

Minutes of the Advisory Committee on SPSVs Meeting
Video conference, Thursday, 27th January 2022

Present:

Chairperson	Mr. Cornelius O'Donohue
Representing SPSV and driver interests	Mr. Francis Doheny, Mr. John Murphy, Mr. Kevin Finn
An Garda Síochána	Superintendent Tom Murphy
Representing the interests of consumers	Ms. Michelle Reid
Representing the interests of Business	Ms. Ann Campbell
Representing the interests of tourism	Mr. Al Ryan
Representing interests of persons with disabilities	Ms. Joan Carthy
Special interest or expertise	Mr. James O'Brien, Ms. Fiona Brady, Mr. Noel Ebbs

Apologies:

Representing SPSV and driver interests	Mr. Shajedul Chowdhury
Representing the interests of consumers	Mr. James Cawley
Representing the interests of older persons	Mr. Peter Fleming
Representing local authorities	Ms. Mary Henchy
Special interest or expertise	Mr. Martin Plummer

NTA Staff in Attendance:

Ms. Jackie Mullen (Secretary)

1. Minutes and Matters Arising.

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th November were approved with no amendment.

2. Covid-19 Update.

The Committee had a brief discussion on the challenges currently facing the industry in relation to Covid-19 and the return to work for drivers. Drivers are slowly returning back to work. Many drivers are demonstrating a preference for working during the day and not at peak hours because of concerns regarding the spread of the virus, with Covid-19 protocols such as mask wearing and social distancing not always being followed by the public. Older drivers in particular are reluctant to operate in the peak hours.

The Committee agreed that a lot of small business particularly in the tourism and hospitality sectors have been severely impacted by Covid-19. A lot of small businesses lost staff and are finding it difficult to replace them.

Similarly, the entertainment sector will take time to fully reopen and return to full capacity.

3. Advisory Committee Work plan

- **Roof Signs**

The Chair stated that he had received some submissions from members on roof signs. He urged other members to send in submissions including information/best practice from other jurisdictions.

- **Transferability**

Some Committee members expressed concern regarding a perceived supply/shortage of drivers/vehicles in the industry in the medium to long term. Agreed it is ultimately the responsibility of the NTA to manage the number of vehicle licences and the Chair is to request some information/statistics from the NTA regarding its predictive modelling for demand / supply of drivers/vehicles over the next few years and their plans to address any shortfall that the NTA see as existing or arising.

In relation to company licences, the Committee agreed that there should be a mechanism for companies to pass on their licences where the business has been sold.

The driver representatives agreed to put together a short note on the consultant's report that had been previously circulated by the NTA.

4. WAV availability and WAV Register

Committee made aware that while the number of WAV vehicles in the fleet has significantly increased, it can still be difficult to get a WAV vehicle when required. Committee also informed of 2 drivers in one area who it is believed have received WAV grants but do not provide a WAV service as they have since received medical certificates exempting them from transporting wheelchairs. Also raised with the Committee was the issue individuals, having received a WAV grant, presenting for WAV training in line with the conditions attaching to the grant.

5. AOB

Committee informed of an ongoing issue with chauffeurs not being able to operate fully in relation to cross border jobs. Answer to a PQ on the issue to be circulated.

The Chair and Committee expressed their thanks to Patricia Craven for all her support to the Committee as Head of Taxi Regulation and wished her well in her future endeavours.

Date of next meeting – Thursday 24th February 2022 at 10.30am

Signed: _____ **Dated:** _____