

# Regulatory Consultation Report

Report on the Public Consultation on proposals for

- **SPSV Fines for the Non-Compliant**
  - Focus on Safety, Consumer Protection and Services for Users with a Disability
- **SPSV Driver Licence Validity Period**



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## 1 Introduction

On the January 1, 2011, the National Transport Authority (NTA) assumed responsibility for regulation of the small public service vehicle (SPSV – taxi, hackney and limousine) industry in Ireland. Under the Taxi Regulation Act 2013, it is a function of NTA to develop, operate and maintain a regulatory framework for the licensing and regulation of the standards to be applied to—

- (a) small public service vehicles and their drivers, and
- (b) the provision of services involving small public service vehicles.

Within that, NTA is the Licensing Authority for small public service vehicles (SPSV) and dispatch operator in Ireland and as such grants, renews, refuses or revokes SPSV vehicle and dispatch operator licences in Ireland. As at 31 October 2022, the Small Public Service Vehicle (SPSV) fleet comprised 21,523 taxis, hackneys and limousines in active and inactive (2yrs) licence status, with over 100 dispatch operators providing booking services from the largest, FreeNow, to 2-5 car operators.

An Garda Síochána is the Licensing Authority for SPSV Drivers and as such they grant, renew, refuse or revoke SPSV Driver Licences in Ireland. As at 31 October, there were 26,649 SPSV driver licences in active and inactive (1yr) status.

NTA assists with the administration of SPSV Driver Licences by managing the SPSV Driver Entry Test, processing SPSV Driver Licence fees, issuing SPSV driver identification cards that an SPSV driver must have with them at all times while operating and maintaining the SPSV Driver Licence public register.

## 2 Consultation Overview

On 16 August 2022, NTA published both public consultations the subject matter of this report, together with an Information Note, on both the NTA (industry) and Transport for Ireland (public facing) websites. Also on that day, a text message was issued to 27,150 licence holders for whom we have mobile telephone numbers, and an email to 23,804 SPSV licence holders and stakeholders notifying them of the public consultation.

Representations on the proposals were invited from any interested parties during the period of the consultation from 16 August 2022 to 25 September 2022. NTA consulted directly with the Advisory Committee on SPSVs, the Garda Commissioner and the Legal Metrology Service inviting them to make submissions to the consultation.

## 3

**November 2022**

***Public Consultations on Proposals for SPSV Fines for the Non-Compliant and SPSV Driver Licence Validity***

57 submissions were received all of which have been referenced in this report.

It is worth noting that, although these proposals were communicated to all SPSV industry members by text, email or both and were displayed on the Latest News Section of the industry facing website, only 31 submissions were received from respondents who identified themselves as SPSV industry members. In contrast, NTA recently completed a public consultation on proposals to temporarily extend SPSV vehicle age rules as a result of the present challenging vehicle supply environment. This consultation was communicated only to SPSV vehicle licence holders (those for whom we have telephone or mobile contact details - approx. 19,000) and 1,938 submissions were received. When the lack of response from the SPSV industry was queried with members of the industry, the responses provided were that the majority agreed with the proposals and are compliant, so they simply did not engage.

## 2.1 Overview by Interest

The table below provides an overview of the interest of the respondents.

Interest	Count	%
I am a member of a representative group/organisation (please specify)	7	12%
I am a member of the public (non-industry member)	18	32%
I am an SPSV driver/owner	31	54%
I am an SPSV industry representative	1	2%
Total	57	100%

### Representative Groups:

- Advisory Committee on SPSVs
- An Garda Síochána
- Independent Living Movement Ireland
- Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind
- National Council for the Blind in Ireland (NCBI)
- National Disability Authority
- Progressive Friends Taxi Association

### **3 PART A - PROPOSED INCREASES IN FINES FOR LEGISLATIVE BREACHES**

In carrying out its functions, NTA must consider how best to ensure that the small public service vehicle (SPSV – taxi, hackney and limousine) industry is maintained at an appropriate level of safety, quality of service and consumer protection. This is done in such a way as to not become overly burdensome on compliant small public service vehicle service providers and/or cause a reduction in market competition or cost which can in turn also affect consumers.

Regulation without adequate enforcement and compliance arrangements will rarely be successful. For this reason, enforcement and compliance activities are at the heart of ensuring that the overall objectives of the regulations enforced are achieved. The objective of compliance and enforcement is to maximise compliance within the small public service vehicle industry through all available means such as legislation, education, deterrence, resources and technology, which in turn maximises customer safety and satisfaction increasing demand for the services of compliant operators. Such activity supports compliant operators while targeting those who are non-compliant. This is key in ensuring a level playing field for compliant operators.

The policy objective considered in this public consultation is the making of small public service vehicle regulation as effective as possible and, in particular, the Fixed Penalties (fines) associated with a breach of such small public service vehicle legislation. This will help to ensure public safety and quality of service provision, together with compliant operator and consumer protection.

It is important to note that:

- this proposal only impacts upon those small public service vehicle operators who break the law;
- for the year 2018, 199,369 compliance checks were completed on 27,373 drivers, with 1,878 Fixed Payment Notices (fines) issued throughout Ireland. 2019 saw 196,868 compliance checks completed on 27,328 drivers with 1,641 Fixed Payment Notices issued. This indicates a high level of compliance by our taxi, hackney and limousine operators. Fixed Payment Notices are issued on a tiny proportion of trips taken. The vast majority of drivers are compliant and provide very good services;
- the payment of any Fixed Payment Notice issued by NTA is voluntary. An alleged offender does not have to pay the Fixed Payment Notice and can choose to have his/her case decided

by the Judge of the District Court when a prosecution is taken by NTA. The majority of alleged offenders represent themselves by giving their own evidence in the District Court and NTA uses one firm of solicitors to act on its behalf, engaging barristers only rarely on the most specific of cases. Costs may or may not be awarded when the judgement is against NTA at the discretion of the presiding Judge. NTA only seeks a contribution towards costs in each successful case. The NTA success rate is in excess of 90% for prosecutions taken.

NTA currently issues Fixed Penalties (fines) for breaches of the:-

- 1) Taxi Regulation Acts 2013 & 2016 (the Act) and
- 2) Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015 (the Regulations)

The prescribed amounts in place at the moment were designed in 2011, with little data or information analysis available. It is now considered appropriate to revisit the penalties (fines) payable for prescribed offences, given the lapse of 11 years and significant technological advances, together with an assessment of passenger complaint trends over that period, particularly from vulnerable groups. NTA wishes to tailor the penalty to reflect the significance of the particular infringement to which it refers. Public safety, consumer protection and operational safety are the three pillars under which these fixed payment offences stand.

Interestingly, on 27 October last, 16 fines for road safety offences doubled with Minister of State for Transport Hildegard Naughton stating the measures were “evidence-based actions” and were taken to act as a “deterrent” for people when it comes to offences.

### **3.1 Current Legislation**

A large amount of statutory instruments under the Taxi Regulation Act 2003 were consolidated in the Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2014 with the commencement of the Taxi Regulation Acts 2013. This consolidation was further revised in 2015 and 2016 but with no material relevance to this topic, fixed payment offences and payment amounts.

#### *Fixed Payment Offences and Notices*

Under Part 6 of the Act, Authorised Persons (NTA Compliance Officers or any member of An Garda Síochána) may issue Fixed Payment Notices, commonly known as on-the-spot fines or just fines. These

can be issued for a range of offences which have been declared to be Fixed Payment Offences under section 48 of the Act and listed in Schedule 8 of the Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015.

These Fixed Payment Notices may be issued as a result of a roadside audit or other contact with an Authorised Person. They may also be issued following receipt of a complaint by NTA.

Each Fixed Payment Notice (fine) specifies each alleged offence, together with the prescribed fixed penalty amount which must be paid within 28 days, or 50% greater amount if paid within 56 days, in order to avoid prosecution for the alleged breach. If Fixed Payment Notices are not paid within the prescribed period, a prosecution will be instigated by NTA for the alleged offence. The prosecution is not for the small public service vehicle operator refusing to pay a Fixed Payment Notice issued but rather for a Judge to decide whether the offence itself occurred based on the evidence put forward at the District Court hearing. A court attendance is mandatory and it may result in a criminal conviction as well as a court fine and legal costs. It may also result in a successful defence by the small public service vehicle operator. A criminal conviction for a small public service vehicle offence can have serious implications for a career in the small public service vehicle industry and travel/visa applications amongst other matters.

### **3.2 Proposal**

The proposal is to move the current Fixed Payment Offences Prescribed Amounts from the current four bands to five and to increase the amount of each Fixed Payment Notice, except for two offences where the amount remains at €250. The current bands are €40, €60, €80, €250. The newly proposed five bands will include €80, €100, €150, €200, €250. The full scope is outlined in Appendix B included below.

In addition to the proposed changes to the payment amount, a new Fixed Payment Offence is proposed for the refusal of a driver of a SPSV to carry a passenger in a wheelchair. The amount for this will be €250, reflecting the gravity and nature of the offence.

The regulatory impact of these changes was discussed in the initial Board paper setting out the detail of the public consultation.

## 4 PART A - SUBMISSIONS OVERVIEW

### 4.1 Overall Opinion - Proposed changes to Fixed Payment Penalties

With reference to the proposals relating to the increase of current fines and the introduction of a new fine, the majority of respondents agreed.

What is your view on ...	the proposed changes to Fixed Payment Penalties
Agree	27
Disagree	18
Unclear/not relevant	12
Total	57

What is your view on ...	The introduction of a new fine (€250) for refusal to provide services to a passenger seated in a wheelchair
Agree	33
Disagree	12
Unclear/not relevant	12
Total	57

What is your view on ...	The increase to €250 for refusal to carry to a guide/assistance dog accompanying a person with disabilities
Agree	31
Disagree	10
Unclear/not relevant	16
Total	57



## 4.2 Key Observations

Overall:

- The majority of respondents providing a clear position (47%) were in support of the proposed changes to Fixed Payment Notices.
- The majority of respondents providing a clear position (58%) were in support of the proposal to introduce a new Fixed Payment Notice for refusal by the driver to provide services to a passenger seated in a wheelchair.
- The majority of respondents providing a clear position (54%) were in support of the proposal increase to €250 the Fixed Payment Notice for refusal by the driver to carry to a guide/assistance dog accompanying a person with disabilities.

Key observations arising from submissions include:

### **Proposed changes to Fixed Payment Penalties**

- A number of respondents stated the proposed changes would act as a deterrent for the non-compliant
- Some respondents stated the proposed increases were too high and would result in pressure on SPSV operators. On the contrary, a number of respondents believed increasing fines would not deter non-compliant operators. Some respondents also stated some fines were too low.
- Respondents also stated that the fine amount should reflect the severity of the offence, with some suggesting that SPSV driver licences should be revoked for repeat offenders.

### **The introduction of a new fine (€250) for refusal to provide services to a passenger seated in a wheelchair**

- A prevalent theme was that the increase for refusal to provide services to a passenger seated in a wheelchair should be higher, given the severity of the offence.
- Similar to the above, some respondents suggested fines should be increased incrementally for repeat offenders up to and including SPSV driver licence revocation.
- One respondent stated the fine should have a maximum of €2,500.
- Some respondents stated the increase would be a deterrent for the non-compliant.

- A small number of industry members stated the proposed increase was too high and would put pressure on SPSV operators.

**Increase to €250 for refusal to carry to a guide/assistance dog accompanying a person with disabilities**

- A prevalent theme arising from commentary was fines should be higher than €250 for refusal to carry a guide or assistance dog. Some respondents believed the fine should be between €1,000 and €2,500.
- A small number stated they believed dog allergies should be taken into account. (Legislation does, in fact, cater for this and same is highlighted in our disability awareness training and Newsletters. Medical evidence provided prior to any refusal advising that an operator has an allergic reaction to dogs can be presented to any compliance officer or intending passenger as a defence to an allegation of unreasonable refusal.)
- Several respondents cited experience with service refusal and will be contacted directly where a complaint was made.
- Some respondents stated the increase would be a deterrent for the non-compliant.

## 5 PART B - PROPOSED SPSV DRIVER LICENCE VALIDITY PERIOD AMENDMENT

An Garda Síochána is the Licensing Authority for SPSV Drivers in Ireland and as such they grant, renew, refuse or revoke SPSV Driver Licences in Ireland. As at 31 October, there were 26,649 SPSV driver licences in active and inactive (1yr) status.

On 03 August 2022, NTA received correspondence from An Garda Síochána requesting that consideration be given to amending section 7(3)(a) of the Taxi Regulations (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015. This followed the 2022 judgment of the High Court in the matter of Rahman v Healy and Others.<sup>1</sup>

**From:** Murphy, Thomas <redacted@garda.ie>  
**Sent:** Wednesday 3 August 2022 16:51  
**To:** Wendy Thompson <redacted@nationaltransport.ie>  
**Cc:** redacted  
**Subject:** FW: Request for amendment to Taxi Regulations (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Ms Wendy Thompson  
Director of Transport Regulation  
National Transport Authority

Good afternoon Wendy

Regarding above and in light of the judgment received in respect of the recent High Court case (JR 2020/441) Saydur Rahman v Superintendent Thomas Murphy, I am to request that consideration be given to seeking an amendment to Section 7 (3)(a) of the above mentioned 2015 Regulations please.

The requested amendment is to insert the words 'up to' prior to '...five years from the date...' contained within Section 7(3)(a)

The request will provide for the Authorised Officer to consider all parts of the application including current immigration status of an applicant (if appropriate) or any other reason that may present itself during the application which may require for the issuing of an SPSV licence by an Authorised Officer for a period of less than five years.

Kind Regards

Tom

*Thomas Murphy* SUPERINTENDENT  
Thomas Murphy | Superintendent | Garda National Roads Policing Bureau, Garda Headquarters, Phoenix Park, Dublin 8. D08 HN3X.

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<sup>1</sup> High Court Judicial Review, Judge Simons J, judgment delivered 24/04/22

## 5.1 Current Legislation

Within the Taxi Regulation Act (Small Public Service Vehicle Regulations) 2015, Regulation 7 sets out the form and duration of the licence to drive small public service vehicles.

The current Regulations reads:-

- 7. (3) A licence to drive small public service vehicles shall remain in force until the earlier of—*
- a) the expiry of a period of five years from the date of its grant or renewal,*
  - b) the surrender of the licence by the holder,*
  - c) the revocation of the licence under the Principal Act, and*
  - d) the disqualification of the licence holder pursuant to section 30 or 38 of the Principal Act.*

## 5.2 Proposal

The proposal for this amendment is to insert the words ‘up to’ prior to the words “five years from the date [...]” contained within Section 7(3)(a) of the Regulations.

Under this proposal the wording will change to:

- 7.(3) A licence to drive small public service vehicles shall remain in force until the earlier of-*
- a) The expiry of a period of **up to** five years from the date of its grant or renewal,*
  - b) The surrender of the licence by the holder,*
  - c) The revocation of the licence under the Principal Act, and*
  - d) The disqualification of the licence holder pursuant to section 30 or 38 of the Principal Act*

The regulatory impact of this change was discussed in the initial Board paper setting out the detail of the public consultation.

## 6 PART B - SUBMISSION OVERVIEW

The proposal relating to the Driver Licence Validity Period had a higher proportion of respondents who were unclear, provided commentary that was not relevant to the proposal, or provided no feedback. However, the majority of respondents who provided a clear position (37%) were in support of the proposal. 25% disagreed and 39% of respondents did not provide a clear position.

What is your view on...	the proposed amendment to the SPSV driver licence validity period?
Agree	21
Disagree	14
Unclear/not relevant to proposals/no feedback	22
Total	57

### 6.1 Key Observations

Themes arising from the submissions included:

- A number of supportive respondents believed the licensing authority, An Garda Síochána, would have appropriately increased supervisory powers through this the proposed amendment.
- Delays in the processing of SPSV driver licences were also cited by respondents, stating the proposed amendment would result in further delays.
- Others in support of the proposal stated visas should be considered when an SPSV driver licence is granted (or renewed) and previous complaints should also be taken into account.

## 7 Submissions

The below submissions are divided into Section I and Section II. Submissions listed in Section II were received via different formats to the submissions in Section I. As a result, the full submission and the opinion (agree, disagree, unclear/not relevant to proposals/no feedback) have been included.

The respondents to the public consultation were asked to provide their views on:

1. the proposed changes to Fixed Payment Notices ("fines");
2. the introduction of a new fine for €250 for refusal by the driver to provide services to a passenger seated in a wheelchair;
3. the proposed increase in the current €80 fine to €250 for refusal by the driver to carry to a guide dog or other assistance dog accompanying a person with disabilities; and
4. the proposed amendment to the SPSV driver licence validity period.

Each submission below includes the respondent's views, which correspond with the above.

Name/Ref	Submission
<b>Section I</b>	
J Murdock	
1	As they are only for people who break the law, I agree with the increases. There aren't many law breakers from what I read but it will help to reduce that more. Yes from me.
2	Definitely. Its disgusting to think that would happen.
3	Same. Definitely.
4	Seems to make sense. If someone can only get a normal licence or visa for a year or two why would they get a taxi licence for longer.
A Walsh	
1	How is the wheelchair fleet supposed to cover jobs from disabled people when the Dublin Airport Authority are actively seeking wheelchair taxi drivers to exclusively to work Dublin Airport. By encouraging this discriminatory behaviour the NTA is reducing the amount of WATs in the rest of Dublin for disabled passengers. Fines won't fix this issue. The fine amounts are irrelevant as drivers have no fear of the NTA or any of it's inspectors.
2	Fine amounts are irrelevant.
3	Yeah I like dogs.Perhaps waterboarding these drivers might change their attitude.
4	Dunno ,the carriage office are slow enough as it is maybe it's best not to complicate their workload.
E Borisova	

1	Free Now purposely uses their "pre booking pool" where the wheelchair accessible booking confirmed is then anonymously cancelled and the wheelchair customer can't see the name of the driver who refused to appear on the place and hence NTA excuses that they have no one to blame or issue a fine to. This is a horribly mean app the Free Now manages to avoid fines so I insist that NTA investigates this and issue fines to the Free Now managers who constructed the app this way. Free Now as a whole abuses the grant scheme and the customers and they need a proper action taken against them. Yes, 250 euro fine is OK, but the main thing is that the confirmed booking of a wheelchair user must NOT be cancelled the last minute or totally ignored. The booking confirmed by a taxi company or a driver must be accomplished by all means. Make Free Now serve their confirmed bookings for wheelchair users.
2	Yes, 250 euro fine is OK, but the main thing is that the confirmed booking of a wheelchair user must NOT be cancelled the last minute or totally ignored. The booking confirmed by a taxi company or a driver must be accomplished by all means. Make Free Now serve their confirmed bookings for wheelchair users. Also if one and the same driver fails to serve a wheelchair confirmed booking more than twice, his grant must be asked or if he is unable to repay it, his driving licence taken.
3	250 euro fine is OK, but the main thing is that the confirmed booking of a wheelchair user must NOT be cancelled the last minute or totally ignored. The booking confirmed by a taxi company or a driver must be accomplished by all means. Make Free Now serve their confirmed bookings for people with guide dogs. Also if one and the same driver fails to serve such confirmed booking more than twice, his grant must be asked or if he is unable to repay it, his driving licence taken.
4	I suggest that when a driver has no complaints resulted in NTA investigation over him his drivers licence to be automatically renewed every year. This will save a lot of paper work and time for both sides. If a driver was investigated and fined by NTA more than twice, his licence must be taken away for a period of 2 years or he repays the full amount of his grant to NTA for a period of 6 months.
E Carey	
1	I'm in agreement
2	I'm in favour I have had lots of issues over the years from a taxi driver telling me he didn't cover south side when he was parked in o Connell street to having an empty taxi pull away right in front of me coz ye didn't want to take me.
3	Yes definitely
4	It's no harm to reapply I'd one is doing their job properly. If not it gives the opportunity to not renew their licence.
Bob	
1	No Feedback
2	Against. The number of taxis on our roads has taken a massive hit since the pandemic with large numbers waiting for queues at nighttime. There is already a barrier to becoming a taxi driver due to the expense, why make this even more expensive to make all drivers require to buy more expensive vehicles when most won't have to use it.

