



Department
for Transport

The Automated Passenger Services (APS) Permitting Scheme and the Wider Regulatory Framework

**The Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CCAV)
September 2026**

OFFICIAL

Automated Vehicles Act Regulatory Framework

Elena Gillies, Head of Automated Vehicles Act Implementation, CCAV

Context: enabling AVs

Automated Vehicles Act 2024 receives Royal Assent

Regulatory framework for AVs is fully implemented

Second Half of 2027

2024-2027

2024

2022

Connected & Automated Mobility 2025: Realising the benefits of self-driving vehicles in the UK

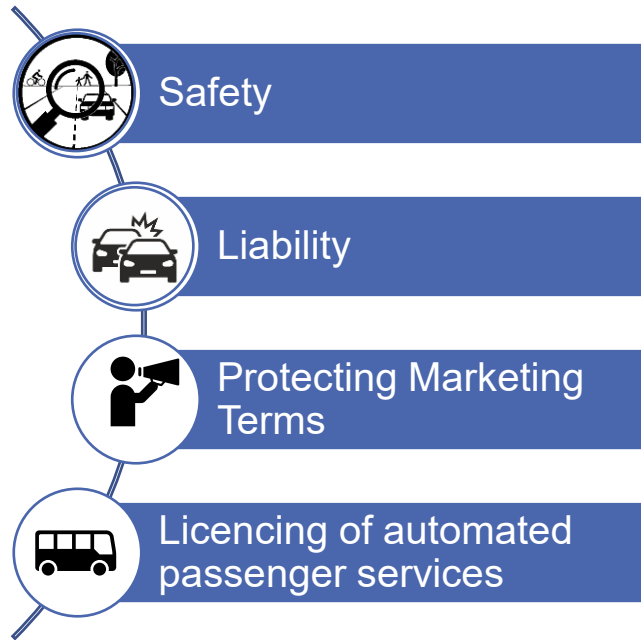


Law Commissions of England & Wales and Scotland published a joint report with recommendations for self-driving vehicles. CAM 2025 Strategy launched later that year.

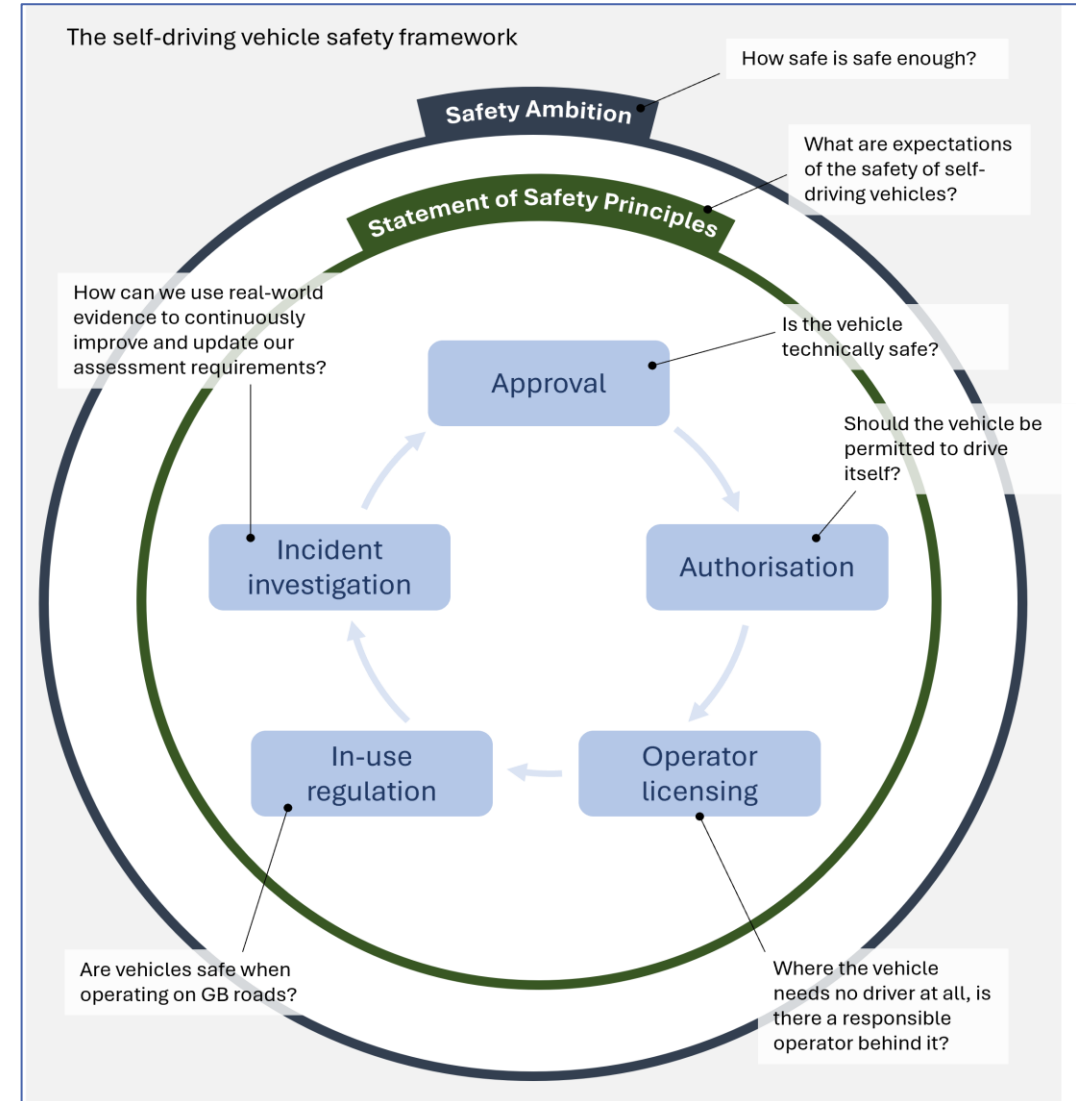
Development of safety principles and non-statutory AV guidance, secondary legislation and international regulation.

