

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee
Wednesday 14 January 2026
1st Meeting, 2026 (Session 6)

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

Introduction

Petitioner Ryan McNaughton

Petition summary Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to create a new body responsible for the inspection, assessment and licensing of private ambulance service providers or encompass the clinical governance management of private companies in Scotland into Healthcare Improvement Scotland.

Webpage <https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE2078>

1. [The Committee last considered this petition at its meeting on 19 February 2025.](#) At that meeting, the Committee agreed to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, and to invite the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care to give evidence on the petition at a future meeting once a response has been received.
2. The petition summary is included in **Annexe A** and the Official Report of the Committee's last consideration of this petition is at **Annexe B**.
3. The Committee has received a new written submission from the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care which is set out in **Annexe C**.
4. [Written submissions received prior to the Committee's last consideration can be found on the petition's webpage.](#)
5. [Further background information about this petition can be found in the SPICe briefing](#) for this petition.
6. [The Scottish Government gave its initial response to the petition on 20 February 2024.](#)
7. Every petition collects signatures while it remains under consideration. At the time of writing, 36 signatures have been received on this petition.
8. [At its meeting on 24 September 2025, the Committee took evidence on thematic healthcare issues](#) that have been raised in multiple petitions, including this petition.

Action

9. The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take.

Clerks to the Committee
January 2026

Annexe A: Summary of petition

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

Petitioner

Ryan McNaughton

Date Lodged

11 January 2024

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to create a new body responsible for the inspection, assessment and licensing of private ambulance service providers or encompass the clinical governance management of private companies in Scotland into Healthcare Improvement Scotland.

Previous action

I have raised this issue with Katy Clark MSP, who wrote to (then Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care and now First Minister) Humza Yousaf MSP who responded by stating a belief that private event first aid and ambulance companies are regulated in Scotland, a response which is completely inaccurate, as there is no clinical governance of private ambulance services.

A letter is being drafted to Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care.

Background information

Each year in Scotland, hundreds of thousands of people attend various different events, from small local community gala days to large national music festivals and sporting events held throughout Scotland. Each of these events has a minimum level of immediate first aid and ambulance service provision which they are required to have to ensure the safety of patrons, staff, and competitors.

These private companies, however, are not required to register with any clinical governance organisation, adhere to any rules or be subjected to any form of assessment or inspection. I worked in this industry and have significant concerns about practice. Contrary to the requirements in England, which require private ambulance service providers to be registered with the Care Quality Commission which carries out a number of assessments and inspections to ensure the suitability of these registered companies.

Each year in Scotland, the attendees of these events are put at risk by companies with no clinical oversight or governance.

Annexe B: Extract from Official Report of last consideration of PE2078 on 19 February 2025

The Convener: We move to petition PE2078, which was lodged by Ryan McNaughton and calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to create a new body to be responsible for the inspection, assessment and licensing of private ambulance service providers, or to encompass the clinical governance management of service companies in Scotland into Healthcare Improvement Scotland. We last considered the petition at our meeting on 1 May 2024, when we agreed to write to the Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care.

Members will recall that we heard that, although the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 covers independent ambulance services, Healthcare Improvement Scotland confirmed that regulation of those services had not yet commenced, which means that HIS is unable to undertake any regulatory activity in relation to them. The Scottish Government's initial response to the petition stated that it would prioritise the commencement of HIS's functions in relation to the regulation of independent ambulance service provision.

In his written submission to the committee, the cabinet secretary recognises that, although private ambulance services must comply with Health and Safety Executive responsibilities, the broader regulatory framework does not currently offer adequate assurance. The cabinet secretary states that officials are engaging with HIS on regulation of independent ambulances and that the next steps include stakeholder engagement and a public consultation, but he is unable to confirm a timeline for when provisions will be in place.

Do colleagues have any suggestions about how we might proceed?

Maurice Golden: Particularly at this point in the parliamentary session, it is unacceptable not to have a timeline in place. We should write to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care to highlight the time that has elapsed; request an update and a timeline for the Scottish Government's work, including the stakeholder engagement and public consultation; and, critically, ask whether that will be concluded in the current session. Perhaps we could consider inviting the cabinet secretary to give evidence on the petition at a future meeting.

The Convener: Are colleagues content?

Members *indicated agreement.*

Annexe C: Written submission

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

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

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