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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref EH/00943/14
David Stewart
Convener of the Committee

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Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of 12 March regarding the considerations of the Scottish Parliament's Public Petitions Committee in relation to school bus safety.

We have done much work in recent years to try and improve school transport for children and young people. We requested the power to be able to legislate in relation to safety on school buses, particularly with regard to seat belts and other safety/security devices such as flashing lights, CCTV, the introduction of specific driver training and the establishment of escorts on buses.

The Department for Transport's main concern during negotiations was that we did not legislate in the area of technical standards of vehicles. We were therefore permitted to regulate the description of motor vehicles that may be used for learner transport, except for the setting of technical standards for construction or equipment of motor vehicles which differ from the standards that would or might otherwise apply to them.

This has allowed the Welsh Government to legislate so as to provide that from 1st October 2014 any bus contracted for school transport must have a seatbelt fitted to every passenger seat. It has also enabled us to regulate so as to:

- provide CCTV on buses
- to ensure that only vehicles which fit specific descriptions are used- to require safety risk assessments are carried out
- to require drivers to undertake specific training
- to place escorts on buses

The Safety on Learner Transport (Wales) Measure 2011 can be viewed at:
http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-legislation/bus-leg-measures/bus_legislation_measure_learnertransport.htm