



Department  
for Transport

From the Parliamentary  
Under Secretary of State  
**Richard Holden MP**

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Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee  
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15 November 2022

Dear *Edward,*

Thank you for your letter of 7 November, regarding the provision of wheelchairs on buses under the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000 (PSVAR).

PSVAR sets out the minimum accessibility requirements expected of public service vehicles, such as buses, carrying over twenty-two passengers on local or scheduled services. Wheelchair spaces on buses are permitted to be either forward or rearward-facing, but most service providers opt for buses with a rearward-facing wheelchair space.

The design of the rearward-facing wheelchair space, with upright poles, handrails and palm-press buttons required to be within easy reach of a wheelchair user when the wheelchair is securely positioned against a padded backrest, helps to prevent injuries to the wheelchair user as the vehicle moves. Forward-facing wheelchair space designs require additional tie-down systems attached to the wheelchair, as well as a suitable restraint, to provide a reasonable level of safety. A wheelchair user should not travel sideways on a vehicle as this is regarded as unsafe for the passenger.

Your letter asks about the current evidence base relating to wheelchair positioning on buses. The most relevant research is a report produced by TRL on behalf of the Department in 2003 which explores the safety of wheelchair users on road passenger vehicles, including wheelchair positioning on buses. The report is available at:  
[www.trl.co.uk/publications/misc8](http://www.trl.co.uk/publications/misc8)

The Department is committed to reviewing PSVAR by the end of 2023 and remains on track to achieve this. The Review will help the Department to understand the efficacy of the existing regulations and ensure that future decisions on accessibility standards are based on an up-to-date understanding of passenger need. To deliver the Review, the Department will run a Call for Evidence, which will provide an opportunity for interested parties, including wheelchair users and others who have petitioned against rearward-facing wheelchair spaces, to contribute their views on PSVAR.

Best wishes,

**MINISTER FOR ROADS AND LOCAL TRANSPORT**