Spring 2026
Automated Passenger Services (APS) permitting regime launches.

The Automated Vehicles Act 2024 overview



We are now in the process of **developing regulations** to implement the **full provisions** in the **second half of 2027**.



CCAV's consultation series

The AV Act implementation timeline incorporates extensive public consultation. The programme of work is designed to prioritise the development of a regulatory framework that maximises innovation, improves public safety and strengthens public confidence.

2024

- Royal Assent of the Automated Vehicles Act in **May 2024**.
- Government launched an implementation programme for the Act, led by the Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CCAV).



2025

- Published four consultations, including:
- Call for evidence on the **Statement of Safety Principles** to establish safety outcomes,
- Consultation on **protecting marketing terms for AVs** to prevent misleading end users,
- Consultation on **Automated Passenger Services permitting scheme** to facilitate commercial pilots,
- And a call for evidence on the wider **AV regulatory framework**.



2026

- **May 2026** saw the Automated Passenger Services permitting scheme SI come into force.
- The consultation on the **draft safety principles** was published (open June to early September).
- Subject to consultation outcome, 2026/early 2027 will see further consultation on the wider **AV regulatory framework**.



2027

- Marketing restrictions for AVs will come into force in **January 2027**.
- Work to harmonise international rules on self-driving is anticipated to complete **in early 2027**.
- Subject to consultation outcome, the **Statement of Safety Principles** will be laid before Parliament.
- We intend to implement the remainder of the regulatory framework by the **second half of 2027**.

