

TO: House of Commons Public Bill Committee  
CC: Mims Davies MP  
FROM: Lorraine Robertson, London Bus Driver (2004-2021, *Retired*)  
RE: Evidence Submission - Bus Services [No. 2] Bill  
DATE: 21 June 2025

1. I am a veteran female BAME London Bus Driver who retired after 17 years (2004-2021) who's been campaigning for improved Bus Driver Working Conditions in London for years. Members may know me as the Bus Driver whose April 2020 video where I ['pleaded with the Mayor of London'](#) to protect my co-workers from Covid-19 was seen [all over the world](#). The [trauma](#) of seeing [at least 76](#) of my Bus Driver colleagues die from Covid-19—most of whom became ill and died [after the March 2020 lockdown](#)—served as a catalyst for me [to go public](#) about the longstanding [abysmal working conditions](#) of London Bus Drivers that I am convinced made them [more susceptible](#) to the ravages of the virus when it hit and [continued to kill them](#) after the Government's delayed action. Time and time again, the public has been told that the Bus Services [No. 2] Bill will "put passengers first" so that they can benefit from the kind of Bus Services enjoyed by Bus Passengers in London, home of the United Kingdom's largest and longest running state-controlled Public Bus Operation.
2. It is my firm belief that giving Local Transport Authorities the right to Operate or Franchise Public Bus Services by applying the same Bus Timeliness and Availability Contract Performance Metrics enforced by TfL for decades will result in— as it has in London—
  - an excess number Deaths and Serious Injuries from preventable Bus Safety Incidents
  - degraded working conditions for Bus Drivers
  - at the Local Authority level, a lack of accountability for the public bus operation's management and monitoring of safety performance by Bus Companies

### **Timeliness is a Dangerous Measure Bus Operator Contract Performance**

3. In November 2024, [Transport Focus](#), the statutory Bus Passenger Lobbying Group published its ["Making great bus journeys"](#) investigation which, it would appear (a) *prefigured* the Government's oft-stated goals for this Bill—

"Passengers want their bus to turn up on time, without a long wait, and to reach their destination in good time mirroring the

expectation set in the timetable. Having a good experience at the bus stop/station environment while waiting, with accurate, ideally real-time information, to hand can make this a better experience.

Building on that experience to get from a good to a great journey are two further ingredients; having a friendly and helpful bus driver at the wheel and the experience on the bus (clean and comfortable vehicle).

Both play a larger role, although still secondary to timeliness."

and (b) *confirmed* what the London Assembly Transport Committee's ["Bus Services in London"](#) Investigation stated in 2013—

"Bus customer satisfaction directly affects how TfL operates the bus service. TfL reports that it measures the drivers of bus passenger satisfaction regularly and time-related factors are always dominant." (cf. fig. 11 in TfL, [Roads Task Force Thematic Analysis – Technical Note 7](#), 2013, p13)

### **TfL Bus Contracts: "Time is Money"**

4. While I fully appreciate that the Government's Bill intends to reverse decades of disinvestment in public Bus Services outside London, I think it is important that the Committee be made aware of the fact that, since the ["summer of 2001"](#) and in direct response to passenger preferences, Transport for London has been contracting London's Public Bus Service using a sole measure of performance—[Excess Waiting Time](#) or ["Headway"](#)—by which Bus Operators can only make a profit on their contracts with TfL if their buses, essentially, 'turn up on time' 'without a long wait' and 'reach their destination in good time mirroring the expectation in the timetable"—exactly what Transport Focus tells us UK Bus Passengers think is important and what the Governments says its Bill will catalyse Local Authorities to make happen.
5. In TfL Contracts, since ["Time is Money"](#) and the [cost of a London Bus Driver](#) ranges from 50 to 60 percent of the total costs of running a TfL Bus, any *time*—read "money"—saved from increased efficiency gains attributed to these time-contingent contracted financial incentives comes disproportionately out of the Bus Drivers pocket and also from *the time* the Driver is allowed to refresh and recover during ever-decreasing break and turnaround times. In London, Passenger

Satisfaction has been subsidised by degrading the Safe Working Conditions of London Bus Drivers.

