



**Elly Baker AM**  
**Chair of the Transport Committee**

Andy Lord  
TfL Commissioner  
(Sent by email)

24 March 2026

Dear Andy,

## **Assaults on transport workers in London**

Like you, we are concerned by the number of incidents of work-related violence and aggression towards transport workers in London – around 200 reported incidents per week across 2023/24.<sup>1</sup> Given these concerns, the Committee held a meeting on 24 February 2026 to examine the issue in greater detail and to hear directly from transport workers about their experiences.

The evidence we heard in this meeting was deeply troubling. Workers described to us the frequency and severity of abuse they face while carrying out their duties. Deban Aderemi, a Bus Enforcement Officer at TfL, said he has experienced verbal abuse “and there is almost always hate crime”<sup>2</sup> as well as physical abuse including spitting and being pushed. It was also particularly concerning to hear that such behaviour is often viewed as an expected part of the job. Luke Banks, a Revenue Control Officer on the London Underground, told the Committee about the “first major assault” he experienced, describing it as “not the first [assault], and I know it will not be the last” acknowledging that “it is insane that we talk about it in those terms”.<sup>3</sup>

Worryingly, we heard multiple accounts of the British Transport Police (BTP) taking hours to show up or not showing up at all. Unite the Union’s evidence to the Committee suggested the current situation creates “a perception of impunity, where offenders believe they can treat transport staff

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<sup>1</sup> TfL, [New TfL campaign launches to tackle violence against staff on London’s transport network](#), 19 August 2024

<sup>2</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Assaults on Transport Workers in London – Panel 1](#), 24 February, p.1

<sup>3</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Assaults on Transport Workers in London – Panel 1](#), 24 February, p.3

poorly without consequence.”<sup>4</sup> This echoes our findings from last year into fare evasion on the network.<sup>5</sup> It was pleasing therefore to hear from the Mayor that you had “heard the comments” and would be “taking them up with the BTP”.<sup>6</sup>

We had already written to BTP ahead of the Committee’s February meeting to request data on assaults on transport workers and look forward to hearing its response. Ahead of that, **we request that you provide the Committee with an update on any correspondence and/or discussions you have had with BTP since our meeting concerning work-related violence, and actions arising.**

We have also written to the Home Secretary supporting your and the wider transport sectors calls for a new specific offence of assaults on transport workers.

### **Underreporting workplace violence**

Evidence presented to the Committee suggests that TfL’s official figures almost certainly underreport the true scale of assaults on transport workers, as many incidents of work-related violence and aggression towards transport workers go unreported. This means the 10,500 reported incidents in 2023/24<sup>7</sup> may just be the tip of the iceberg. When asked by the Committee whether TfL has considered setting a target to reduce the overall number of incidents Siwan Hayward OBE, Director of Security, Policing and Enforcement at TfL said: “We have not, and we will not yet, set a target in terms of reduction of overall WVA because of the concern we have that there is still a level of underreporting.”<sup>8</sup>

Guests at our meeting lay part of the blame for underreporting at the feet of the “very antiquated” reporting system on the London Underground.<sup>9</sup> Luke Banks told us it can take 35 to 45 minutes fill in the relevant forms and that can deter workers from reporting.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, Deban Aderemi said “Sometimes, when I do encounter things in the course of my day-to-day working that merit a report going in, I have to think twice and say, ‘Do I really want to do this?’”<sup>11</sup>

We also heard that TfL staff are deterred from reporting assaults because of the lack of perceived action taken in response to the reports. Paul Feakes, also a Revenue Control Inspector at London Underground, told the Committee that “a lot of members of staff do not report incidents anymore. Even if they are serious, even if they are physical assaults, it is just a case of, ‘Why am I going to bother? Nothing gets done.’”<sup>12</sup> RMT’s evidence to the Committee echoed this view. It explained nearly a quarter of its members said that they had not reported an assault to their employer, most

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<sup>4</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Unite the Union - Written evidence to the London Assembly Transport Committee](#), February 2026, p22

<sup>5</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Letter to the British Transport Police](#), 2 September 2025

<sup>6</sup> London Assembly Mayor’s Question Time, [Questions to the Mayor](#), 26 February 2026, p.26

<sup>7</sup> TfL, [New TfL campaign launches to tackle violence against staff on London’s transport network](#), 19 August 2024

<sup>8</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Assaults on Transport Workers in London – Panel 2](#), 24 February, p.2

<sup>9</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Assaults on Transport Workers in London – Panel 1](#), 24 February, p.6