The Automated Passenger Services (APS) Permitting Scheme

Christina Majdi, Senior Policy Advisor, CCAV

Trials of self-driving vehicles are underway in the UK

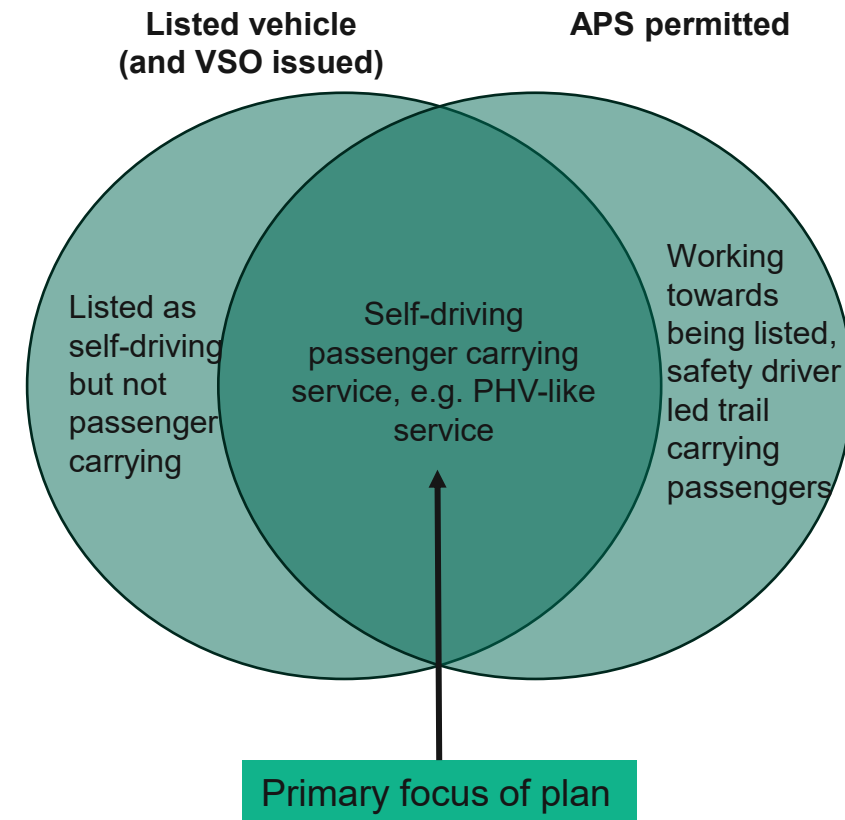
- **Trialling** of any level of **automated vehicle technology** is **currently possible in GB**, provided it complies with relevant legislation.
- Under the current framework, **a safety driver must be present** and able to **take control** of the vehicle **at all times** during trials.
- Industry identified a lack of clarity on the **legal path** for moving beyond safety-driver trials and deploying **commercial self-driving services**.
- The **Automated Passenger Services (APS) permitting scheme and guidance**, is intended to provide clarity on route to commercial self-driving deployments.

The '**Code of Practice: automated vehicle trialling**' is the starting place for trialling requirements.



Already implemented legislation enables the deployment of self-driving vehicles

- The **Autonomous and Electric Vehicles Act (AEVA) 2018** provides the legislative basis to enable the deployment of self-driving vehicles in GB.
- To be seen as self-driving under AEVA – referred to as **‘listed’** - a vehicle must be:
 - Capable, in at least some circumstances or situations, of safely driving themselves **AND** may lawfully be used on roads in these circumstances / situations
- A **Vehicle Special Order (VSO)** may need be issued to grant an exemption to certain legal requirements, e.g. C&U R.107 (leaving motor vehicles unattended).
- Capability will be assessed by the **Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA)**. Assessment will broadly be based on the **UN ADS Regulation**, which will form a key part of the safety assurance framework going forward.
- Applicants will need to meet **VSO conditions**, which will include **operational and emergency service considerations**.
- The **APS permitting scheme** provides a clear legal route for self-driving passenger carrying services, which will include further conditions generally related to the passenger experience.
- These both combine to enable the pilot deployment of **commercial self-driving passenger services**.
- Some **use-cases** may come forward that use one element and not the other, which will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.



The Automated Passenger Services (APS) pilot permitting scheme

The APS permitting scheme was introduced in the AV Act 2024 to address various **complexities of applying current legislation** to passenger services designed to operate **with no driver**.

APS is a **new, flexible procedure** to issue passenger permits for automated vehicles. It is a **clear route to commercialisation**, and the department will be able to take **learnings from early deployments**.

The scheme was **fast-tracked** by Government in June 2025. It opened to applications for small-scale pilot deployments on **22 May 2026**. Operators can apply for an Automated Passenger Services (APS) permit, and **if a permit application is successful, pre - existing taxi, private hire, and PSV legislation will not apply**.