3	Against. Again I don't see why ever vehicle needs to be able to handle a dog. A dog, even a we'll trained one can cause damage to a seat of a car which will have to be repaired at the drivers expense. A person with a guide dog can phone a taxi service, letting them know of their requirements and a suitable car can be made available to pick them up.
4	I support any action that will mean there can be more licenses provided to taxi drivers.
C O'Gorman	
1	I think the increases will signal the severity of some breaches to the industry. In particular the changes to fines relating to not carrying guide dogs or persons with disabilities and the increases in fines for stopping at unsafe locations will be good to support those members of society who already suffer discrimination as well as prioritizing safe conduct on the roads.
2	I agree
3	I agree
4	I agree as it gives more supervisory powers to maintain a safe industry for consumers
L Leeson	
1	Should not apply
2	Should apply
3	Should apply
4	Yes
J Murray	
1	I am 100% behind a substantial increase in penalties. The vast majority of drivers simply will not take wheelchair users. Some reasons are 1, Too much time to take out ramp, secure properly the chair 2. inclement weather conditions. Means leaving the seat of the taxi driver 3 High possibility of being boked for a return journey . More work 4. Unlikley to have more no than two fares. Less revenue 5. Booking in advance means planning - Waste of their time
2	100% Agree
3	100% Agree
4	The system as it stands is in my view a way for drivers to get a license quickly and not sure, but a reduced fee. A generous grant to modify the vehicle and and then never take disabled passengers This in my view i a fraud and and in my view , an offence or a crime
V hand	
1	lthink the fines are insufficient to deter wrongdoers.
2	fine should be higher
3	agree
4	no view
J bhamra	
1	Not good
2	Very good
3	Very good



4	Not good
P Donnelly	
1	Fines should be expensive enough that the culprit never wants to commit the same offence.
2	I believe this to be too expensive as in my opinion €100-€150 is enough.
3	I believe does no reason for there to be such a big increase and €100-€150 is enough of an increase.
4	I believe the current period of five years should be continued with no leeway.
A O Rourke	
1	80 euros is already a hefty fine for hard pressed taxi drivers who are suffering cost of living increases across the board, petrol diesel gas electricity car-repairs tyres etc. Not to mention food and all the other price increases associated with every day living.
2	Same as above.
3	Some people such as myself have allergies to dogs and any fine in this situation is unreasonable.
4	There is enough red tape in this business without adding more for drivers who have to work long hours in order to make a living wage.
D O reilly	
1	<p>Currently you are issuing warnings and possible fined to people with unsealed meters. Do you realize how difficult it is to seal these meters. Firstly the software updates for people outside Dublin often mean taking a day off work to travel to Dublin, In my case to Athlone from Waterford city. Then to seal the meter again traveling to cork or Kilkenny. I have school runs . Dialysis runs.</p> <p>Waterford Irelands oldest city and there is no facility to seal a meter. This current fine will insure less Taxis enter the industry and discriminates against the only section of the industry that actually is looking after disabled needs. The other section of the industry can continue to drive saloons and avoid any responsibility for the needs of people in wheelchairs.</p> <p>Most wheelchair vehicles just insure you lose the vast majority of the day trade. No pensioners will use it as it's difficult to climb in . Anyone with mobility issues similar ,can not use these vehicles. I asked the insurance company about using a portable step like the HSE transport uses. They said if it's not part of the vehicle it will not be insured.</p> <p>I work with wheelchair users daily in dialysis , however I have had drunk wheelchair users at night being obnoxious and abusive. Even some in wheelchairs as a result of needle use. These people can be challenging and vary from person to person just like anyone. I use my personal judgement with everyone regardless of their circumstances. If you are drunk or obnoxious or soiled yourself or covered in vomit you are not getting in my car. fine or no fine.</p>
2	So if someone soiled themselves or was drunk covered in vomit or aggressive ,I can't refuse them because they are in a wheelchair. I have in the past had to call the Garda to wheelchair users. One particular wheelchair user and drug user in my area has often been removed by Garda.

3	I am a driver since 1992 and I have had a blind person with a dog in my car three times at most. I would never refuse them , I don't think this is an issues. I know in some stricter Traditions of Islam dogs are considered haram, or forbidden, in Islam as they are thought of as dirty. I think this is a non issue. Some people are allergic to cat and dog hair. Perhaps it might be better when issuing licences to ask drivers if they have such allergies or religious believes and give them an exemption.
4	This makes no sense . If your standard driving fall due for renewal, you are like every other taxi driver in Ireland and you renew it. If I wanted to work in a taxi for two years while not staying in the state permanently, what difference would having a two, three four year PSV licence. A five year licence like a one year licence will naturally expire when it's not renewed.
C Boylan	
1	I agree, 100 per cent. But, consideration, should always be given, to circumstances, at the time. Not everything is always, black and white.
2	I agree, 100 per cent. I would also suggest, that wheelchair accessible Taxi, has a big wheelchair sign, on the back doors, and the roof sign, as mandatory. I have seen , lots of W.A.Vs, telling people, they are not W.A.Vs, and refusing to take them. I drive a Mondeo Hatchback, and I guarantee you, I have done more pick ups for wheelchair users, than most, W.A.VS. They get away with it, because, some vans, are not W.A.VS, But, they cannot be distinguished, at a glance on a rank, or at the side of the road.
3	I agree, 100 per cent. I haven't heard of any driver refusing, a person, with a guide dog. But, I did see a driver , some years ago, refusing a woman. There was a lot of commotion, at the rank. The driver was told by, everyone, on the rank, that it was the law, he can't refuse, but , his ignorance was too much, and he drove off the rank, empty.
4	I don't agree, with short term taxi licence s, being granted. It really creates a bad impression, to the industry. Some of the stories, I am told, by passengers, are horrendous. I've told them, where to report it, but not enough people, bother.
M Mchale	
1	I don't think that putting the fines up is helping anyone. I've never been fined but I have reported numerous drivers who have obviously flouted the current regulations and they are still Doing the same. Thing. So id prefer The current fines but with more regulation. And banish drivers from trade who are repeat offenders.
2	That's fine. Although I have a wheelchair ramp, I didn't get the grant and the ramp Can only fit normal. Size chairs. My ramp can't hold large electric chairs.
3	Don't agree. 80 euro fine is plenty, and if they repeat then take action.
4	Restrictions while working in the state is fine but you should be allowed get the licence to overlap with the spsv, it is illegal to drive without a current licence so any honest driver is going to renew it. It's only another cost if I get a 3 year licence instead of a 5 year.
P Sauvage	
1	You are putting increasing pressure on me as a taxi driver. I won't tolerate much more. Il quit the taxi business as will many more people unless you back off.

2	In almost 30 years driving a taxi, I have never witnessed a driver refusing a passenger because of a disability. This is not a problem. You are inventing problems to justify your job.
3	I am allergic to dogs. I cannot accept a dog in my taxi. You constantly present the taxi driver as a potential criminal, always ready with your fines. Where's my protection?
4	I agree with this amendment. The Garda should have as much control of the licensing of taxi drivers as they need.
E Jankovska	
1	No Feedback
2	I think that if drivers operating WAV then they can't refuse to provide services to a passenger seated in wheelchair
3	I think there should be some exceptions,for example when driver have allergy to dogs
4	No Feedback
A Clarke	
1	No Feedback
2	I strongly agree
3	No Feedback
4	No Feedback
S CORCORAN	
1	Don't agree with fines going from 40 to 250 however do know that fines need to increase as a way of a deterrent ..instead a smaller increase may be possible.
2	Don't agree with this fine should be lower Alot of wheelchair licenses issued over last few years ..one would assume if seated in a wc they would need a wheelchair car for their convenience..
3	Smaller increase
4	Don't agree..
G Njotoge	
1	Some good, some bad
2	Good idea
3	Good idea
4	Good idea
M Sharkey	
1	I agree
2	I agree as my view is that some drivers too this road to get into the industry and have never helped a disabled person, in my opinion this is wrong.
3	Yes
4	I will always carry a guide dog , it's discriminatory not to . And yet some of these drivers are wanting not to be discriminated against.
K Nguyen	
1	DISAGREE WITH ANY NEW CHANGES
2	NO
3	NO

