport Committee Inquiry: Licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles

I am writing to provide you with the London Assembly Transport Committee's response to your inquiry into the licensing of taxis and private hire (PH) vehicles.¹ Please find attached our submission as an appendix to this letter.

Yours,



Elly Baker AM
Chair of the Transport Committee

¹ House of Commons Transport Committee, [Licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles](#), 16 July 2025

London Assembly Transport Committee submission to the House of Commons Transport Committee Inquiry: Licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles

Our submission

1. The London Assembly Transport Committee examines all aspects of the capital's transport system in order to press for improvements for Londoners. The Committee pays particular attention to how the Mayor's Transport Strategy is being implemented, and looks closely at the work of Transport for London (TfL) and other transport operators.²
2. This submission draws on evidence we have heard across several investigations, including most recently from an investigation this year³ which focussed on TfL's new Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan (2025).⁴ As part of this work, the Committee wrote to TfL regarding a backlog in PH licence applications at TfL.⁵ We have also written separately to both TfL and the Department for Transport about the broader set of issues facing the taxi and PH sector in London, which we also set out in this submission.⁶ Those letters can be accessed on the Committee's website.

Context: London's Taxi and Private Hire (PH) trade

3. London is home to around a third of the total number of licenced taxi and PH drivers in the country.⁷ Yet, the landscape for the trade in London has changed significantly in the last decade. For years the number of taxi drivers serving the capital used to hover at ~25,000 drivers. Since 2014/15 these numbers have decreased year-on-year.⁸ The latest data for 2024/25 shows there are now only 16,676 licenced taxi drivers in London, a decrease of over 34 per cent compared to the 25,538 licenced taxi drivers in 2013/14.⁹ Over the same period, the number of PH drivers licenced in London has increased by 62 per cent, from 65,656 drivers in 2013/14 to 106,468 drivers in 2024/25.¹⁰ The largest increase in PH drivers was seen in 2015/16, when 22,744 additional drivers were licensed compared to the previous year – an increase which almost equates to the total number of taxi drivers at the time.¹¹ Despite this increase in PH drivers, the number of PH operators in London has decreased in the last decade, from 3,038 in 2013/24 to 1,789 in 2024/25.¹² TfL has attributed this decrease partly to a consolidation in the industry.¹³

² [Transport Committee | London City Hall](#)

³ [TfL's Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan | London City Hall](#)

⁴ TfL, [Taxi and private hire action plan 2025](#), 2025

⁵ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Letter to TfL re: action on private hire licence backlog](#), June 2025

⁶ London Assembly Transport Committee, [TfL's Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan](#)

⁷ See [Taxi and private hire vehicle statistics, England, 2024 \(revised\)](#) and TfL, [Licensing information](#).

⁸ TfL, [Licensing information](#)

⁹ TfL, [Licensing information](#)

¹⁰ TfL, [Licensing information](#)

¹¹ TfL, [Licensing information](#)

¹² TfL, [Licensing information](#)

¹³ TfL, [Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025](#), 27 March 2025

Current licensing arrangements

4. Your inquiry asked if current licensing arrangements and tools enable local authorities to effectively regulate and oversee the taxi and PH sector.¹⁴ It is clear to us that in London, the answer to this question is: no.
5. We believe that mandating for increased data sharing by operators as part of their licensing agreements with TfL would enable TfL to monitor the business practices of operators. It would also provide TfL with a better picture of how long drivers are working, how much they are being paid and where they are operating. This would also help TfL to ensure that the PH industry is supporting the Mayor's Transport Strategy targets in terms of safety and environmental impacts.
6. The Committee heard that requiring operators to share data with licensing authorities is already being successfully carried out in other major cities. We heard from driver representatives that New York has been successful in mandating that large app-based operators share data as part of its licensing requirements and that this transparency enables fairer working conditions and informed decision making.¹⁵ ¹⁶ TfL's Helen Chapman also highlighted the legislative powers that New York has and stated that TfL is calling on the Government to have the same level of authority.¹⁷
7. London is often seen as world-leading when it comes to transport systems. Yet, if London continues to lack the regulatory powers other cities have, we risk attracting bad actors who can exploit drivers and jeopardise the safety of Londoners. **The Government must urgently prioritise modernising taxi and PH legislation. The Committee believes that the Government should legislate to grant TfL the power to mandate data sharing by private hire operators as part of its licensing requirements.**