<sup>10</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Assaults on Transport Workers in London – Panel 1](#), 24 February, p.6

<sup>11</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Assaults on Transport Workers in London – Panel 1](#), 24 February, p.8

<sup>12</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Assaults on Transport Workers in London – Panel 1](#), 24 February, p.3

commonly because such incidents were seen as just “part of the job” followed by a belief that the complaint would not be taken seriously.<sup>13</sup>

TfL could also explore non-legal consequences for those responsible acts of physical or verbal abuse. The Transport Salaried Staffs Association (TSSA) told us it wanted to see TfL “work with venues and other entertainment providers to ensure [...] consequences such as venue bans for those who can be identified.”<sup>14</sup> Such bans could also be extended to the transport network itself as we heard TfL is piloting in Harrow through the use of Withdrawal of Implied Permission (WIP) notices.<sup>15</sup>

TfL told us it does have plans to update its reporting system for London Underground staff, with a new system currently being piloted ahead of a full launch by the end of this year.<sup>16</sup> This cannot come soon enough. The rollout of a new reporting system presents a valuable opportunity to create a process that actively encourages reporting, enabling TfL to better understand the true scale of the issue and to set ambitious targets to reduce violence and aggression against staff.

## Culture

TfL’s *Work-Related Violence and Aggression Strategy*, sets out a “zero-tolerance approach” to work related violence and aggression.<sup>17</sup> Despite this, we heard from Paul Feakes that “this is just a buzz phrase” and “there very much is a tolerance for it, and it is well above zero”.<sup>18</sup>

We heard shocking accounts of a workplace culture that treats incidents of assault as normal and where workers are being questioned, rather than supported, following incidents of assault. Paul Feakes told the Committee that there is a culture of victim blaming, and that those who want to submit a report of work-related violence and aggression will be asked “What did you do to make him spit at you? What did you do to make him swear at you? What did you do to make him hit you?”<sup>19</sup>

Siwan Hayward told us that TfL is trying to shift the culture from one of “normalisation” to “absolutely being one where everyone sees this as unacceptable and not tolerated”.<sup>20</sup> And, we heard from frontline workers that they feel TfL’s senior leaders are committed to challenging work related violence and aggression and understanding the experience of frontline workers, but that this approach and understanding does not translate to day to day management.<sup>21</sup> After hearing these concerns, Siwan Hayward said “that was one of the most disappointing/disturbing elements of the

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<sup>13</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [RMT - Written evidence to the London Assembly Transport Committee](#), February 2026, p.8

<sup>14</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [TSSA - Written evidence to the London Assembly Transport Committee](#), February 2026, p.20

<sup>15</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [RMT - Written evidence to the London Assembly Transport Committee](#), February 2026, pp.15-16

<sup>16</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Assaults on Transport Workers in London – Panel 2](#), 24 February, p.5

<sup>17</sup> TfL, [TfL Work-related violence and aggression strategy](#), February 2020, p.18

<sup>18</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Assaults on Transport Workers in London – Panel 1](#), 24 February, p.23

<sup>19</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Assaults on Transport Workers in London – Panel 1](#), 24 February, p.23

<sup>20</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Assaults on Transport Workers in London – Panel 2](#), 24 February, p.2

<sup>21</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Assaults on Transport Workers in London – Panel 1](#), 24 February, p.24

testimony we heard today because that is so far away from the culture we are trying to create within the organisation.”<sup>22</sup>

These accounts of a culture which normalises assaults on transport workers and blames victims when incidents occur are deeply concerning. It is positive that the aspirations of TfL’s senior management were recognised, but the accounts we heard signal a significant disconnect between those aspirations and the lived experiences of frontline staff.

### **Support for Staff**

The Committee heard that post-incident communication and support for staff is very limited and inconsistent.<sup>23</sup> And that much of the post-incident support that staff accessed was organised by the victim themselves, rather than line managers or TfL’s Workplace Violence and Aggression (WVA) Team. Paul Feakes, told the Committee that he, as the victim, was left to chase up the prosecution, the WVA Team and the BTP following his assault.<sup>24</sup> RMT told the Committee that two-thirds of its members who work on the London Underground said they were not satisfied with their employer’s response to the incident, with some reporting that they felt pressure to return to work before they were ready to do so.<sup>25</sup>

