

Briefing for the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee on petition PE2078: [Introduce mandatory licencing and inspection of private ambulance service providers](#), lodged by Ryan McNaughton.

Brief overview of issues raised by the petition

The petition calls 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.

Background

The regulation of independent healthcare in Scotland is overseen by [Healthcare Improvement Scotland](#) (HIS).

[The Public Services Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) includes independent ambulance services in the definition of independent health care service. The Act sets out that Scottish Ministers may prepare and publish standards and outcomes applicable to independent health care services and HIS may inspect any independent health care service.

However, HIS has confirmed¹ that at present while independent ambulance services sits in the statutes as a type of independent healthcare service, regulation of these has not been commenced. In the light of this, HIS is unable to undertake any regulatory activity in respect of this type of service.

[HIS currently regulates](#) independent healthcare (IHC) services, including:

- independent hospitals
- private psychiatric hospitals
- independent hospices, and
- independent clinics

Scottish Government action

¹ Personal correspondence – 20 February 2024

In January 2005, the Scottish Executive published a [consultation paper on the Regulation of Independent Ambulance Services](#). Responses to the consultation paper were invited from various organisations and individuals on whether they felt that independent ambulance services should be added to the list of services regulated under the Care Act by the Care Commission.

In [response to a FOI request](#) correspondence from the Scottish Government, in 2018, stated:

“At present, as you are aware, Healthcare Improvement Scotland has no regulatory functions in respect of independent ambulance services. However, the Scottish Government is committed to ensuring that all independent healthcare providers are adequately regulated. It is our plan that independent ambulances will be included in this future programme of work and, when this work is being taken forward, views will be sought from stakeholders and providers. Unfortunately, we are unable to provide timescales for this work at the present time”

Scottish Parliament action

In 2012, the Scottish Executive was asked: “[when it plans to introduce legislation regarding the regulation of independent ambulance services?](#)”.

The answer given was:

“The power to regulate independent ambulance services is included in the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010. Decisions on commencement of the provision relating to independent ambulance services will be made following the completion of a wider piece of work on the future scope of independent healthcare regulation (which is expected to be completed by autumn 2012).”

Lizzy Burgess
Health and Social Care Team, SPICe Research

20/02/2024

The purpose of this briefing is to provide a brief overview of issues raised by the petition. SPICe research specialists are not able to discuss the content of petition briefings with petitioners or other members of the public. However, if you have any comments on any petition briefing you can email us at spice@parliament.scot

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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