

Automated passenger services permitting scheme: government response

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The safety of automated passenger services (APS) will be independently assessed, monitored and enforced to ensure they operate responsibly in the UK.

This statement provides an update on the government's work to enable the automated passenger services permitting scheme from this spring, a key step in implementing the Automated Vehicles Act 2024 and supporting economic growth through the safe deployment of self-driving technology.

I am pleased to inform the House that today (23 April 2026) the government is publishing its response to the automated passenger services (APS) permitting scheme consultation and laying the Automated Vehicles (Permits for Automated Passenger Services) Regulations 2026.

Automated passenger services represent one of the most significant transport innovations of our generation. When introduced safely and responsibly, they have the potential to transform how people move around the country, improving road safety, widening access to transport and supporting greener, more reliable journeys.

The APS permitting scheme establishes a dedicated licensing route for passenger-carrying automated services to operate on public roads. It was created by the Automated Vehicles Act 2024, a world-leading regulatory framework that sets out clear legal responsibilities, a robust safety framework and the regulatory powers necessary to support deployment while protecting the public.

Following consultation, one change has been made to the statutory instrument to increase the scope of data sharing to enable wider non-safety-related information to be shared with emergency responders, ensuring there is an awareness of how to interact with and respond to any incidents involving a permitted automated passenger service.

Safety will always be the government's highest priority. Automated passenger services will be required to meet stringent safety standards before they are permitted to operate, ensuring that passengers, other road users and the wider public are protected. This includes safeguarding considerations and a clear focus on the needs of vulnerable users. As services are introduced, safety will be independently assessed, monitored and enforced, giving the public confidence that these new services are operating responsibly.

The government is also committed to ensuring that automated passenger services support a more inclusive transport system. These services have the potential to widen travel choices and increase independence for disabled people and older passengers. To support this commitment, the Department for Transport is establishing the APS Accessibility Advisory Panel, a new non-statutory body that will provide advice on accessibility considerations and support the development of non-statutory guidance as services are deployed.

The APS permitting scheme is unlocking growth and significant economic opportunity. By providing businesses with the regulatory confidence to invest in deploying passenger-carrying automated vehicles, the government aims to support innovation, attract private investment and create high-skilled jobs, while strengthening local economies and improving access to essential services.

The government will continue to work closely with industry, local communities, user groups and

experts to ensure automated passenger services are introduced safely, inclusively and responsibly.

A copy of this publication will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses and published on GOV.UK.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/automated-passenger-services-permitting-scheme-government-response>