



Department  
for Transport

Elly Baker AM  
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From the Secretary of State  
**Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP**

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Our Ref: MC/00064966

20 April 2026

Dear Elly,

Thank you for your letter of 18 March providing the London Assembly's Transport Committee response to the consultation on making all Local Transport Authorities responsible for taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) licensing.

Your response will of course be considered as part of the consultation. Please pass on my appreciation to the Committee for taking the time to share their views and help shape the final decision on this important matter.

I note the Committee's suggestions for further reform of the regulation of the sector. Since coming into Government, the ministerial team has been actively looking at regulatory reform in relation to taxis and PHVs, including in terms of the challenges caused by out-of-area working. Baroness Casey's audit on group-based child sexual exploitation and abuse adds valuable evidence to our ongoing work to improve the regulatory framework for taxi and PHV licensing.

As a first step, the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill seeks a power for the Secretary of State to set national standards for taxi and PHV licensing and to enable the suspension, with immediate effect, of any licence issued by any authority in whose area it is being used if such action is needed to protect public safety. If passed, this would enable government to set robust standards for licensing right across England and provide licensing authorities with greater powers to keep vulnerable children and, indeed, all members of the public safe, wherever they live or travel.

We acknowledge that more consistent licensing requirements and greater enforcement powers would not be a complete solution for all the issues with the current licensing framework.

In that context, we are continuing to consider, holistically, how the regulation of taxis and PHVs could be more fully reformed. We want to achieve the best overall outcome for passengers, not least for the vulnerable passengers who we know rely so much on these services, improving consistency and regulatory oversight.

We will work with stakeholders, including Transport for London, to understand the potential impacts of the options for reform before taking a final decision.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heidi Alexander". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Heidi" being more prominent than the last name "Alexander".

**Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP**

**SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT**