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Dear Caroline,

Thank you for your letter of 16 March 2021 following the Assembly's recent Transport Committee hearing. I appreciated the opportunity to attend, alongside Heidi and Will, to update you on Transport for London's (TfL) key priorities and take part in the stimulating discussion.

I appreciate you raising these concerns and I know that taxi and private hire drivers are at a significantly increased risk of COVID-19 infection and mortality. This is documented in a paper that was recently been published by the [Environmental Modelling Group \(EMG\)](#), which follows earlier studies by the [Office for National Statistics](#) and [Public Health England](#). I know that sadly some taxi and private hire drivers have lost their lives as a result of the pandemic and my thoughts are with their family and friends.

Throughout the pandemic TfL's Taxi and Private Hire team has provided extensive information, guidance and advice to licensees to keep them, and their passengers, as safe as possible. This has included regular meetings with trade representatives, providing advice on personal and vehicle hygiene, emphasising the importance of face coverings for both drivers and passengers and making available to licensees 1.5 million medical-grade face coverings and 30,000 bottles of Dettol hand sanitiser.

TfL also recognises the difficulties that some licensees are facing so have provided information and advice on [health and wellbeing](#), alongside the [financial support](#) that is available to those affected by the pandemic.

Our consistent advice has been that licensees should follow Government guidance and Public Health England advice, including taking appropriate steps if they present with COVID symptoms.

Turning to the recent Supreme Court judgment, which I know the Mayor has welcomed and has also encouraged all companies in London, including private hire operators, to pay their workers the London Living Wage, and to give them the security they deserve.

TfL, as the licensing authority and regulator of London's private hire services, is not able to stipulate the pay and conditions that operators should provide for drivers and those drivers have a clear legal recourse through the employment tribunals system if they consider an employer is not playing by the rules.

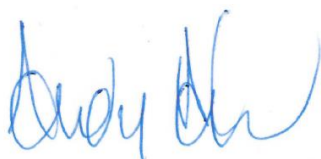
We have brought the Supreme Court's judgment to the attention of private hire licensees [<https://content.tfl.gov.uk/05-21-tph-notice-supreme-court-ruling.pdf>] and reminded operators that they are required to inform TfL of any material changes to their operating model which may affect their compliance with London legislation.

Turning to your point about the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission, I know my colleagues in Taxi and Private Hire speak with licensing authorities around the world. These conversations are useful, to share best practice and experiences of regulating a variety of services.

However, it is important to recognise that the legislative and regulatory regimes in London and New York differ greatly. To introduce some of the measures that are being used in New York would require a change to primary legislation – which is a matter for central Government.

Thank you for taking the time to write to me about these important issues.

Yours sincerely



Andy Byford