Digital ride hailing apps

8. In your call for evidence, you asked how digital ride-hailing platforms are impacting standards in the sector.¹⁸ The advent of app-based operators has irreversibly changed the landscape of taxi and PH, along with a changing approach to road transport policy. We believe that both TfL and Government policy have been slow to catch up, leading to a steep decline in numbers of taxi drivers, and concerning evidence about working practices in the PH sector. Given the sector's importance to integrated transport, including journeys taken by

¹⁴ House of Commons Transport Committee, [Licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles](#), 16 July 2025

¹⁵ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport for London's Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025 – Panel 1](#), 15 May 2025, p. 15

¹⁶ Abdurzak Hadi, [Written evidence submitted to the Committee](#), 19 May 2025, p. 1

¹⁷ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport for London's Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025](#), 17 June 2025

¹⁸ House of Commons Transport Committee, [Licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles](#), 16 July 2025

those who may not have other travel options, and all our commitment to road safety, we believe much more should be done.

9. TfL has repeatedly told us that it needs the Government to provide it with new powers, through legislation, for it to be able to solve many of the issues facing the taxi and PH industry in London.^{19 20} Specifically, this includes a private hire vehicle cap, cross-border hiring and data sharing.
10. There are over 106,000 PH drivers working in London.²¹ The Committee heard from PH driver representatives that this volume of drivers is causing extreme competition for fares.²² We heard that it is common among PH drivers to work long hours to earn enough money to live on, and that some drivers are now working 16 hours a day.²³ Working shifts as long as this can result in driver fatigue, and we heard that driving under these conditions is dangerous for drivers, passengers, and other members of the public.²⁴ This raises serious concerns about safety.
11. In March 2024 the Committee wrote to the Mayor calling for a cap on private hire licences.²⁵ Since then, we have heard powerful evidence from drivers that without a cap on the number of PH vehicles the welfare of drivers will continue to suffer and progress on road safety will be put at risk.²⁶ The Government has previously said it does not plan to introduce a cap on the number of PH vehicle licences granted in London.²⁷ We cannot see the reasoning behind continuing to resist this call, which has wide support across taxi and PH drivers. **We believe the Government should legislate to grant TfL the power to establish a cap on the number of PH vehicles licenced for use in London.**

Cross-border hiring

12. The issues with the number of PH drivers working in London is exacerbated by cross-border hiring.²⁸ Cross-border hiring enables drivers who are licenced by a different licensing

¹⁹ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles](#), 23 January 2024

²⁰ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport for London's Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025](#), 17 June 2025

²¹ TfL, [Licensing information](#)

²² London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport for London's Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025 – Panel 1](#), 15 May 2025, p. 11

²³ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport for London's Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025 – Panel 1](#), 15 May 2025, pp. 7-8 and p.16

²⁴ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport for London's Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025 – Panel 1](#), 15 May 2025, pp. 7-8

²⁵ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Letter to Mayor](#), March 2024

²⁶ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport for London's Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025 – Panel 1](#), 15 May 2025

²⁷ Minister for Roads and Local Transport, [Response to Letter on Taxis and PHVs](#), 19 April 2024, p. 1

²⁸ Cross border hiring is where taxis or private hire vehicles that are licensed by one licensing authority work wholly or predominantly in another licensing authority area. This practice is permitted under current legislation.

authority to work wholly or predominantly in London, further increasing the number of PH drivers working in London. It also undermines the licensing standards that London sets.

13. In your inquiry, you asked what steps the Government should take to address the challenges posed by cross-border hiring.²⁹ The Government previously told us it plans to address the negative impacts of cross-border hiring “when parliamentary time allows”.³⁰ The Committee is concerned that not enough priority is being given to this issue, and we believe urgent action is required. Helen Chapman, Director of Licensing, Regulation and Charging at TfL told the Committee that cross-border hiring needs to be addressed urgently so that TfL can close this regulatory loophole.³¹ We agree. **We believe the Government should legislate by the end of the 2025-26 Parliamentary session to grant TfL the power to stop cross-border hiring.**

²⁹ House of Commons Transport Committee, [Licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles](#), 16 July 2025

³⁰ Minister for Roads and Local Transport, [Response to Letter on Taxis and PHVs](#), 19 April 2024, p. 1

³¹ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport for London’s Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025](#), 17 June 2025, p. 19