



Department  
for Transport

From the Secretary of State  
**Rt. Hon Mark Harper MP**

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Web site: [www.gov.uk/dft](http://www.gov.uk/dft)

Mr James Bennett  
Area Coroner for Birmingham and Solihull  
50 Newton Street,  
Birmingham B4 6NE

4 September 2023

Dear Mr Bennett,

I was very sorry to hear of Mustafa Nadeem's tragic death and would like to thank you for your investigation and the issues you have highlighted in your report. I am writing to address the concerns you have raised about children accessing rental e-scooters illegally, which were: the effectiveness of current precautions; age and identity checks; and the use of children's bank accounts to make payments. I will take each of these in turn.

I note your comments about the effectiveness of current precautions in preventing children from (illegally) hiring e-scooters, but it is important to acknowledge the steps that e-scooter rental operators have already taken to discourage under-age riding. These vary across the 23 trial areas and include but are not limited to: in-app safety pop-ups and quizzes to ensure awareness of the rules; in-person safety events and training sessions, some held in partnership with the local police; foot patrols by the operator across the trial area; reviews of the location of parking bays; and advertising the rules beyond the app and website, for example in newspapers, on advertising boards, and through the use of stickers on the e-scooter itself.

My officials will encourage all operators to continue these additional measures and good practice being developed to help deter under-age riding. It is also important to acknowledge that anyone trying to access an e-scooter illegally, including without a valid driving licence, is committing an offence. I welcome and strongly encourage enforcement of the rules. My officials have been in contact with the police during trials, and local authorities are speaking to police forces in their areas.

I note your concern that the Department's guidance does not require operators to undertake age or identity checks when an account is transferred to a new device. I have reflected on the current guidance issued to local authorities and trial operators regarding licence checking and verification

procedures and concluded the minimum standards required from operators should be strengthened to further discourage illegal use.

Anyone with a full or provisional driving licence can use a trial e-scooter. The Department's current guidance to operators and local authorities makes it a requirement for the licence details of users to be 'captured by operators' and asks operators to confirm what information, to identify users, they will provide to the police if requested. This should, as a minimum standard, include the name and driving licence details of the driver.

The Department will issue updated guidance as soon as possible, and ask all operators to confirm that they are meeting the new minimum requirements no later than two months following publication. As a minimum standard for licence checking, the updated guidance will require all new users registered after the updated guidance comes into force, and all existing active users, to provide their name and licence number and submit a photograph of the front of the licence. These details will need to be stored by the operator so they can be shared with the police if necessary. Licence checking software, or customer service team checks, will also need to be used to check licence validity. The Department understands that the majority of e-scooter operators use third party software to verify licence details. The Department is not involved in the procurement or management of this software, but whatever system is used must be robust. All operators must also ensure they have in-app messaging that states the rules clearly, including the age limit for the trial, and the rule that the person riding the e-scooter must hold a valid driving licence.

In the meantime, officials will write to all local authorities and e-scooter rental operators involved in the trials to notify them of an increase in the minimum standards expected, both for checking and validating licences.

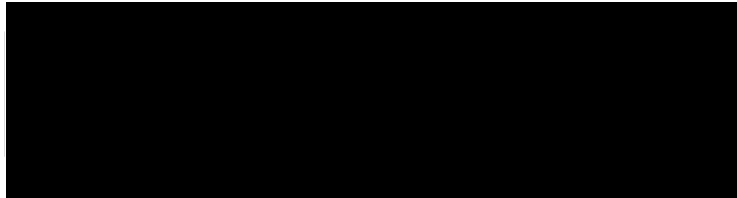
In addition to the minimum standards, officials will work with trial operators to gather and disseminate examples of additional measures that could further discourage under-age riding, with the aim of raising standards across the industry. I understand that these measures could include a selfie to confirm identity, additional selfie checks when a user switches an account to a new device and at random times when the account is in use, and liveness checks to ensure the selfie is not a photograph or recording.

You also raised a concern that operators have no ability to detect if a child's bank account is being used to pay for rides. An initial review by officials suggests there are currently no systems that would allow a bank to share, with an operator, details of the type of account used to make a payment. This is not a system in use when purchasing other age restricted products and services, but I agree it could be useful in preventing under-age access to e-scooters and have asked my officials to work with operators to understand if

anything more could be done to alert them to attempts by under-age riders to gain access to e-scooters.

The trials are designed to assess the safety of e-scooters and their wider impacts, and while they are running, we will keep the guidance under review. The Government continues to consider options for future regulation of e-scooters. Any future regulatory changes require completing an impact assessment, equalities assessment and a public consultation. The latter will provide an opportunity for interested parties to shape the new regime before any regulations are introduced. In the meantime, current regulations for e-scooters still apply, and private e-scooters remain illegal to use on public roads.

Yours sincerely,



**Rt Hon Mark Harper MP**

**SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT**