

This order sets out the conditions that apply to operators who have been granted special authorisation to use prescribed public service vehicles that do not fully comply with the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000.

You can find a list of the relevant operators and vehicles covered by the special authorisation on the [GOV.UK homepage for this order](#).



Department
for Transport

Equality Act 2010

Order of the Secretary of State under Section 178 of the Equality Act 2010

Order Reference	Valid from	Expires
SA/MTE26/01	11/08/2026	10/08/2030
Vehicles		
As listed at Annex B		

The Secretary of State for Transport, in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 178 of the Equality Act 2010, hereby authorises the use on roads, of the Prescribed Public Service Vehicles listed in this Order notwithstanding that the vehicles do not comply with the requirements of Schedules I and III to the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000, as amended, and subject to the conditions set out in this Order.

This Order gives Special Authorisation to the Prescribed Public Service Vehicles listed in Annex B to this Order, giving legal exemption granted under Section 178 of the Equality Act 2010 and is valid only when the conditions included in this Order are met.

The Special Authorisations remain the property of the Secretary of State for Transport and may be withdrawn at any time at the discretion of the Secretary of State.

Signed by the authority of the Secretary of State:

Issue Date: 11/08/2026

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Deputy Director
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Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000

Special Authorisation Conditions of Use

1. This Order gives Special Authorisation that exempts Prescribed Public Service Vehicles from Schedules I and III to the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000 (referenced hereafter as PSVAR), when they are providing Relevant Services.
2. Prescribed Public Service Vehicles are Public Service Vehicles identified at Annex B, which comply with the definition of a coach in the PSVAR at Part 1 (2) (1). A Special Authorisation is hereby ordered for each of the Prescribed Public Service Vehicles listed at Annex B and to which this Order applies.
3. A Relevant Service is a closed door home-to-school service that provides home-to-school transport for eligible passengers.
4. Eligible passengers are defined as a person:
 - a) receiving primary, secondary or further education or training at an educational establishment served by the service,
 - b) supervising or escorting any such person while they are using such transport or
 - c) involved with the provision of education or training at that establishment.
5. Each Special Authorisation is valid only when all the conditions specified in this Order are complied with by the operator of a Prescribed Public Service Vehicle, known hereafter as a Relevant Operator.
6. A Relevant Operator must not use a Prescribed Public Service Vehicle with a Special Authorisation to provide any service within scope of the PSVAR that is not a Relevant Service, unless it has become PSVAR compliant since the Special Authorisation was applied for.
7. A Special Authorisation will remain valid until its expiry date unless:
 - a) the Secretary of State for Transport withdraws the Order, which they may do at their sole discretion,
 - b) the operator of a Prescribed Public Service Vehicle fails to comply with any one of the conditions specified in this Order or
 - c) The Prescribed Public Service Vehicle is awarded an Accessibility or Approval Certificate under Sections 176 or 177 of the Equality Act 2010
8. The conditions of the Special Authorisations are:

Condition 1: Maintaining minimum fleet compliance

A Relevant Operator must maintain a minimum proportion of PSVAR compliant coaches within their overall coach fleet.

The applicable minimum proportion is a percentage calculated in accordance with Annex A to this Order and prescribed alongside the details of each Prescribed Public Service Vehicle identified at Annex B to this Order. It will be fixed for each Relevant Operator for the duration of the Special Authorisations applied to each of the Prescribed Public Service Vehicles for which they are responsible.

Condition 2: A PSVAR compliant coach must be provided upon request

The operator of a Prescribed Public Service Vehicle that receives a valid request must:

- provide a PSVAR-compliant coach if one is available within their overall fleet,
- not charge nor propose to charge more to provide a PSVAR compliant coach than they would to provide a non-compliant coach
and
- fulfil the request within two calendar months.

A request is valid if it is made by a commissioner of a Relevant Service:

- such as a local authority, school or organiser of the service or if it is provided of the Relevant Operator's own volition by, or on behalf of, a prospective passenger,
- for a coach carrying more than 22 passengers in addition to the driver, for a Relevant Service,
- to carry an eligible passenger who cannot travel safely or comfortably without the accessibility features provided on a PSVAR compliant coach. Eligible passengers are listed at paragraph 4 (a) to (c) to this Order.

A coach is considered to be available if it is:

- owned or leased by the operator,
- not already procured or committed to provide another Relevant Service in response to another valid request.

If a Relevant Operator is running a Relevant Service using a Prescribed Public Service Vehicle, which remains non-compliant with PSVAR, they must ensure eligible passengers who need the accessibility features that are only present on a PSVAR compliant coach, are still able to travel. How this is delivered depends on who arranged the service. If a third party arranged the service, such as a council or school, the Relevant Operator must obtain and retain written confirmation from the third party that they will provide suitable alternative accessible transport.

If a Relevant Operator arranged the service, they must:

- offer to or provide, alternative accessible transport
and
- retain records showing that they did this.

Condition 3: New coaches must be PSVAR enabled

From 1 February 2027, any service operated by a Relevant Operator must be operated using a PSVAR enabled vehicle where the vehicle operating that service is a coach designed to carry more than 22 passengers in addition to the driver and where:

- the Relevant Operator is the first Registered Keeper of that Prescribed Public Service Vehicle and either the vehicle:
 - is first registered on or after 1 February 2027

- or
- pre-registered from 10 August 2026 but not delivered to the Relevant Operator until 1 February 2027 or later.

PSVAR enabled means that a coach:

- complies with the requirements of PSVAR Schedules I and III, except for the excluded requirements listed below and
- is capable of having excluded equipment installed easily and without major structural changes to the vehicle in order to comply with PSVAR in full.

