



Department
for Transport

House of Lords
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My Lords,

Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) Bill – Second Reading

Thank you for your important contributions to the Second Reading of the Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) Bill on Friday 1 April. I promised to write to you on a number of points raised.

Lord Addington raised the issue of further legislative amendments to improve disabled people's access to the transport network. When Parliamentary time allows, the government will legislate to require taxi and Private Hire Vehicle drivers to complete disability awareness training through the introduction of new National Minimum Standards. The government is also continuing to progress non-legislative commitments from our Inclusive Transport Strategy 2018 in support of our ambition for disabled people to have the same access to transport as everyone else, and to be able to travel easily, confidently, and without additional cost. I am pleased to say that we have achieved 57 of our 85 commitments to date.

Lord Borwick asked about the purpose of the Bill's requirement for Local Licencing Authorities to maintain and publish a list of designated wheelchair accessible taxis and Private Hire Vehicles. The amendments to section 167 of the Equality Act 2010 to require Local Licencing Authorities to maintain and publish such lists would have two main benefits.

Firstly, a driver of a wheelchair accessible taxi or Private Hire Vehicle is only subject to the duties at section 165 of the Equality Act 2010 if the vehicle is on a Local Licencing Authority's designated list. This Bill would ensure that any applicable driver of a designated vehicle – no matter where their vehicle is licenced – has specific duties to carry a wheelchair user, to provide reasonable mobility assistance for them, and to not charge extra for fulfilling those duties. Therefore, this Bill would ensure the duties apply consistently

across the country, making the legislation fairer for both drivers and wheelchair users.

Secondly, the requirement for Local Licencing Authorities to publish the lists would provide a valuable source of information for wheelchair users. It would enable them to make informed travel choices with the reassurance that the vehicles on a list have been specifically designated as wheelchair accessible, thereby providing reasonable confidence that the vehicle is fit for purpose to carry them whilst seated in their wheelchair.

Lord Mann raised the issue of disabled people's access to football stadiums. Football fans travel from far and wide, using a multitude of transport modes to watch the beautiful game in stadiums across the country. The government is committed to ensuring disabled passengers have the same access to transport as everyone else.

Recently, we have completed the 1,000th accessibility audit of railway station facilities out of our target to audit all 2,565 mainline stations in Great Britain. We are providing £2.2m to motorway service areas for installation of 59 Changing Places toilets, plus a further £450,000 for Changing Places toilets at other transport locations. Last month we completed another round of #WorldofDifference, part of the 'It's everyone's journey' communications campaign that aims to build disabled people's confidence to travel by creating a more considerate and supportive environment. These are just a few examples of the accessibility improvements we are working on across all modes of transport so that disabled people can go where they want to go – including travelling to and from football stadiums. Policy relating to disabled access to the stadiums themselves is led by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport.

Lord Boateng asked what the government is doing to ensure disabled people can access electric-vehicle (EV) chargepoints. The government is committed to ensuring the EV charging network works for all consumers. That is why the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) is partnering with national disability charity Motability to commission the British Standards Institution (BSI) to develop accessibility standards for public EV chargepoints across the country.

These standards will consider aspects such as kerb height, adequate space between bollards, and chargepoints being of a height suitable for wheelchair users. They will also consider chargepoints in the context of their surrounding built environment to ensure pedestrians and other road users' needs are reflected. On 30 March, BSI launched a draft of the standard for consultation, which closes on 4 May. This is available on the BSI website [here](#), under the reference 1899.

In addition, the Department sought views on introducing accessibility requirements at EV chargepoints in autumn 2021 as part of the Future of Transport Regulatory Review consultation. We will publish a response in 2022.

Lord Rosser asked for an update on the Disabled Persons Passenger Charter. On 10 January 2022, we announced that the government had joined with disability charity Scope to develop a new Disabled Passenger Charter by the end of this Parliament which will cover buses, coaches, taxis, Private Hire Vehicles, and rail.

The Charter will bring together a host of information for disabled passengers travelling across England, including advice for passengers on what to do when things do not go as expected. The Department has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Scope, which sets out how the Charter will be developed and that it will be published on GOV.UK.

I hope that my answers help to allay any concerns that noble Lords may have. This Bill has cross-party support and would make crucial amendments to the Equality Act 2010 so that any disabled person has specific rights and protections to access and travel in a taxi or Private Hire Vehicle.

I would also be happy to meet with Lord Borwick and Baroness Brinton, as well as other noble lords who may wish to join, to further discuss the issues raised. Please reach out to my office at Baroness.Vere_PUSS@dft.gov.uk to arrange. I also offered a meeting between Lord Boateng and Minister Harrison to discuss the issue of accessibility of EV chargers and charging points. Minister Harrison would be delighted to meet with him and any other noble lords to discuss this, her office can be contacted at Trudy.Harrison_MP@dft.gov.uk.

Thank you once again for your interest and scrutiny of this Bill. I will also be placing a copy of this letter in the Library of the House.

*Yours,
Charlotte*

BARONESS VERE OF NORBITON