



Department for
Business, Innovation,
Science and Trade

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Dear Cristina,

Thank you for your correspondence of 22 July, regarding working conditions of private hire drivers and the government's employment status consultation. Thank you for your kind congratulations to the Secretary of State following his appointment, he has asked me to respond on his behalf.

Bogus self-employment and status timeline

We are unable to comment on individual circumstances or the working practices of individual companies, but are clear that bogus self-employment is unacceptable. Employers should never seek to deny people their employment rights and avoid their own legal obligations by claiming someone is self-employed when in reality they are not.

As you are aware, we plan to consult on employment status in due course. The consultation will seek to address issues with the framework which can enable worker exploitation and leave vulnerable workers, including some of those in the gig/platform economy, without core employment protections.

Algorithmic pay

Where individuals are classified as "workers" for employment law purposes, they are entitled to core employment rights, including the National Minimum Wage and paid annual leave. These rights are enforceable, and HMRC and the Fair Work Agency will not hesitate to take action where breaches occur. Employers must comply with these obligations, regardless of the business model they use or whether pay is calculated through dynamic, algorithmic or platform-based systems.

Account Deactivation

I recognise the issue you have raised of drivers having their accounts deactivated without the opportunity to appeal the decision. As you may be aware, the *Organise* Network previously raised concerns about the deactivation of Uber driver accounts with the Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade.

We previously raised these concerns with Uber, and Uber's General Manager provided a response indicating that their Review Centre is fully operational and offers a robust appeals process for drivers. I understand *Organise* dispute the accuracy of this information based on feedback from drivers they represent.

The Supreme Court ruling in 2021 established that Uber drivers have worker status with certain rights and protections under UK law. Should drivers believe these rights are being violated, the appropriate course of action would be to seek legal advice and pursue the matter through established legal channels.

Private Hire Vehicles

The government understands the important role that private hire vehicle drivers play in supporting and enabling people to travel in London. Research commissioned by the government and published in June last year by independent consultants highlights the extent of this role and the challenges for the introduction of self-driving passenger transport services. In continuing to develop the regulations, government will continue to engage with Trade Unions and provide opportunity to shape their development.

Before the deployment of any self-driving vehicle, all operators will be required to demonstrate their vehicles meet the required capability with a high bar for safety. No vehicles have currently been approved as self-driving or granted a permit to operate an automated passenger service. Local taxi and private hire vehicle licensing authorities also continue to have an important role in whether a permit can be granted for a passenger carrying service, where, for a service that resembles a private hire vehicle, a permit cannot be granted without the explicit consent of the appropriate authority. In London, this would require Transport for London to provide their consent for a private hire vehicle-like service.

The government announced its intention to enable early self-driving vehicle pilots in June 2025, following enactment of the Automated Vehicles Act 2024 in May 2024. This followed more than six years of policy development, beginning with the Law Commissions' review of automated vehicle legislation in 2018, and included extensive stakeholder engagement, public consultation and parliamentary scrutiny before the legislation was approved. Any pilots that are approved for deployment will be small-scale in their nature and help to build a greater understanding and awareness of their role in complementing existing transport provision. This is alongside the road safety benefits self-driving vehicles could bring, with 88% of accidents involving human error as a contributory factor.

As a part the of new Road Safety Strategy the government has committed to piloting a National Work-Related Road Safety Charter for those who ride or drive for work. This voluntary Charter is being developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders including road safety organisations and industry. The Charter will be influenced by existing road safety programs such as Driving for Better Business and encourage businesses to improve their road safety outcomes. Work on the Charter is ongoing following initial engagement sessions, with further details to follow in due course.

Best wishes,



KATE DEARDEN MP

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