4	<p>for a period of less than five years where the applicant's standard driving licence falls due for renewal within the current five year period</p> <p>are you trying to drive taxi drivers out of the business, no stop this stupidity, maybe skill levels in your office should be examined</p>
NCBI	
1	<p>The acknowledgement by the NTA of the specific needs of people who require assistance or guide dogs and of people who use wheelchairs, is welcomed by NCBI.</p> <p>However, NCBI would consider the category for failure to adhere to SPSV regulations should be expanded. It should include people with sight loss who require mobility aids such as long canes, and those in a taxi rank queue with disabilities, such as sight loss or problems of balance.</p> <p>It is often difficult for those with sight loss at a taxi rank to identify the presence of the taxi. Those who have problems with balance have been mistakenly deemed intoxicated and bypassed by the SPSV driver. Finding themselves anxious and stranded on a busy street or isolated area is very upsetting for this specific group of people, and therefore the category should expand to recognise their specific needs.</p> <p>NCBI recommends an expansion to the category for SPSV non-compliance to include people with access needs such as those using mobility aids (canes), and those with problems with balance.</p>
2	<p>Fully support the proposal. Any form of discrimination needs to be recognised and treated with the utmost severity. The point below in relation to the maximum fine amount applies in this instance too.</p>
3	<p>NCBI agrees with the view expressed by the NTA which indicates that a review of the effectiveness of fines for SPSV operators is necessary. The proposal includes an increase in fines from €40 to €250, for SPSV legislation non-compliance.</p> <p>Referring to the impact of increased fines as a deterrent, NTA states that the increase of fines to €250, highlights the significance of non-compliance and therefore emphasises that providing service to passenger with access needs is crucial.</p> <p>Although the proposed increase of fine for SPSV non-compliance is positive, refusal to carry a person with a guide dog or who requires mobility aids, is discriminatory. Therefore, NCBI question the proposed increase of fines to €250 will be an effective deterrent. An effective increase in fines would address the severity of the offence on SPSV legislation non-compliance as discriminatory, which is in breach of the Equal Status Acts. Consequently, NCBI would recommend an increase in the fine to bring it in line with the fines imposed under the Equal Status Act.</p> <p>Recognising the NTA are currently limited in the maximum fine possible, NCBI recommends that the current legislation under the Taxi Regulations Acts 2013 &amp; 2016, Taxi Regulation (Small Public Services Vehicle) Regulation 2015, Section 73 Schedule 8, would be amended. This amendment would allow NTA to impose a maximum fine up to €2,500, as this offence is a breach of the Equal Status Acts, and in line with European evidence for the implementation of fines for the same offence.</p>

4	In addition, An Garda Siochana has recommended NTA to amend the Taxi Registration for SPSV licence to include the revocation of the licence or the disqualification of the licence pursuant to section 30 or 38 of the Principal Act. In the current regulation a licence is issued for five years. The amendment requested would allow An Garda Siochana to consider all parts of the application when issuing a licence, and if required to issue a licence for less than five years or revoke or disqualify the licence of the applicant in question. NCBI believes a licence application should therefore be considered in the context of all the information available to An Garda Siochana including the fines issued.
K Kelly	
1	I welcome this public consultation on “Proposals for SPSV Fines for The Non-Compliant”. For some time now, as someone with a disability, I have been advocating for reforms to Small Public Service Vehicle fines.
2	I welcome the proposal to introduce a fine for the refusal of someone who uses a wheelchair of €250, as I can only imagine the hurt this causes a wheelchair user when this occurs. This proposal will only impact drivers who choose to disrespect and show no understanding of the additional needs of people with a disability.
3	<p>I have been a guide dog owner since May 2008, and have regularly encountered both reluctance and flat-out refusals from taxi drivers when I try to avail of their service.</p> <p>Presently, there seems to be a lack of awareness or understanding amongst a minority of taxi drivers of their obligation to carry guide dogs in their vehicles. Each time I have been refused, I have found it both disheartening and upsetting, and it does dent your confidence.</p> <p>I have had drivers tell me that they were “happy to take the fine” as it would cost them more to clean/valet their vehicle.</p> <p>Leaving aside the inaccuracies in the statement around the dog dirtying their car to such an extent that it would require a valet, the more pertinent takeaway is the glimpse this provides into a minority of drivers’ attitudes to the current fine for refusing a guide dog.</p> <p>Under the proposed revised fines, I welcome the fact that the fine will increase to €250, as I believe that this is now a sufficient deterrent and will make drivers stop and think before refusing someone with a guide dog.</p> <p>No taxi driver or representative group for the taxi industry can validly object to this proposed increase in the fine, as it will only impact on drivers who refuse to comply with the current regulations and who show a lack of respect and understanding for people who are blind/vision impaired who use a guide dog.</p>
4	I agree with this proposal.
C McCarthy	

1	I am in agreement with the proposed increase of the fine for refusal of a guide dog, and the introduction of a fine for the refusal to carry a wheelchair user. In both cases, this change is long overdue and will hopefully serve as a deterrent to the minority of drivers who think this behaviour is acceptable.
2	the introduction of this penalty is something which I wholeheartedly agree with, as I cannot imagine how disheartening and hurtful it must be to be refused access to something as basic and essential as a taxi just because you use a wheelchair, something which is not a choice. It is my hope that this fine is strictly enforced if introduced, as it will be a wakeup call to those drivers who think this is acceptable.
3	<p>I am in total agreement with this proposal.</p> <p>I am a recent guide dog user (two years), and while I have not experienced refusals, I have heard of plenty of people who have; I have also heard from taxi drivers whom I spoke to while travelling with my guide dog that the fine is "very low" and "wouldn't put anybody off" - surely this is not the desired effect.</p> <p>I have on one occasion had to remind the driver of their obligation to take the guide dog, but this is not something I or anyone else should ever have to do.</p> <p>With the increase in this fine, I hope it will deter the minority of drivers who will inevitably refuse to comply with the regulations.</p>
4	I have no opinion.
D O' Keeney	
1	<p>I do not agree with the changes to the fixed payment notices fines. All Taxi drivers have had a very difficult few years with rising costs and reduced earning potential.</p> <p>At a time when the public are crying about the shortage of taxis at peak times this proposal will only encourage drivers to leave the industry.</p>
2	While a deterrent may be necessary I think €250 is excessive.
3	Definitely over the top. €80 is adequate deterrent for this practice.
4	I am in agreement with this proposal.
F Korumtallee	
1	I don't agree
2	No Feedback
3	I don't agree
4	I don't agree
J Carleton	
1	I object to an increase in fines. This is simply a revenue collecting. Help the drivers and stop seeing us as cash cows.
2	I do not drive a wheelchair vehicle, and have carried many passengers who are wheelchair bound with no issue. Fining people more money won't stop those that refuse to do their job. So I object to an increase in the fine. Do more spot checks on wheelchair taxis. €80 is a lot to the majority of drivers. Maybe have an incremental scale for those that continue to break the rules in this instance.

3	I do agree with this , assistance dogs are well trained and well behaved. They are a necessity to their owner,who depends on them to move around freely. Unless a driver has a medical issue that stops them being able to carry a dog,then there is no reason to refuse.
4	I disagree in relation to a drivers standard driving license falling due within 5 years, that is not a reason to penalise anyone. This will be renewed when required. I do agree where the applicant has restrictions to working in the state. But then I ask the question ,why was this person granted a license to start with, if they had restrictions to working in the state. So in a nut shell if both of these items are being put together,then I disagree.
<b>B Singh</b>	
1	The fines are way to expensive and it should be less than €100
2	Instead of fine NTA should offer something to driver for helping wheelchair people
3	It should be around €100, having a €250 is daytime robbery.
4	Not a good idea at all which will put driver to sit home if his driving licence take long to renew
<b>W Mohammed Abdul</b>	
1	I agree with some increases and don't agree with some increases.
2	It's ridiculous to refuse services to a wheelchair passenger, as a wav driver myself I've never done or will ever refuse a wheelchair passenger. I'm in support of increase in fine for refusing services to wheelchair passenger, drivers who refuse shouldn't be driving a WAV and their licence should be revoked.
3	How would you know that a driver refused an actual service dog or just any dog, people could falsely report out of spite even if they don't When have service dog. I don't agree with fine increase in this instance, as it has lot of grey area.
4	I disagree with it, it'll effect the driver's that are citizens who don't need permission to work in the state and driving licence can be renewed straight away so I don't see why they should get spsv licence for a period based on their driving licence. Renewing spsv licence is time and money consuming so why NTA wants drivers to go through the hassle of that, so I think it's a bad idea for such amendment.
<b>J Graydon</b>	
1	I agree with the increase of fines. Still some operators will not take card payments so this increase in fines might help.
2	Should be €1,000
3	Yes agree
4	No, I think it still should be 5 years
<b>ILMI</b>	
1	The ILMI working group felt fines are not always useful but can be useful when the “consequences” are clearly communicated to drivers of SPSVs. “If the fine was high enough it would make them think”. Others stated “when you hit people’s pockets they start to listen”.

