

Briefing for the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee on petition [PE2140: Introduce a parking badge for pregnant women, lodged](#) by James Bruce

Brief overview of issues raised by the petition

The petitioner is:

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to introduce a new parking badge to assist women being able to get in and out their cars while they are pregnant, and for the initial months after their pregnancy.

The focus of this appears to be on private car parks, rather than parking on public roads.

Blue Badge Scheme

There is an existing scheme of issuing parking badges for disabled drivers or passengers – the Blue Badge Scheme.

The Blue Badge Scheme supports disabled people to access parking bays situated closer to where they want to go. It operates UK wide and is administered by local authorities. It mainly applies to on-street parking.

Administration of the Blue Badge Scheme is devolved to the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Ministers have the power to define and amend the eligibility criteria for badges.

[Transport Scotland](#) is responsible for the legislation setting out the framework for the scheme and provides support to local authorities.

The key regulations for Scotland are in the [Disabled Persons \(Badges for Motor Vehicles\) \(Scotland\) 2000/59](#), as amended, under Section 21 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970.

Off-street car parks

The Blue Badge scheme does not generally apply in off-street car parks (private car parks), such as supermarkets. However, parking spaces for disabled people should be provided under the Equality Act 2010 because service providers have a duty to

make 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled people in order for them to access their service. It would be up to the car park owner whether Blue Badge holders can park free of charge and whether to enforce the use of disabled parking spaces.

How are private car parks managed?

Private car parks are managed by the owner of the private land, such as a supermarket, or a company employed to manage the car park.

If a person parks in a private car park without permission, or breaches parking conditions, then a parking ticket might be issued. This is called a Parking Charge Notice.

When a person parks in a private car park, they are entering a contract with the landowner. There are usually signs displaying the rules of parking and terms of the contract. The owner can enforce these rules if they are broken.

Issuing parking tickets in private car parks is an unregulated business. However, some operators are members of an accredited trade association (ATA):

- [British Parking Association](#) – see Code of Practice
- [International Parking Community](#) – see Code of Practice.

From June 2024, both ATAs (the BPA and IPC) adopted a [Single Code of Practice](#) for their members to adhere to.

The Code permits a period of transition where members will be required to meet the new standards in full by December 2026. All signage must be compliant with the Code for all new sites and locations from October 2024.

Nothing in the Code references pregnant drivers, or indeed parents of young children or family parking spaces.

The Code does reference disabled motorists and the Blue Badge Scheme.

[Transport Scotland has a briefing on parking](#), which notes that in private car parks “it is up to private companies to decide how to lawfully manage their operations.”

Parent and child parking bays

Private car parks often have several parent and child parking bays, e.g. at a supermarket car park. These parking bays are wider than standard parking bays, to allow parents more space to move in and out of their cars. There is usually signage indicating these parking bays are for parents with young children. These parking bays are often found closer to the shop entrance than standard bays. They are generally reserved for parents/guardians with a child or children under the age of 12.

However, [information from the RAC](#) suggests it is unclear whether such bays can be used by pregnant women and that it is “probably best to ask an individual store manager what their rules are.”

It is not illegal to park in a parent and child bay without a child present, but the car park owner could issue the driver with a Parking Charge Notice.

Advice to pregnant women

Some organisations do provide advice to pregnant women, in terms of where they can park in private car parks.

For example, the [Go Girl car insurance company](#) published a blog on [Parents and Child Parking – can you use them while pregnant?](#) (2019). It advises that:

“...the fact is, heavily pregnant women need extra room to manoeuvre. And if it’s painful to walk, being able to park closer to the store can be a massive help.

The experts at both [Mumsnet](#) and [Money Saving Expert](#) agree: If you’re heavily pregnant, and you need to park in a parent and child space, then you should do it.”

The insurance company Aegas provides similar advice in its article: [Parent and Child Parking Spaces: Q&A](#).

Petitions in the UK Parliament

A range of similar petitions have been submitted to the UK Parliament, including:

- [Make it illegal to park in Parent and Child parking spaces if you are not pregnant or have no accompanying children under the age of 12](#) – received 5 signatures before being closed after 6 months, on 20 June 2013.
- [Pregnant women should be given blue parking badges for final months](#) – received 13 signatures before being closed after 6 months, on 8 May 2013.
- [Introduce proof of entitlement to park in parent and child spaces](#) - received 7 signatures before being closed after 6 months, on 8 August 2012.

These petitions did not receive enough signatures for any action to be taken. Petitions in the UK Parliament require 10,000 signatures to get a response from the UK Government, and 100,000 signatures to be considered for a debate in the Parliament.

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21 February 2025

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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