



Department
for Transport

From the Parliamentary
Under Secretary of State
Nusrat Ghani MP

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Tel: XXXXXXXXXXXX
E-Mail: XXXXXXXXXXXXX

Web site: www.gov.uk/dft

Dear **[Name of Chief Executive]**,

The Inclusive Transport Strategy

I am writing to inform you that on 25th July I published the Government's Inclusive Transport Strategy. At the same time I published the Summary of Responses for the draft Accessibility Action Plan consultation, which ran from August until November last year.

It is my ambition that disabled people have the same access to transport and opportunities to travel as everyone else, irrespective of whether their impairment is visible or less visible. This Strategy sets out the Government's plan to make travel easier for disabled people and is a major step in the change I intend to deliver as Accessibility Minister.

The Strategy builds on the responses received to our consultation, with the actions and objectives reflecting the responses received from our stakeholders. Government will be delivering the Strategy in close partnership with the travelling public and a wide range of public and private sector bodies. The support of **[Name of Local Authority]** will be vital in ensuring the success of our work.

The Strategy's core objectives are:

- Raising awareness of passengers' rights and ensuring better enforcement of existing legislation;
- Improving the training that all transport services staff receive;
- Improving information provision before and during journeys;
- Planning physical infrastructure changes to enable disabled people; and
- Ensuring inclusive design for the technologies and business models of the future.

The Strategy covers a number of issues that I particularly want to bring to your attention. As you will be aware, the appearance of streets, and the way in which they function, has a significant impact on people's lives. Shared space is one approach to street design that has been introduced in some town centres in recent years. There are mixed views on the impact of shared space schemes, and many respondents to our consultation on the draft Accessibility Action Plan raised significant concerns about them. In particular, groups representing visually impaired people expressed concern that shared space schemes were difficult to navigate and left them feeling excluded. This particularly applied to schemes that included a 'level surface', in which the kerb between the road and the pavement is removed.

In recognition of these issues, we are therefore asking that your authority pause the introduction of new shared space schemes which incorporate a level surface, and which are at the design stage. This pause will allow us to carry out research and produce updated guidance. We have also suspended our guidance note Local Transport Note 1/11: Shared Space while this work takes place - the Department's website will be updated to reflect this.

I am absolutely clear that all public realm schemes should be inclusive and accessible and I hope that you will play your part by respecting our request to pause the introduction of new shared space schemes. Please direct any queries about this to our enquiry inbox at traffic.signs@dft.gov.uk.

I also wanted to write to you about the accessibility of any taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) services which your authority may be responsible for licensing. Such services play a vital role in helping disabled people to remain independent and to complete door-to-door journeys, yet all too often they are inaccessible to those who rely upon them. I want all licensing authorities to play their part in ensuring that the taxi and PHV services they support meet the needs of passengers wishing to use them, including:

- Publishing lists of taxis and PHVs designated as being "wheelchair accessible" for the purposes of Section 167 of the Equality Act 2010;
- Prosecuting drivers for discriminating against assistance dog owners and wheelchair users, where sufficient evidence exists to do so, and applying appropriate licensing sanctions;
- Reviewing the demand for wheelchair accessible taxis and PHVs in your area, and taking steps to ensure that the composition of fleets reflects this need; and
- Requiring all taxi and PHV drivers to complete disability awareness training.

I am clear that where authorities have the powers necessary to improve services for disabled passengers they should be using them, and I will write to all local licensing authorities later in the year to understand better the steps

they are taking to challenge discrimination and to support an inclusive service. If your authority is not responsible for licencing, then I would ask that you share this letter with the lower-tier authorities within your area so that they may consider these issues.

The Strategy also highlights our commitment to work with local authorities to identify solutions that address disabled people's access to hospital transport. This issue requires a coordinated approach, and so it is only in partnership with your authority that the Department will be able to deliver new solutions. Accordingly, we hope your authority will support the improvement of journeys to hospitals by actively considering the location of bus stops and routes when developing the next iteration of your local transport plan.

I'm sure that you will welcome our plans to make travel easier for disabled people, and hope that we will be able to work closely together to deliver on our ambitions on achieving a transport system that works for everyone.

NUSRAT GHANI