We heard that there is a particular lack of support for TfL contract workers, such as bus drivers, and taxi and private hire drivers, who face unique challenges because they are self-employed.<sup>26</sup> Kola Olalekan, a private hire driver, told the Committee that private hire drivers do not have access to TfL’s WVA Team for support following incidents, and that drivers have been asking for this to change.<sup>27</sup> Selington Rock Santan Fernandes, a bus driver for Transport UK, told the Committee that following a serious incident that left him unable to work he received no support from the bus company and is now on sick pay.<sup>28</sup> Emma Croxall, TfL’s Work Related Violence and Aggression Strategy and Support Manager, told us that in the last few years TfL has put more specific work related violence and aggression responsibility into operator contracts on the rail and bus networks. She also said that as the licensor and regulator for taxi and private hire drivers, TfL has different communication with the industry than with other transport modes in London, which includes sharing guidance that TfL has issued on personal safety for drivers.<sup>29</sup>

The Committee welcomes the work that TfL has been doing to tackle violence and aggression directed towards transport workers, particularly since the launch of its *Work Related Violence and Aggression Strategy*, including the investments in training, Transport Support and Enforcement

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<sup>22</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Assaults on Transport Workers in London – Panel 2](#), 24 February, p.7

<sup>23</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Assaults on Transport Workers in London – Panel 1](#), 24 February, p.3 and p.24

<sup>24</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Assaults on Transport Workers in London – Panel 1](#), 24 February, p.10

<sup>25</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [RMT - Written evidence to the London Assembly Transport Committee](#), February 2026, p.9

<sup>26</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Assaults on Transport Workers in London – Panel 1](#), 24 February, p.6 and p.12

<sup>27</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Assaults on Transport Workers in London – Panel 1](#), 24 February, p.11

<sup>28</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Assaults on Transport Workers in London – Panel 1](#), 24 February, p.12

<sup>29</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Assaults on Transport Workers in London – Panel 2](#), 24 February, p.11-12

(TSE) presence, and body-worn video.<sup>30</sup> Siwan Hayward told us that that “no one should have to come to work on the transport system and face aggression, face violence, face abuse, be intimidated, or feel fearful about working.”<sup>31</sup>

Since the Committee’s meeting, you and the Mayor have brought together key stakeholders at the summit on work-related violence and aggression on 12 March 2026, marking an important step in recognising the scale and seriousness of the issue.<sup>32</sup> At that summit, you also announced plans to develop a new five-year strategy to improve staff safety, signalling a commitment to longer-term change.<sup>33</sup> While this renewed focus is welcome, it is essential that it translates into tangible action, particularly for staff who continue to face violence and aggression as part of their daily work. These are not new challenges, but they are becoming more acute, and those affected need to see meaningful progress in addressing them.

In this letter, we have described some of the most urgent issues, including how incidents are reported and acted upon, the organisational culture within TfL, and the communication and consistency of post incident support across transport modes. Addressing these issues is a vital next step in providing a safe and supportive workplace for London’s transport workers. **In response to this letter, we request an update from TfL on:**

- **Work ongoing or planned to encourage workers to report all incidents of work-related violence and aggression;**
- **How it plans to address the cultural issues across the organisation that may be normalising assaults on transport workers and blames victims when incidents occur (including support to, resourcing and training for middle managers);**
- **Options being considered to improve post-incident support and communication for victims of workplace violence;**
- **How taxi and private hire drivers licensed by TfL could opt-in to support from TfL’s Workplace Violence and Aggression Team; and**
- **What consideration it has given to how it could implement stronger consequences (e.g. Withdrawal of implied service) for those who verbally or physically assault staff.**

The Committee would welcome a response to this letter by 13 May 2026. Please send your responses to Hannah Barlow, Principal Committee Manager and Eleanor Haigh, Senior Policy Adviser, at [assemblytransport@london.gov.uk](mailto:assemblytransport@london.gov.uk).

Yours,

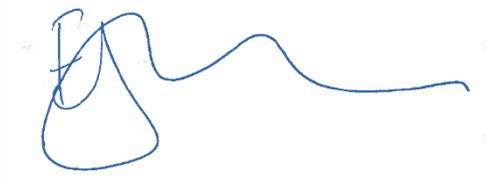
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<sup>30</sup> TfL, [TfL Work-related violence and aggression strategy](#), February 2020, p.15-19

<sup>31</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Assaults on Transport Workers in London – Panel 2](#), 24 February, p.1

<sup>32</sup> TfL, [TfL and Mayor of London convene urgent summit to tackle violence and aggression against transport staff](#), 12 March 2026

<sup>33</sup> TfL, [TfL and Mayor of London convene urgent summit to tackle violence and aggression against transport staff](#), 12 March 2026



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