

# MAYOR OF LONDON

**Valerie Shawcross CBE AM**

City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
More London  
London SE1 2AA

**Our ref:** MGLA230915-5145

**Your ref:** VS/ke

**Date:** 29 OCT 2015

Dear Val

Thank you for your letter of 16 September about the current delays in processing Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) applications. I apologise for the delay in responding to you.

As we discussed at Mayor's Question Time on 16 September, I am fully aware of the delays currently being experienced and the impact they are having on licensed drivers and their families. The backlog of DBS applications is unacceptable and I have been discussing this as a priority with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) Commissioner, Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, for some months now.

I met with taxi trade representatives on 20 October at my Cabbies Cabinet and discussed this issue with them. I believe there may be a case for issuing temporary licences to out-of-work taxi drivers who are renewing their licence and have done so within good time. I have asked Transport for London (TfL) to look into this possibility and report back to me shortly.

TfL has also been working closely with the MPS to explore options to expedite the recruitment process. An agreement has been reached and six members of the TfL licensing team have joined the MPS team to undertake additional DBS checks. This will increase the number of checks that can be carried out while recruitment takes place. It also allows TfL to prioritise drivers in order of the date their previous licence expired, or is due to expire.

I believe this to be the most effective way of tackling the immediate issues that the MPS is facing. I am also confident that this approach will ensure that drivers are able to get back to work as soon as possible while ensuring that the interests of public safety are upheld.

In parallel, the MPS is taking urgent action to address this issue and are currently recruiting staff to fill the 20 vacancies in the team, as well as recruiting an evening team to address the backlog and provide future resilience.

To this end, I encourage all drivers to submit their DBS application as soon as possible after receiving it, as in the advice found in their renewal application packs. It is important that as much time as possible is given for their DBS application to be completed prior to their licence expiring.

# MAYOR OF LONDON

Thank you again for writing to me.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Boris', written in a cursive style.

**Boris Johnson**  
Mayor of London