## **Evidence of TfL Trading of Bus Driver Welfare Safeguards for Bus Timeliness**

6. It is imperative that this Bill *safeguard* Bus Drivers from the negative effects of "putting Passengers first", all of which is borne out by years of [TfL Bus Safety Performance Data](#) supplemented by years of [confidential testimony](#) from London Bus Drivers (cf. Appendix 1), from London Assembly [Transport Committee Investigations](#) and [London Bus Drivers](#) including me (Appendices 3-7).
7. In February 2017, London Bus Drivers participated in a private "Bus Driver Roundtable" with Members of the London Assembly Transport Committee (Appendix 1) where they highlighted the concerns they had about their awful working conditions and the causal factors responsible for them. Their concerns—Bus Driver Fatigue, Lack of Toilets, TfL and Bus Operator indifference to their Safety Reports, became key findings of the London Assembly's July 2017 ["Driven to Distraction" Bus Safety Investigation](#) (Appendix 2, attached), a landmark investigation whose [alarming findings](#) remain as urgent today because they were, by and large, [ignored](#) by the Mayor of London and TfL.
8. In December 2021, I gave [evidence](#) as a [veteran TfL Bus Driver](#) for the London Assembly Transport Committee's [Investigation](#) of the Mayor of London's Vision Zero Programme. The evidence I gave at that London Assembly Session can be found in Appendix 3. Members are asked to pay special attention to the evidence I gave about how [Bus Driver Fatigue](#) is both [endemic and unmitigated](#) and how the [complete disconnect](#) between TfL Bus Contract Timeliness Incentives and the [realities of Driving in London](#).
9. In January 2022, I provided [written evidence](#) to the Caroline Pidgeon AM, then Chair of the London Assembly Transport Committee (Appendix 4, attached) which advocated three actions to improve Bus Safety Performance and Bus Driver Working Conditions—
  - Investigate Bus Controller Instructions to Bus Drivers
  - Strip Unite the Union of its position as London's only recognised Bus Drivers' union.
  - Investigate London Buses' Safety Culture

I stand by these recommendations and would urge the Public Bills Committee to consider them within the context of the powers this Bill will extend to Local Transport Authorities about Public Bus Transport

and the safety competence of the people involved in overseeing it at the local level.

7. In August 2022, I submitted [written evidence](#) to the Siân Berry AM, then Chair of the London Assembly Transport Committee (Appendix 5, attached) which highlighted the critical lack of toilet facilities for Bus Drivers. In this evidence submission, I made two points:

- *TfL is Gaslighting the Assembly about Toilet Availability, because even the toilets TfL says are available to Bus Drivers aren't guaranteed.*
- *Lack of Toilet Dignity Disproportionally Discriminates against Women Bus Drivers*

I stand by these points and would urge the Public Bills Committee to consider them within the context of any further Safeguards for Bus Drivers that might be considered as amendments to this Bill. It is a fact that [1 in 4 Bus Routes in London lack toilet facilities](#) at one end for Bus Drivers, an inhumane situation that is entirely the responsibility of Transport for London.

8. In June 2024, encouraged by [Resolution 7](#) passed *unanimously* at [the RMT 80th Bus Workers National Industrial Organising Conference](#) in April 2023, I submitted a formal [request](#) to Elly Baker AM, Chair of the London Assembly Transport Committee (Appendix 6, attached) to investigate, specifically—

- 9.
- The Contradiction between TfL's Bus Contract Timeliness Incentives and Speed Limits;
  - TfL's Refusal to Require Independent Bus Crash Investigations;
  - TfL's Failure to conduct Risk and/or Human Factors Assessments of Bus Driver Working Conditions that are known to have a direct impact upon Safety Performance.

Although I never received an acknowledgement or response from the Committee Chair, I stand by my request and would urge the Public Bills Committee to consider the substance of the evidence provided in my unacknowledged request to the London Assembly Transport Committee. I believe it is irresponsible for this Government to advocate the London as a model for Local Transport Authorities without subjecting TfL to Parliamentary Scrutiny as to how TfL's "model" has affected Bus Driver Working Condition and their ability to perform their jobs safely and with duty of care.

