

PE2078/C: Introduce mandatory licencing and inspection of private ambulance service providers

Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care written submission, 26 March 2025

Thank you for your letter on 26 February 2025 regarding the Petition [PE2078](#), which calls for an introduction of mandatory licencing and inspection of private ambulance service providers.

In my previous response to the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee on 13 June 2024, I noted the need for engagement and public consultation in order to ensure the scope of regulation is right for the whole sector.

The engagement with Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) and scoping relevant stakeholders began last year (2024). However, due to the commencement of HIS' functions in relation to independent medical agencies, as well the widening out of the definition of independent clinics to include those provided by registered pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, and the ongoing work to bring forward further regulation of non-surgical cosmetic procedures, further work on private ambulance services was paused.

I have asked my officials to convene with HIS and commence engagement with other relevant stakeholders in 2025, to consider the definition of independent ambulance services in the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978, and how that relates to first aid services. Any amendment to that definition will require public consultation. This work is required to ensure any regulation adequately reflects services today and in the future.

If the engagement with relevant stakeholders and HIS suggests that the definition should be amended, plans would be made to have a public consultation. This would be necessary before laying any Scottish Statutory Instrument to make that amendment during 2026-2027 (after the Scottish Parliamentary elections).

I acknowledge that this defers the legislative work until the next Parliamentary session. It does, however, allow for full engagement with stakeholders and public consultation to bring forward robust proposals for proportionate regulation of the whole sector, addressing the wider concern.

I hope you find my response helpful and informative and that it provides the Committee the further information you requested.

Yours sincerely

NEIL GRAY MSP