Operators do not have to apply for an APS permit. This is an alternative approach; **pre-existing licensing routes remain available though are complex and largely untested**.

Initially, the APS piloting **scheme will exist on its own**, before being supported by the full regulatory framework in the **second half of 2027**.

Legislative make-up of the Automated Passenger Services (APS) permitting scheme

- The Act provides the **high-level framework** and context for what the APS is and can be used for.
- The **Automated Vehicles (Permits for Automated Passenger Services) Regulations 2026** came into force on **15 May 2026**. Applications were able to be received from 22 May.
- The permitting scheme is available for:
 - Taxi- or Private Hire Vehicle-like in England
 - Bus-like services in GB
 - To meet a requirement imposed on a No User in Charge Operator

Primary legislation

- Power for appropriate national authority (ANA) to grant permits
- What APS is
- Attaching conditions to permits
- Disapplication of taxi, PHV and bus legislation
- The requirement for consent
- Consultation requirements
- Regard to how granting a permit will improve understanding of design and provision for older and disabled people
- For holders to report on the steps taken to meet the needs of older and disabled people and safeguard passengers

Secondary legislation

Power taken

- Max permit length
- Varying, suspending and withdrawing
- Renewing
- Appeals
- Info sharing

Power not taken

- Fees
- Form and content of application

Part 5 of the AV Act and early implementation of the APS permitting scheme

ASPECT	APS FRAMEWORK (PART 5 AV ACT)	PURPOSE
Service Type	Self-driving passenger services (e.g. taxi-, PHV-, bus-like)	Focus regulation on commercial passenger use
Licensing Level	National	Ensure consistency across England, Scotland, and Wales, though limited to bus-like services for Scotland and Wales
Local Role	Local authority consent required	Align deployments with local strategies
Regulatory Tool	APS permit with conditions	Manage safety, operations, and compliance
Implementation Timeline	Secondary legislation in force from 15 May 2026	Enable early pilots ahead of full AV Act rollout to inform the framework
Supporting Material	Non-statutory guidance on GOV.UK	Provide clarity for pilot deployments

Local Consent

Katherine Lancaster, Head of Local Engagement,
Safeguarding and Accessibility, CCAV

Local Consent

- APS permits cannot be issued without the **consent of relevant licensing or franchising authorities** in every area where the service will operate.
- **In London, TfL is the consenting authority** for taxi-, PHV-, and bus-like automated passenger services.
- The **Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA)** will manage the APS permitting process on behalf of the **Secretary of State**, including requesting consent and consulting relevant authorities.
- Consenting authorities have **up to six weeks** to respond to a request for consent.
- Applications may still progress if an authority **does not respond** or **does not provide written reasons for refusal**.
- **Traffic authorities** seen as being **substantially affected** by the proposed service must also be **consulted** before a permit can be granted, alongside **emergency services**.
- **Early engagement** between operators and consenting authorities is strongly encouraged prior to a formal request for consent being sought.

Role of Local Authorities

- The Act does **not prescribe consent criteria or decision-making processes**.
- **Non-statutory guidance** has been published to support authorities.
- Consenting authorities can consider how a proposed service aligns with **local transport strategies and objectives**.

Guidance

- **Feedback from stakeholders** from a wide range of sectors has **outlined the importance of:**
 - **Raising awareness** to enable informed discussion and input
 - **Building understanding** of the legislative approach and requirements
 - Supporting deployments to come forward and **complement local priorities**
- A suite of **non-statutory guidance** was **published at the end of March 2026** to support and inform stakeholders to deploy self-driving passenger carrying vehicles:
 - [Self-driving vehicles pilot scheme: information for applicants](#)
 - [Automated passenger services permits: local authority and transport bodies roles](#)
 - [Self-driving vehicles pilot scheme: information for first responders](#)
- While targeted at specific audiences, the guidance is available to be read by and inform anyone.
- The **non-statutory basis** enables **greater flexibility** in ensuring the guidance is a valuable tool and to respond to lived experience.
- Wider materials are being considered, predominantly by industry, to help **inform** the public and **provide reassurance** on the **safety** of any deployment.

Questions