9. In November 2024, I sent another [request](#) to Elly Baker AM, Chair of the London Assembly Transport Committee (Appendix 7, attached), alerting her to the 5 November 2024 London Bus Driver Bill of Rights [Protest](#) at TfL Headquarters and to remind her of what "Rights" we Bus Drivers were demanding that the Mayor of London write into TfL's Framework Bus Services Contract, i.e,
1. The Right to a safe work schedule without any forced overtime or loss of pay
  2. The Right to a decent and proper rest break in the working day
  3. The Right to drive a safe and well-maintained vehicle
  4. The Right to clean, serviced toilet and rest facilities on all bus routes
  5. The Right to report safety concerns without fear of retribution from TfL or employers
  6. The Right, when seriously ill and covered by a doctor's note, to not be harassed into coming into work until fit to do so
  7. The Right to relevant and timely safety training
  8. The Right to drive without being forced to answer radio messages and texts from Controllers whilst in motion
  9. The Right to have all company rules in writing and clearly displayed
  10. The Right to be treated with dignity and respect by our employers, TfL and the public
  11. The Right to Working Air Cooling in our cabs in the summer heat
  12. The Right to Working Heaters in our cabs in the cold of winter

Although I neither received an acknowledgment nor a response from Elly Baker AM, the important fact for this Committee to know is that the Mayor [rejected](#) inscribing these "Rights" into London's [stale](#)

[Framework Bus Services Contract](#) without [providing any evidence](#) to support his claim that we already had them.

## **Bill Urgently Requires 4 Bus Safety Amendments to Safeguard Bus Drivers and Public**

10. Applying the lessons learned Bus Drivers have learned from [London's well-evidenced painful experience](#), a group of London Bus Drivers and I cooperated with Lord Hampton to co-author 4 Amendments that he helpfully submitted to the Bus Services [No. 2] Bill while the Bill was being considered in the Lords.
  1. [Amendment 58. Confidential Safety Reporting \(Withdrawn\)](#) — that any Bus Operator running a Public Bus Service enabled by the Bill be subscribed to a Confidential Safety Reporting Scheme like CIRAS or its equivalents,
  2. [Amendment 59. Bus Safety Incident Reporting \(Not Moved\)](#) — that any Public Transport Authority ("PTA"/"LTA") taking control of its Public Bus Services through franchising or direct ownership will be obligated to publish data about the Safety Performance of those Bus Services every quarter.
  3. [Amendment 60. Bus Driver Hours \(Not Moved\)](#) — that the Working Hours of Bus Drivers should conform to those of UK Lorry Drivers.
  4. [Amendment 61. Safety Qualifications of Public Transport Authority Officials \(Not Moved\)](#) — that any Public Transport Authority Official made responsible for Franchising Public Bus Services under the Act will possess basic IOSH and/or NEBOSH certifications.
11. It is my understanding that after these Amendments were either withdrawn or not moved in the Lords, they have been re-submitted by Sian Berry MP as [Amendments NC4, NC5, NC6 and NC7](#) to be considered for inclusion into the Bill.
12. If Committee Members read my all the evidence I have submitted, I hope it will understand that the Government's stated goals of "putting Passengers first" will be an empty slogan if Bus Drivers' ability to perform their jobs safely and with duty of care is not the Bill's highest priority. It hasn't been TfL's priority since June 2001 and both Bus Drivers and members of the public have suffered loss of life and livelihoods at a much higher rate than would have been the case if Bus safety and safeguarding Bus Drivers—and *not Bus timeliness and availability*—had been TfL's first priority. While *Transport Focus* might consider the safety critical factors missing in TfL's Franchised Bus Operations that Bus Drivers have raised for years as "secondary to

timeliness", the lessons learned from London's ghastly experience are neatly encapsulated in these London-Bus-Driver-Originated 4 Amendments that the Commons *must include* to ensure that this Bill places lives and livelihoods of the Public and Bus Drivers are more important than political careers and bus company profits.

13. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or require additional evidence.

#### Attachments:

Appendix 1: London Assembly Transport Committee roundtable with bus drivers (Private Hearing - 9 February 2017)

Appendix 2: London Assembly - Driven to Distraction Bus Safety Investigation (July 2017)

Appendix 3: London Assembly Transport Committee –14 December 2021 Transcript of Vision Zero Discussion

Appendix 4: My Evidence Submission to London Assembly Transport Committee - Caroline Pidgeon, Chair (4 January 2022)

Appendix 5: My Evidence Submission to London Assembly Transport Committee - Siân Berry, Chair (20 August 2022)

Appendix 6 - My Letter to London Assembly Transport Committee - Elly Baker, Chair (24 June 2024)

Appendix 7- My Letter to London Assembly Transport Committee - Elly Baker, Chair (1 November 2024)