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Written Answers to Questions

Monday 16 May 2011

Taxis: Disability

Caroline Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 relating to taxis, private hire vehicles and accessibility for disabled persons and assistance dogs to be implemented; and when he expects to launch his Department's consultation on the proportion of wheelchair accessible vehicles per local fleet that must be met before a licensing authority can refuse to grant a licence for a wheelchair accessible vehicle for the purpose of controlling taxi numbers. [53060]

Norman Baker [*holding answer 28 April 2011*]: The sections of the Equality Act 2010 which place duties on taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) drivers to carry assistance dogs came into force in October 2010.

Section 166, which allows taxi and PHV drivers to be exempt from the duties to assist passengers in wheelchairs for medical reasons, or under certain defined conditions, also came into force in October 2010.

We are currently considering the commencement strategy for sections 165 and 167 which deal with the imposition of the duties on taxi and PHV drivers to assist passengers in wheelchairs. We are also considering the commencement strategy for section 161 which qualifies local authorities' power to control taxi numbers. We will consult before making any regulations under this section, but we have not yet set a timetable for doing so.

The Department has no immediate plans to implement those sections of the Equality Act which are associated with a requirement for all taxis to meet certain accessibility standards.

