

13th May, 2011

**NATIONAL TRANSPORT AUTHORITY TO IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY
WITH €1.5 million IN GRANTS FOR WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE TAXIS**

FUNDS TO BE SPLIT 50:50 BETWEEN DUBLIN AND REST OF COUNTRY

The National Transport Authority today (May 13, 2011) announced a new grant aid scheme to increase the availability of wheelchair accessible taxis for customers. The move is in line with the Authority's requirements, under the Taxi Regulation Act (2003), to develop high quality, accessible services.

A fund of €1.5 million will be allocated, from September 2011 to year-end on a first-come first-serve basis as follows:

- €1 million for conversion of existing wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) – to meet accessibility standards published in 2007 (up to a maximum of €6,000 per vehicle)
- €0.5 million for new applicants for WAV licences (up to a maximum of €15,000 per vehicle)

This initial round of funding will be divided on a 50:50 basis between Dublin and the rest of the country.

No additional funding is available this year, due to the current exchequer budgetary constraints. As a result, the Authority will revoke regulations which would have required all WAV operators to upgrade their vehicles in 2012.

Stringent criteria have been put in place to ensure that the driver and the vehicle grant-aided comply with all licencing and standards requirements. All new and existing wheelchair accessible licence holders irrespective of whether they receive grant aid will be required to demonstrate evidence of the provision of accessible services to people with disabilities to the Authority at regular intervals in order to renew their licence. Monies can be recouped by the Authority in certain circumstances.

Full details of the grant scheme is available on the Authority's website www.nationaltransport.ie and telephone queries can be addressed to the industry information line 1890 347 347.

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