2	<p>The ILMI working group believes there needs to be better understanding of what the “actual need” for disabled people to get taxis is in Ireland. ILMI recommends the introduction of disability equality training not disability awareness training. This must be led by disabled people or through Disabled Person’s Organisations (DPOs) to ensure we (as a society) change the way we think about disability. “This would in turn be as effective as using “fines” to prevent negative attitudes towards us”.</p> <p>The working group stated that “Disabled people need to report any incident where they are refused entry to a SPSV”. Better enforcement comes with better reporting. There was a suggestion to use mystery shopper methods from the group who are willing to engage. ILMI is working on a video around making complaints and will share with the NTA in the near future.</p> <p>The ILMI working group agree on the introduction of a new fine for €250 for refusal by the driver to provide services to a wheelchair user. The group believes the fine needs to be higher in absence of accessible fleets. However, the group is conscious that higher fines i.e. 1,000 euro might deter WAV licenses.</p> <p>The working group believe the overall transport system in Ireland needs to work towards genuine inclusion and full capacity rather than “wheelchair accessible taxis” alone. In the UK most wheelchair users/guide dog/assistance dog users can use “black cabs” spontaneously. This would reduce the use for fines. The group commented “it’s a human rights and equality issue”.</p>
3	<p>The group also supports the increase in the current €80 fine to €250 for refusal by the driver to carry a guide dog or assistance dog accompanying disabled people.</p>
4	<p>The ILMI working group support the proposed amendment to the SPSV driver licence validity period with a suggestion of it being 3 years maximum. This could be based on a number of refusal or complaints received.</p> <p>The group also suggested a “penalty” on the license accompanied with a fine. It was noted that the general accessible parking badge is only valid for 2 years and then the disabled person has to reapply. Similar could be applied to SPSV licences if they are not complying.</p>
Free Now	
1	<p>FREE NOW welcomes the proposed changes to Fixed Payment Notices. It is essential that the SPSV sector maintains a high standard of regulatory compliance and provides a high-quality service to all passengers. The proposed increased fines are appropriate in ensuring standards across Ireland’s taxi fleet.</p>



2	<p>FREE NOW believes that all passengers should have a right to quality, affordable and accessible transport options. Taxis provide a vital service to wheelchair users for whom other transport services are overly cumbersome to avail of or are effectively inaccessible to them.</p> <p>The transport sector more broadly has scope to improve when it comes to providing accessible options for those with physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities. Our own survey research conducted in partnership with the Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) showed that a majority of those surveyed avoid public transport altogether as a result of insufficient and poor quality accessible public transport options. Over two thirds (67%) consider their main concern with public transport to be the lack of understanding among other passengers and drivers in relation to their accessibility challenges.</p> <p>For our part, FREE NOW provides disability awareness training for our partner drivers and facilitates commission-free jobs on all wheelchair accessible trips in order to encourage drivers to provide wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) services and improve in-app service levels by increasing the volume of WAV drivers available.</p>
3	FREE NOW welcomes the proposed increase to the fine for refusal by the driver to carry a guide dog or other assistance dog accompanying a person with disabilities.
4	FREE NOW supports the proposed amendment to the SPSV driver licence validity period.
<b>B Sweeney</b>	
1	No need for this
2	I agree
3	I agree
4	No need to alter licence age
<b>A Walsh</b>	
1	I think the penalties and fines are adequate as they are. The increase from €40 to €250 for not being logged on to the proper vehicle is just one example of an increase that is very severe.
2	I agree
3	I agree
4	No opinion but I ran into difficulty because I couldn't get an appointment with the NDLS to renew my licence quickly enough and my PSV licence wasn't processed on time because the timeframe I had was not long enough. This caused a lot of stress for me because I would have lost out on work time with the dispatch company because in their view my PSV drivers licence had expired even though I had a letter from the PSV office to confirm it was being processed. They couldn't except it until I got my Garda licence and my vehicle ID didn't get processed for weeks after.
<b>N Oldenburg</b>	
1	Supportive of increase in fines. Need more information on enforcement and enforcement mechanisms. Public campaign with accessible and universally designed information is advised.
2	strongly in favour of introduction of this new fine

3	strongly in favour of this increase.
4	No Feedback
<b>J Mc Govern</b>	
1	I am a fan of fines provided they are given in the correct circumstances. There should always be a provision for appeals, as sometimes there are extenuating situations. Genuine mistakes can happen to honest people trying to make a living and there are times when passengers are misunderstood.
2	It should be more as there are far too many drivers ignoring wheelchair accessible jobs.
3	I agree with the €250 if not more.
4	I totally agree.
<b>G Glenn</b>	
1	I believe that the fines for illegal taxis is not high enough and that the Taxi regulators are not active enough in detecting these offenders. The industry can not expect SPSV drivers to put up with this much longer a level playing field is all we want.
2	Yes I agree
3	Yes I agree
4	No I don't agree
<b>S J. Madsen</b>	
1	I'm against an increase in fines in the taxi industry. I think that the fines in place are adequate and fit for purpose. I would prefer to see better enforcement and policing of the existing rules and penalties. We can increase the penalties as much as we want, but it will have no effect without enforcement.
2	I personally cannot imagine why I would refuse to take a person in a wheelchair, outside of the logical problem of the wheelchair not fitting in my vehicle, or being too heavy for me to lift. In which case I think it unfair to penalise the driver.
3	I suffer from severe allergies, but dogs are not a problem for me, I would never refuse to carry an assistance dog. However, I think it would be unfair to penalise a driver who is allergic to dogs or other animals. I don't believe fines are the answer. Education would be a much better alternative.
4	I believe this amendment may have merit, however, I think that such a change should be overlooked by the judiciary. Gardaí should have to apply to the courts to impose this restriction.
<b>G McFeeley</b>	
1	As the fines are going to be set for the foreseeable future they should be at an appropriate level. The vast majority of taxi drivers provide an excellent service and have nothing to fear from an increase in the level of fines. Repeated incidents should allow just cause for the NTA to refuse renewal of SPSV licence or to cancel it. Perhaps two incidents in three years or three in five?
2	Fixed penalties by their nature do not take into account the severity of the incident. What if the person is trying to get to a medical appointment? Fixed penalties do not reflect the potential severity of a situation like this. Therefore, a scale from at least €250 to at least €2500 should be in operation. It is far more serious when a wheel chair user is refused service than when a member of the general public is refused service.

3	Fixed penalties by their nature do not take into account the severity of the incident. What if the person is trying to get to a medical appointment? Fixed penalties do not reflect the potential severity of a situation like this. Therefore, a scale from at least €250 to at least €2500 should be in operation. It is far more serious when a guide dog owner is refused service than when a member of the general public is refused service. It is unacceptable that refusing to carry a guide dog carries a smaller penalty than refusing a person who does not have a dog.
4	Agree with the examples given.
Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind	
1	See attached submission
2	See attached submission
3	See attached submission
4	No observation
A Ryan	
1	The proposed fine of €250 is what was in place pre-2011. Fines are supposed to act as a deterrent and also as an incentive for compliance. Some of the current fines do not fulfil either criterion. Bizarrely if a person with a service dog is refused carriage, the penalty is incurred because of refusal to carry the dog and not refusal to carry the person. The fine in this instance is €40 and not €80 as it would be for any other member of Joe Public. Thus Blind or Vision Impaired People with dogs are currently treated less favourably than other people. The process of enforcing the payment can be a lengthy one as payment is voluntary. A fine of €40 is so low it isn't even worth taking time off to go to court or engage a solicitor. It is more of an inconvenience than anything else. Fines should be graduated on the severity of the offence in line with the penalties under the Equality Legislation and should incorporate a facility for on-the-spot fines which may be appealed.
2	As stated above the level of €250 was in force over a decade ago and is not as powerful now as it was then. To promote inclusivity and accessibility, there should be a real deterrent for refusing to carry a person in a wheelchair. This should be a fine of up to and including €2,500 depending on how serious the breach and the consequences suffered by the injured party. If the PSPV driver is a serial offender, then serious consideration should be given to revoking their licence. The burden of proof rests with the wheelchair user to prove that the service provider saw the wheelchair and drove on. This can be a serious impediment for the service user to discharge and a reversal of the burden in this case should be also considered. So, if the PSPV driver can prove they weren't in the area or were on a way to a fare, then that burden is discharged. Honest mistake should also be a defence, but it should only be employed very very stringently. The use of apps has ameliorated this issue somewhat, but PSPV drivers are still prepared to leave people stranded evidences that the present system of enforcement needs to be improved.

3	<p>To promote inclusivity and accessibility, there should be a real deterrent for refusing to carry a visually impaired person or any person with a service dog. The fallout for the client being refused carriage could be quite serious. The fine should be increased up to and including €2,500 depending on how serious the breach and the consequences suffered by the injured party. If the PSPV driver is a serial offender, then serious consideration should be given to revoking their licence unless good reason given.</p> <p>The burden of proof rests with the visually impaired person to prove that the service provider saw them, saw the dog and made the decision to drive on because of the dog. Putting the burden of proof on the user in these circumstances is unworkable. Effectively the burden is insurmountable and a reversal of the burden of proof must be considered. So, if the PSPV driver can prove they weren't in the area or were on a way to a fare, then that burden is discharged. Honest mistake should also be a defence, but it should only be employed very very stringently. The use of apps does not appear to have ameliorated this issue. That PSPV drivers are still prepared to leave people stranded evidences that the present system of enforcement needs to be overhauled. That the fine is attached to the dog and does not include the person is shocking. Service dogs are highly trained, assessed regularly and regularly groomed and do not make PSP vehicles dirty. I have had PSPV providers tell me that builders coming home on a Friday evening after working all week on the sites are far messier with their boots and plaster dust. On a final note, I have had occasion to liaise with the NTA and, without exception, every time I have found every person that I have dealt with to be exceptionally helpful, professional and kind. I would like to finish this by saying thank you as I know they too are constrained by the present regulations.</p>
4	Examples provided seem reasonable.
F Coloe	
1	Increased fines mean nothing without proper enforcement!!
2	Should be €1000!
3	Should be €1000
4	Agree provided there are safeguards in place, and a right of appeal.
<b>Section II</b>	
L Kenny	
Submission	<p>There are a lot of private unlicensed drivers operating in towns and villages throughout, Ireland that seem to be above the law. operating as taxis for reward, claiming they are only carrying there friends home for free, While in reality they are doing very well from it with no proper insurance and no regulatory expense which is reducing the demand and livelihood for properly licenced taxis or Hackneys in that area, are there any proposals to deal with that.??</p>
1	Unclear/not relevant to proposals/no feedback
2	Unclear/not relevant to proposals/no feedback
3	Unclear/not relevant to proposals/no feedback
4	Unclear/not relevant to proposals/no feedback
S Colclough	

Submission	I agree with the increase in SPSV fines and also with the introduction of the new fine for discrimination against service users with a disability. I also agree with the changing of the wording for section 7(3)(a) of the Taxi Regulations (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015 in relation to the SPSV Driver Licence Validity Period
1	Agree
2	Agree
3	Agree
4	Agree
<b>C Axenti</b>	
Submission	<p>Fines are definitely not focused on safety, fines are focused on money making and profiteering. The responsibility is shifted from the authority on the driver. This is a great marketing scam.</p> <p>Again, SPSV driver licence and immigration are two different matters. In the case of tax clearance there seems to be no need for the licence timing to be amended, the same way there is no need for the licence fee to be paid more often. Is expensive as it is.</p> <p>The Authority through the proposed changes are not looking to improve the lives of the SPSV operators but to put extra pressure and burden on us.</p> <p>This changes are very useless and not welcomed.</p>
1	Disagree
2	Disagree
3	Disagree
4	Disagree
<b>A Balogun</b>	
Submission	I DO NOT SUPPORT THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE EXISTING REGULATION for SPSV Fines for the Non-Compliant and SPSV Driver Licence Validity Period
1	Disagree
2	Disagree
3	Disagree
4	No Feedback
<b>M Akinjopo</b>	
Submission	I DO NOT SUPPORT THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE EXISTING REGULATION for SPSV Fines for the Non-Compliant and SPSV Driver Licence Valid Period
1	Disagree
2	Disagree
3	Disagree
4	No Feedback
<b>J Callaghan</b>	
Submission	The public need to be safe knowing that the driver is fully vetted by the garda .....why would anyone want to discriminate against anyone because of age
1	Unclear/not relevant to proposals/no feedback

2	Unclear/not relevant to proposals/no feedback
3	Unclear/not relevant to proposals/no feedback
4	Unclear/not relevant to proposals/no feedback
<b>K KEHINDE</b>	
Submission	I want the SPSV Driver License Validity Period and SPSV Fines for the Non Compliant remain as it's without any changes.
1	Disagree
2	Disagree
3	Disagree
4	Disagree
<b>S Rizvi</b>	
Submission	<p>It would be disaster for the driver industry to have a spsv license any shorter than five years. The bureaucracy around the taxi industry is already burden on the drivers. Having to apply for spsv license any time before five year will add more crisis to the industry. Most of the driver fleet is legitimate and works hard. The driver should be facilitated more by way being able to apply for their spsv renewal online instead of turning up in Carriage office with an appointment.</p> <p>It's about time that the driver should be incentivised rather than placing more burden.</p> <p>Between paying the renewal fee to NTA and applying for a license could cost two weeks of stress and extra financial burden.</p> <p>NTA should take responsibility and start dealing with licensing issues itself.</p> <p>kind regards</p> <p>S Rizvi</p>
1	Unclear/not relevant to proposals/no feedback
2	Unclear/not relevant to proposals/no feedback
3	Unclear/not relevant to proposals/no feedback
4	Disagree
<b>J Callaghan</b>	
Submission	<p>I feel that removing the 5 year licence will discriminate against aging drivers</p> <p>Drivers who reach an age may only get a one two or three year licence</p>
1	Unclear/not relevant to proposals/no feedback
2	Unclear/not relevant to proposals/no feedback
3	Unclear/not relevant to proposals/no feedback
4	Disagree
<b>H Byrne</b>	
Submission	About time!
1	Agree
2	Agree

3	Agree
4	Agree
C Hapka	
Submission	<p>I think the fines seem reasonable. In particular I support the significant proposed fines for refusing to carry a passenger in a wheelchair and for failing to accept card payment.</p> <p>Card payment is already supposedly required for drivers picking up at Dublin airport, but in my experience drivers' card readers tend to mysteriously fail at the destination.</p> <p>Now that all drivers will be required to accept card payment, it would be helpful to require a mandatory notice to that effect in the vehicle, one that also notes the customer's rights of the driver refuses or is not able to accept payment by card.</p>
1	Agree
2	Agree
3	Agree
4	Unclear/not relevant to proposals/no feedback
An Garda Síochána	
Submission	See full submission below
1	No issue with this
2	No issue with this
3	No issue with this
4	Agree
Advisory Committee on SPSVs	
Submission	See full submission below
1	Agree
2	Agree
3	Agree
4	Agree
Progressive Friends Taxi Association	
Submission	See full submission below
1	Disagree
2	Disagree
3	Disagree
4	Unclear/not relevant to proposals/no feedback

**Advisory Committee on SPSVs**

*Advisory Committee on Small  
Public Service Vehicles  
National Transport Authority  
Dún Scéine  
Harcourt Lane  
Dublin 2  
D02 WT20*

Ms. Wendy Thompson  
Director of Public Transport Regulation  
National Transport Authority  
Dún Scéine  
Harcourt Lane  
Dublin 2  
D02 WT20

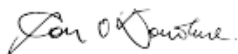
20 September 2022.

**Re: SPSV Public Consultations 2022.**

Dear Wendy,

Further to your letter of the 9 September 2022, I am to advise you that the Advisory Committee on Small Public Services Vehicles is in agreement with the proposal to amend the fixed offences and associated penalties currently set out in Schedule 8 of the Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 201, and the amendment of section 7(3)(a) of the Taxi Regulations (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015 in relation to the SPSV Driver Licence Validity Period.

Yours sincerely,



**Con O'Donohue**  
**Chairperson**  
**Advisory Committee on Small Public Service Vehicles**

**An Garda Síochána**

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November 2022

*Public Consultations on Proposals for SPSV Fines for the Non-Compliant and SPSV Driver Licence Validity*



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**From:** RPMEM\_DV <RPMEM\_DV@garda.ie>  
**Sent:** Sunday 25 September 2022 11:37  
**To:** Wendy Thompson <Wendy.Thompson@nationaltransport.ie>  
**Cc:** RPMEM\_DV <RPMEM\_DV@garda.ie>  
**Subject:** SPSV Consultations 2022

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

**GMRPB\_14-203515/22**

**Ms Wendy Thompson**  
**Director of Transport Regulations**  
**National Transport Authority**

I am directed by Acting Chief Superintendent, Garda National Roads Policing Bureau to refer to the above.

The attached correspondence regarding the proposed changes have been reviewed by this Bureau.

An Garda Síochána continue to refer suspected offences to the NTA (compliance officers) relating to offences which can be progressed by means of Fixed Penalty Notice and see no issue with the proposed increase in fines.

In addition, An Garda Síochána welcome the proposed amendment to Section 7(3)(a) of the Taxi Regulation Act (Small Public Service Regulations) 2015 which would allow An Garda Síochána Authorised Officers to issue Small Public Service Vehicle (Small PSV) Licences for a period of "up to" five years following the judgement of Raham v Healy and other.

An Garda Síochána look forward to working with the National Transport Authority should the proposed amendments be enacted.

Yours sincerely,

*Sent on behalf of Chief Superintendent Michael Henneby, Garda National Roads Policing Bureau by*

*Sent on behalf of Acting Chief Superintendent Thomas Murphy, Garda National Roads Policing Bureau by*

Julie Greene | Garda | Garda National Roads Policing Bureau | Garda Headquarters |  
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**Independent Living Movement Ireland**



INDEPENDENT LIVING  
MOVEMENT IRELAND  
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[www.ilmi.ie](http://www.ilmi.ie)

(Image shows ILMI logo with Text: Independent Living Movement Ireland.

Freedom, rights, empowerment and website address [www.ilmi.ie](http://www.ilmi.ie))

**Independent Living Movement Ireland submission on Public Consultation on  
Proposals for SPSV Fines for the Non-Compliant – Focus on Safety, Consumer  
Protection and Services for Users with a Disability and SPSV Driver Licence  
Validity Period**

**September 2022**

**Introduction to Independent Living Movement Ireland**

Independent Living Movement Ireland (ILMI) is a campaigning, national Disabled Person's Organisation (DPO) that promotes the philosophy of independent living and seeks to build an inclusive society. ILMI works with disabled people on a cross-impairment basis. Central to the way we work is to ensure that policy and legislative discourse and decisions that impact on the lives of disabled people have to be directly influenced by those whose lives are directly affected.

Our philosophy can be summed up as: 'Nothing about us without us!' and 'Rights Not Charity'. Our vision is an Ireland where disabled persons have freedom, choice and control over all aspects of their lives and can fully participate in an inclusive society as equals.

**Social model of disability**

The UNCRPD at its core is framed through an understanding of disability known as the social model of disability. From ILMI's perspective, it is vital that there is a clear and full understanding of what the social model of disability is and how it should inform future discussions on policy development and improvement and policy implementation.

The social model looks at how society is structured and how it disables people. It is not based on a person's impairment, it is focussed on the barriers that exist in terms of attitudes, policy development, access or lack of supports that prevent people from participating in society as equals, with choice and control over their own lives. In this model it is society that disables people from achieving their hopes and dreams, not a person's impairment. The social model informs all aspects of the work of Independent Living Movement Ireland.

### **Language and representation of disabled people**

Independent Living Movement Ireland recognises that language is a very powerful and evocative tool. Therefore, the language and terminology used in this submission has been carefully chosen to reflect the values of equality and empowerment which is at the core of this organisation. The term 'disabled people' has been used throughout the submission in accordance with the UPIAS classification of disability and impairment which has been developed by disabled people themselves (UPIAS 1976). Where disabled people are referred to in the submission this should be understood to include all disabled people, including those with learning difficulties, people experiencing emotional distress and physical and sensory impairments.

### **Context**

ILMI consulted with its taxi working group which is made up of disabled activists of different ages and locations around the country through the "Strategies for Change" project. The "Strategies for Change" project aims to build the capacity of disabled activists and to empower collective activism to eradicate barriers we, as disabled people face.

### **ILMI working group observations for fines and validity period**

- The ILMI working group felt fines are not always useful but can be useful when the “consequences” are clearly communicated to drivers of SPSVs. “If the fine was high enough it would make them think”. Others stated “when you hit people’s pockets they start to listen”.
- The ILMI working group believes there needs to be better understanding of what the “actual need” for disabled people to get taxis is in Ireland. ILMI recommends the introduction of disability equality training not disability awareness training. This must be led by disabled people or through Disabled Person’s Organisations (DPOs) to ensure we (as a society) change the way we think about disability. “This would in turn be as effective as using “fines” to prevent negative attitudes towards us”.
- The working group stated that “Disabled people need to report any incident where they are refused entry to a SPSV”. Better enforcement comes with better reporting. There was a suggestion to use mystery shopper methods from the group who are willing to engage. ILMI is working on a video around making complaints and will share with the NTA in the near future.
- The ILMI working group agree on the introduction of a new fine for €250 for refusal by the driver to provide services to a wheelchair user. The group believes the fine needs to be higher in absence of accessible fleets. However, the group is conscious that higher fines i.e. 1,000 euro might deter WAV licenses. The group also supports the increase in the current €80 fine to €250 for refusal by the driver to carry a guide dog or assistance dog accompanying disabled people.
- The working group believe the overall transport system in Ireland needs to work towards genuine inclusion and full capacity rather than “wheelchair accessible taxis” alone. In the UK most wheelchair users/guide dog/assistance dog users can use “black cabs” spontaneously. This would reduce the use for fines. The group commented “it’s a human rights and equality issue”.

- The ILMI working group support the proposed amendment to the SPSV driver licence validity period with a suggestion of it being 3 years maximum. This could be based on a number of refusal or complaints received.
- The group also suggested a “penalty” on the license accompanied with a fine. It was noted that the general accessible parking badge is only valid for 2 years and then the disabled person has to reapply. Similar could be applied to SPSV licences if they are not complying.

For further information contact ILMI Policy Officer James Cawley at [jamescawley@ilmi.ie](mailto:jamescawley@ilmi.ie) or 0867744991

## **Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind**



### **Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind Submission on SPSV Fines for Offences and Validity Driver Licence Public Consultation**

#### **Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind Submission on the Public Consultation on the Small Public Service Vehicles Fixed Payment Offences and the Driver Licence Period**

Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind welcomes the public consultation on the Small Public Service Vehicle (Fixed Payment Offences and Driver Licence Period) regulations as prescribed by the National Transport Authority, in exercise of the powers conferred on it by section 7 and section 48 of the Taxi Regulation Acts 2013 and 2016 (No. 37 of 2013 as amended).

Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind is a national charity dedicated to helping people living with vision impairment or autism improve their mobility and independence through our vital services. Our association works to enhance awareness of the rights and needs of our clients. Our website provides comprehensive information to public and private transport providers, which can be viewed here:

<https://www.guidedogs.ie/news-resources/accessibility-guides>

#### **Q1 Fines**

In 2011, a review group, led by Mr. Alan Kelly, T.D. was established to look at, inter alia, "accessible taxi services for persons with reduced mobility and people with disabilities"

One of the recommendations was:

"To introduce a graduated system of fixed charge penalties to replace the current single level of penalty charge of €250. This will enable the tailoring of the penalty charge to more closely reflect the significance of the particular infringement to which it refers"



The NTA endorses this approach in that it "wishes to tailor the penalty to reflect the significance of the particular infringement to which it refers".

The burden of proof rests with a blind or vision impaired client to prove that the taxi driver saw them, was prepared to provide service and only withdrew when the driver saw the guide dog.

Similarly, despite digital records of drivers accepting a fare, they are still prepared to incur the fine rather than take a client with a guide dog or an assistance dog. This has happened on more than one occasion where the request was terminated once the drivers saw the dog. Currently the fine for refusing to carry a person without good reason is €80 while in the same situation the fine is only €40 if the person is accompanied by their guide dog or assistance dog.

The drivers who have been reported to the NTA pay the €40 and are free to reoffend. We believe those with a disability or sensory issues are more reliant on public transport and any penalty for refusal of service should act both as an incentive to be compliant and a proper deterrent.

#### Q2 Wheelchairs

Our association provides mobility and independent living programmes to vision impaired people using a wheelchair, some of whom also, use a guide dog. It is our view that the fine for drivers offending by refusing to facilitate a client on the grounds of using a wheelchair, and in some circumstances both a wheelchair and a guide dog, should be brought up to the maximum fine amount of 250 euro.

#### Q3 Guide dogs or Assistance dogs

The NTA states it wishes to ensure "quality of service" provided by SPSVs but of particular relevance to our clients are those listed at "g" and "h". Firstly, the NTA wants to meet the needs of customers with "mobility or sensory impairments". Secondly, it wishes to increase availability, affordability and accord priority in booking SPSVs to persons with disabilities. Buses are not always a practical option for our clients particularly those in remote or rural areas. Clients will from time to time require urgent trips to the hospital. A refusal of service could have catastrophic consequences in these circumstances.

If the current penalty charge is tailored to the offence, it should be a €220 fine at the very minimum for failing to carry the guide dog or assistance dog with its owner.

Breaches of the Equal Status Acts 2000 - 2018 Act attract fines of up to €2500 and the maximum award afforded under the Acts is 15,000 euro.





There should be more parity in the penalties for breaches of the Taxi Regulation Acts. We believe that a first offence should attract a stiff penalty as it is obvious the current level is not fit for purpose. We believe a second offence should result in the revocation of the PUP licence.

Under Article 9 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, state parties must ensure access on an equal basis with the general population to transport services. The Department of Transport and Communications and the National Transport Authority oversees the operation of governmental transport policies and procedures. Appropriate measures must be taken to provide effective and equal access to transport services open to the public. Discrimination against people with disabilities by public, private and commercial transport operators is prohibited.

As a side issue, many of our clients are reliant on the disability pension, the recent 12% price increase will impact them unduly.

We would ask that puppies in training be given explicit protection of the regulations to ensure their proper socialization. IGDB also respectfully requests that all "repurposed career" dogs other than guide/assistance dog be given protection of the regulations. These dogs such as Companion Dogs, Ambassador Dogs and Community Dogs etc. Are assessed for their new careers and are just as professional as guide dogs or assistance dogs. They come from the same carefully selected stock and undergo the same rigorous first year of training. If dogs do not make it, it is for a variety of reasons often completely unrelated to the dog. We also request that all our dogs be afforded access to all forms of public transport.

In summation, our submission is that the Minister sign the final order pursuant to Section 7 of the Taxi Regulation Act 2013 and gives the NTA complete oversight of issuing licences. When infringements presently occur, the current regime has proven inadequate and the personal impact on our clients can be potentially devastating. Vulnerable clients need more protection particularly where clients need taxis to access services and no other forms of transport are available to them. The proposed changes merely revert to what was in force 11 years ago. We would request that two "strikes" over five years and the PUP licence be revoked unless good reason or cause is shown. The first offence should attract a fine of up to €2500 depending on the severity. We feel that a fixed penalty could be unfair and inequitable in certain circumstances.

This suggestion goes to the "good character" requirement under Section 10(2)(a) of the Taxi Regulations 2013. Here the legislative intent is "to ensure that only individuals of "good character" are permitted to operate public service vehicles".

is deemed a prerequisite for a licence. There are many phenomenal drivers and we are deeply indebted to them. Ultimately the quality of service is only judged as against the poorest providers and the negative impact is remembered longer. Compliant drivers will never be impacted by these penalties.

Q4 Licence validity period

No observations



## **NDA submission to National Transport Authority regarding Public Consultation on Proposals for SPSV Fines for the Non-Compliant - Focus on Safety, Consumer Protection and Services for Users with a Disability**

**September 2022**

### **Introduction**

The National Disability Authority (NDA), as the independent statutory body, provides information and advice to the Government on policy and practice relevant to the lives of persons with disabilities. We have a role to assist the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth in the co-ordination of disability policy. We work through our Centre for Excellence in Universal Design to promote the universal design of the built environment, products, services and information and communication technologies so that they can be easily accessed, understood and used by everyone, including persons with disabilities.

The NDA wishes to make a submission with regards to the proposed SPSV (Taxis, hackneys and limousines) fines for non-compliance proposed by the National Transport Authority (NTA).

### **Importance of transport for persons with disabilities**

The importance of integrated universally designed public transport services is underpinned by **Article 9 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**. Ireland ratified the UN Convention in 2018. Article 9 states that in order for persons with disabilities to live independently and fully participate in all aspects of life, they need to have access not only to accessible transportation but also to the wider infrastructure, the built environment, information and communication processes and technologies and to other public facilities and services.

Section 6.3 of the **National Planning Framework for Project Ireland 2040** also identifies universally designed transport services, in addition to housing, education, and health services, as key areas that need to be developed to facilitate the development and progression of diverse and inclusive communities.<sup>1</sup>

The importance of transport in the lives of persons with disabilities and the necessity for transport services that are accessible to everyone is also highlighted in **The Comprehensive Employment Strategy 2015 – 2024; National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017 – 2021**.

Small public service vehicles (SPSVs) form an integral part of the transport infrastructure for everyone, including persons with disabilities. SPSVs offer more flexibility in terms of transport provision and also provide transport to persons who may not be served by public transport routes or are unable to easily access public transport.

### **Proposed changes to fines for non-compliant SPSVs**

As the NTA is aware, despite current requirements and associated fines for non-compliance, persons with disabilities regularly report being refused journeys by SPSV operators<sup>2</sup>. The NDA therefore welcomes recognition by the NTA in the public consultation report of the greater protection needed for SPSV passengers with a disability and the associated proposals of increased fines for SPSV operators who refuse to carry passengers with disabilities, in particular those who travel with guide/assistance dogs and wheelchair users. The NDA would support the maximum fine (€250) now being imposed on these grounds, the NDA is particularly supportive of the increase from €80 in the case of refusal to carry passengers with guide/assistance dogs.

The NDA notes as well that a lack of accessible taxis has been highlighted as a real issue and a barrier to transport for persons with disabilities<sup>3</sup>. The NDA notes that there has been an increase in the wheelchair accessible taxi fleet (from 4% in 2014 to 17.4% in 2022)<sup>4</sup>, however this is still a low percentage of the total

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<sup>1</sup> Scheme 2040 is the Government's long-term strategy to make Ireland a better country for all of its people by investing in its public infrastructure.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.thejournal.ie/lift-out-pt1-5502428-Aug2021/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.thejournal.ie/lift-out-pt1-5502428-Aug2021/>

<sup>4</sup> DoT accessibility Work Programme 01 March to 25 May 2022

fleet. Increased fines and enforcement will address some accessibility barriers, sufficient availability of accessible taxis is key to ensuring wide access for all.

The NDA also advises that clear and universally designed communication on this matter is key, as it is important that all passengers, in particular older people and passengers with disabilities are informed of their rights, and about complaints and enforcement mechanisms. In particular, it is vital that complaints mechanisms are accessible. The NDA recognises that efforts have been taken to reach out to disability groups by the NTA as part of this consultation, however, the NDA notes that on the consultations website there is no clear method to request available documentation in any alternative formats other than those available on the website. [The NDA Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information provided by Public Bodies](#) states that public bodies should have a procedure in place for processing requests for accessible formats that may be provided as far as practicable including providing for a dialogue with the customer in order to ensure that they are compliant with Section 28 of the Disability Act, 2005. The NDA also notes that only written submissions are being considered. The NDA would advise that channels should be provided which allow for spoken comments and submissions to be taken in addition to the written channels available. The NDA would suggest consultation with our newly published guidelines [Participation Matters: Guidelines on implementing the obligation to meaningfully engage with disabled people in public decision making](#) which provides context on the requirements for engaging with Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs), the importance of engagement with DPOs and how to gain meaningful engagement and input from engagement with DPOs and persons with disabilities.

All information (written, spoken, signed and digital) delivered by a public transport services provider (which includes consultation information), should be universally designed. The NDA suggests that the NTA should use the [Customer Communications Toolkit for the Public Service - A Universal Design Approach](#) which will help to produce universally designed written, verbal and digital communications that can be easily accessed, understood and used by everyone.

## Conclusion

Transport plays a crucial role in empowering people with disabilities to participate in everyday life and the activities of their communities. Approximately one in ten people with disabilities said that inadequate/inaccessible transport

systems prevented them from participating in social events.<sup>5</sup> About one in six people with a disability are not in work who would be interested in a job, cite transport or parking as an issue for them. Those with sight, mobility or intellectual disabilities are most likely to cite transport as an issue for employment.<sup>6</sup>

In this context therefore, the NDA advises that the proposed increase in fines is adopted and that universally designed communications publicise this change to operators and the general public. The NDA also advises the need for disability awareness training for providers of transport services for the public, it is vital that those who are providing services to persons with disabilities are trained on communicating and interacting with persons with disabilities.

The NDA is happy to meet with the NTA to discuss this submission.

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<sup>5</sup> National Disability Survey (2006) Vol. 2, Table 7.30

<sup>6</sup> National Disability Survey (2006) Vol. 2, Table 7.30



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18<sup>th</sup> September 2022

SPSV Regulatory Consultations  
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**RE: PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS FOR SPSV  
FINES FOR NON-COMPLIANT**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Progressive Friends Taxi Association Galway is a group of Taxi drivers operating in Galway city and county and was formed 2007. Ours aims are to ensure that all members adhere to the rules, code and conduct of National Transport Authority and Taxi Regulatory commission and also to ensure that our customers/consumers are treated in a fare manner with mutual respect and understanding.

We are writing in relation to a recent publication on the above reference point (**August 2022 Publication**) as it reflects on focus on safety, Consumer Protection and services for users with disability. The Progressive Friend's Association of taxi operators (PFA) and members are committed to contribute meaningfully to these proposals, and the industry at large, while highlighting their observations to these proposed increase in fines.

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Critically there's been a huge reduction of taxi drivers post covid-19, due to older drivers giving up the job on health grounds, likewise other drivers across all spectrum have also considered leaving the job for reasons of safety challenges, especially on night shift. The National Transport Authority will agree with Progressive friends' association, that the above cited instances are well known to all those in the industry, including the taxi regulator and such have contributed to the general reduction of taxi drivers in the industry.

These and more could have formed reason(s) why National Transport Authority, have renewed the ongoing campaign in search for new driver applicants, and to encourage potential persons to join the profession. Therefore, it will be discouraging while hoping to attract new drivers to join the profession, that NTA will be proposing increased fine on tariffs, without providing adequate policy protection towards taxi drivers and make the Industry more attractive. We therefore appeal to your esteem department to have a second thought and consider deferring all intended fine increase taking into account the prevailing Economic situation.

### **OTHER MATTERS OF INTEREST**

It is important for Progressive Friends Taxi Association to highlight an overdue of Non-consideration on the part of National Transport Authority and Taxi regulator to provide adequate policy protection for Taxi drivers operating in the Taxi Industry in Ireland and make the Industry more attractive for new entrants, as every regulation and policies so far provided by National Transport Authority and Taxi Regulator tend to be concentrated in protecting the Consumers and not the Operators in Taxi Industry. The question might be asked, does National Transport Authority considers the Taxi Industry as part of Transport for Ireland? (TFI).

Also a more punitive fine is being proposed towards penalising Taxi drivers and favouring the Consumers the more, while Taxi Drivers operating day and night providing services to same Consumers will have to shoulder the burden. Therefore, the proposed increase in fines should be reconsidered in the interest of Justice, equity, and fair play.

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We would like to make reference to **(Taxi Regulation Act 2013)** refer to **(Customer's Rights and Responsibilities)**. This regulation does not in any form provide adequate protection to Taxi drivers operating in the Taxi Industry, except the mentioned of An Garda Siochana. In a situation that we are distance miles away in a remote area where An Garda Siochana not available and we encountered difficulties with Customer/s, in this instance who removes such person(s) from the vehicle as we the taxi drivers are not permitted to remove such person(s) and this happens very often.

In this same regulation no protection is provided or any deterrent measures put in place to caution customer/s who might refuse to pay their taxi fare due to card failure or outright refusal to pay and we end up losing lots of fares especially in remote areas.

In **Guidelines for the Acceptance of Cashless Payments in Taxis (June 2022)**, there is mention about **(Issues with Card Payments)** and here National Transport Authority quoted by saying:

**(If a passenger card payment problem occurs, such as insufficient funds or the card has expired, for example, drivers should treat the matter in the same way as when dealing with a passenger who finds themselves unable to pay the fare in cash at the end of a journey).**

The National transport authority should clearly define a set rule given to taxi drivers on how to deal with above mentioned payment issue, because up to date no taxi drivers knows any set rules given by your Authority to resolve such issues than the reference pointed to An Garda Siochana. The end points, every taxi drivers' experiences are loss of fare; we are powerless to do anything. In addition, we would like to suggest that National Transport Authority insert a clause in **(Customer's rights and responsibilities)** that it is the responsibility of Customers to have cash to pay their fare in the event that Card payment process fails to go through.

In conclusion the Progressive Friends Taxi Association would like to use this opportunity to highlight hash economic condition at this present time which is affecting the whole world and Ireland not an exception to reconsider and extend the present age limit for Vehicles. High cost of Cars used for SPSV which has now gone out of the affordability of Taxi

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drivers to replace their operating Vehicles which are still in good drivable condition but have to be forced out of the road due to the 10 years rule. The National Transport Authority should reconsider extending this policy to help Taxi operators remain in business until when the harsh economic condition at the present time improves.

We look forward hearing from you and would welcome a positive response.

Yours sincerely:

FRANK OKONKWO, CHAIR-PERSON



(On behalf of Progressive Friends Taxi Association Galway)

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