

## **Briefing for the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee on PE1960: Formally recognise private hire cars and taxis as modes of public transport, submitted by Edward Grice on behalf of the Scottish Private Hire Association (SPHA)**

### **Background**

There is no statutory definition of “public transport”, although the term “public passenger transport service” is used in statutes including the Transport Act 1985, which defines these as:

“all those services on which members of the public rely for getting from place to place, when not relying on private facilities of their own, including school transport but not—

- (i) services provided under permits under section 19 of this Act, other than services provided wholly or mainly to meet the needs of members of the public who are elderly or disabled; or
- (ii) excursions or tours”

Permits issued under Section 19 of the Transport Act 1985 allow educational or other bodies to operate buses to carry students/members on a not-for-profit basis without the need to obtain a public service vehicle operator or private hire vehicle licence.

Typically, in Scotland the term “public transport” applies to local bus, coach, rail, tram, and subway services operating on fixed routes and timetables that are available to all members of the public on payment of a pre-defined fare.

Taxis and private hire cars provide a point-to-point, on-demand service. They do not operate to fixed routes or timetables. Passengers effectively hire the vehicle and driver for a self-defined journey.

The UK Government Office for Science commissioned research into [Taxis and private hire vehicles in the UK transport system](#), which sets out details of the role played by taxis and private hire cars in meeting people’s transport needs.

## **Scottish Government Action**

The Scottish Government has not previously considered creating a statutory definition of taxis services as public transport.

## **Scottish Parliament Action**

The Scottish Parliament has not previously considered the definition of taxi services as public transport.

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16 August 2022

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Published by the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe), an office of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP