

Briefing for the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee on petition PE2209: Make CCTV mandatory in all taxis and private hire vehicles, lodged by Joanna Kerr

Brief overview of issues raised by the petition

Taxi and private hire car licensing in Scotland: Taxis and private hire cars are licensed under the provisions of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982, as amended. The administration of the licensing regime is carried out by Scotland's 32 local authorities, in their role as licensing authorities.

Licensing authorities have broad discretion over the types of vehicles they can license for use as taxis or private hire cars, including the ability to set conditions on the type of onboard equipment that can be installed and how it can be used. This includes the ability to specify requirements relating to onboard CCTV cameras, e.g. [the City of Edinburgh Council](#) attach conditions to all Edinburgh taxi licenses requiring its approval before a CCTV system can be installed. The Council's licensing conditions specify technical requirements that must be met by any CCTV system for it to receive approval.

Paragraphs 5.13 to 5.20 of the Scottish Government's [Taxi and private hire car licensing: guidance - third edition](#), published in May 2023, provides advice to licensing authorities and taxi operators on the installation and use of onboard CCTV cameras.

The Casey Audit: Chapter 7 of the final report of the [National Audit on Group-based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#), referred to by the petitioners as "the Casey Audit" and published in December 2025, deals with issues around taxi licensing. The remit of this audit extended to England and Wales only. The taxi licensing chapter summary states:

- As a key part of the nighttime economy, taxis have historically been identified as a way children can be at risk of sexual exploitation.
- Local authorities issue taxi licences in line with statutory guidance issued by the government. Some go above and beyond this statutory guidance as a means of combating child sexual exploitation but they are being hindered by a lack of stringency in other local authorities, and legal loopholes which mean drivers can apply for a licence anywhere in the country.
- Proper safeguards in the licensing of taxis is as much about protecting the drivers as the passengers.
- The Department for Transport should close this loophole immediately and introduce more rigorous standards.

It goes on to highlight changes made to taxi licensing requirements adopted by Rotherham Borough Council following high profile investigations into child sexual exploitation in their area, including the “Introduction of taxi cameras which must be capable of capturing every passenger and driver from the chest upwards.”

It is worth noting that in Scotland it is an offence for a taxi or private hire car driver to ply for trade in an area for which they do not have a licence, although they can provide pre-booked trips that either start or end outside the area for which they are licensed – such as taking passengers to or from an airport located in a different licensing authority area.

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9 January 2025

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