The excluded requirements are:

- Installation of boarding lifts:
 - Excluded PSVAR requirement: Schedule I (5) (1) requiring the fitting of a boarding ramp or lift or the carrying of at least one portable ramp.
 - Applicable to coaches where any wheelchair space cannot be accessed by wheelchair users using only a fixed or portable boarding ramp.
- Installation of external destination and route number displays:
 - Excluded PSVAR requirement: Schedule III (7) (1) requiring the installation of destination and route number displays on the outside of the vehicle.
 - Applicable to all PSVAR enabled vehicles.

PSVAR enabled coaches must still be equipped with, or carry, a boarding ramp where all of the on board wheelchair spaces can be reached without use of a boarding lift in accordance with PSVAR Schedule I (5) (1) on the provision of boarding lifts and ramps (such as where wheelchair spaces are provided on the lower deck of a double or inter-deck coach).

Condition 3 does not apply where the new coach is:

- an off-road vehicle within the meaning of paragraph 4 of Annex 2A to Council Directive 70/156/EEC of 6 February 1970,
- a vehicle operated under Section 19 of the Transport Act 1985 (community transport vehicles),
- a secure vehicle for the transport of persons, including prisoners,
- a vehicle specifically designed for transporting injured or sick persons,
- a vehicle used by, or for the purposes of, a Minister of the Crown or a Government Department or in the service of a visiting force or headquarters,
- a vehicle first used by the Ministry of Defence before 1 February 2027 or for a period of at least one calendar month beginning on or after the 1 February 2027, prior to being registered by a Relevant Operator,
- a vehicle operated under a long-term private hire arrangement booked by one customer for a continuous period of at least 1 month,
- a specialist touring vehicle, such as for bands or elite sports teams that:
 - has a non-standard layout, such as seats around tables or provision of sleeping accommodation for passengers,
 - has at least 20% fewer seats than a vehicle of its capacity would usually be equipped with,
 - is permanently equipped with built in facilities like a kitchen with at least an oven and hob (excluding microwave ovens).

Condition 4: Providing coach fleet data to the Secretary of State for Transport

A Relevant Operator must provide a full and accurate response to any request from the Department for Transport or the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency for data concerning their coach fleet. A Relevant Operator must respond to a request within the specified timeframe and provide responses which they reasonably believe to be true.

Compliance

This Order supersedes any Orders previously issued in relation to Special Authorisations granting exemptions from the PSVAR.

The failure by a Relevant Operator to comply with the conditions set out in this Order will be treated as non-compliance with PSVAR and will render any Special Authorisation applicable to their Prescribed Public Service Vehicles invalid and leave the Relevant Operator subject to enforcement action.

Annex A: Calculation of Minimum Fleet Proportion

The minimum fleet proportion (percentage) is calculated as the higher of:

- a) the combined total of PSVAR compliant coaches operated on home-to-school and rail replacement services as of 1 May 2026, expressed as a percentage of their total coach fleet
or
- b) the combined total of PSVAR compliant coaches the operator was required to operate on home-to-school and rail replacement services as of 1 May 2026, by the terms of the original Medium Term Exemption scheme, expressed as a percentage of the total coach fleet.

The combined home-to-school and rail replacement coach fleet excludes any vehicles which are not coaches or which are not subject to PSVAR.

The previous Medium Term Exemptions scheme that ended on 31 July 2026, used the calculations in the table below to determine how many of an operator's home-to-school and rail replacement coaches should have been PSVAR-compliant.

Number of coaches in home-to-school and rail replacement fleet	Number of coaches or percentage of coaches required to be PSVAR compliant in home-to-school and rail replacement fleet
1 – 5	1 compliant coach
6 - 9	2 compliant coaches
10 – 29	25% compliant coaches
30 or more	35% compliant coaches

Explanatory Notes

In calculating the total number of coaches used to provide home-to-school and rail replacement services, only coaches designed to carry over twenty two passengers in addition to the driver and otherwise within scope of PSVAR are counted.

In calculating the total coach fleet, only coaches designed to carry over twenty two passengers in addition to the driver are counted.

Compliant or fully compliant refers to a vehicle that complies with all paragraphs of Schedule I and Schedule iii of the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000. Schedule I concerns facilities for wheelchair users and schedule III concerns other accessibility features.

A coach should be considered as compliant with PSVAR only if it has been issued with either an Accessibility Certificate or Approval Certificate under Section 176 or Section 177 of the Equality Act 2010.

Calculation examples

Example 1: Met the previous exemption scheme requirement.

- Home-to-school and rail replacement fleet: 5 coaches
- Required: 1 compliant coach
- The operator had: 1 compliant coach
- Total fleet: 10 coaches
- Minimum proportion for the new exemptions: $1 \div 10 = 10\%$ minimum

Example 2: Exceeded the previous exemption scheme requirement.

- Home-to-school and rail replacement fleet: 5 coaches
- Required: 1 compliant coach
- The operator had: 2 compliant coaches
- Total fleet: 10 coaches
- Minimum proportion for the new exemptions: $2 \div 10 = 20\%$ minimum

Example 3: Did not meet the previous exemption scheme requirement.

- Home-to-school and rail replacement fleet: 10 coaches
- Required: 25% compliant coaches = 3 (rounded up)
- The operator had: 1 compliant coach
- Total fleet: 20 coaches
- Minimum proportion for the new exemptions: $3 \div 20 = 15\%$ minimum