

SPSV Bulletin 2022

June 2023



Glossary

Dispatch operators	Those who provide a booking service or other facility to arrange SPSV journeys.
Electric small public service vehicle (eSPSV)	An electric vehicle (EV) is a type of vehicle that is powered by an electric motor or motors, which are energised by electrical energy stored in rechargeable batteries or other energy storage devices such as Fuel Cells. An eSPSV is an electric vehicle that is also licensed as a small public service vehicle.
Hackney	An SPSV which must be pre-booked and cannot ply for hire on the street or stand at taxi ranks. The fare for the journey must be agreed in advance with the customer. Hackneys may not use bus lanes and may not be fitted with a taximeter.
Limousine	An SPSV evidently suited by reason of its style and condition to be used for ceremonial, corporate or other prestige purposes, which must be pre-booked and cannot ply for hire on the street or stand at taxi ranks. The fare must be agreed in advance. Limousines may not use bus lanes and may not be fitted with a taximeter.
Local Area Hackney (LAH)	A hackney licensed only for a designated local pick up area specifically to address transport deficits that would otherwise not be addressed in certain rural areas, particularly where lack of commercial viability means SPSV services are not provided.
Low emission vehicle (LEV)	Low emission cars produce fewer emissions than your average car on the road. In Ireland, low emission cars are those with CO2 exhaust emissions of 50 g/km or less.
Maximum Permissible Age (MPA)	The maximum permissible age of an SPSV refers to the age of a vehicle beyond which that vehicle may not be licensed as an SPSV of the relevant vehicle licence category.
SPSV	Small Public Service Vehicle (Taxi, Hackney or Limousine).
Taxi	An SPSV which can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ply for hire (be hailed on the street); or • stand for hire at taxi ranks; or • be pre-booked by or for a passenger. <p>It must carry prescribed branding on its front doors and be fitted with a taximeter, printer and roof sign. It can use bus lanes when hired.</p>
Wheelchair Accessible Hackney (WAH)	A hackney which meets a number of additional vehicle specifications designed to allow use by at least one person seated in their wheelchair with at least one other passenger.
Wheelchair Accessible Taxi (WAT)	A taxi which meets a number of additional vehicle specifications designed to allow use by at least one person seated in their wheelchair with at least one other passenger.
Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV)	An SPSV which meets a number of additional vehicle specifications designed to allow use by at least one person seated in their wheelchair with at least one other passenger.

Introduction



About this SPSV Bulletin

Welcome to the National Transport Authority's (NTA) 2022 SPSV Statistical Bulletin on the small public service vehicle (SPSV) sector. It focuses on statistics for all SPSV categories (taxis, hackneys and limousines) and SPSV drivers along with NTA's activities as a regulator.

What is a small public service vehicle (SPSV)?

In Ireland, SPSVs are public transport vehicles with seating for up to eight passengers in addition to the driver. There are three categories of SPSV:

- Taxi (standard and wheelchair accessible). A public hire vehicle licensed to stand or ply for hire on a street. All vehicles must be fitted with a taximeter, roof sign and have approved branding applied.
- Hackney (standard, wheelchair accessible and local area). A private hire vehicle, must be pre-booked and the fare agreed in advance.
- Limousine. A private hire vehicle, must be pre-booked and fare the agreed in advance.

Who is NTA?

NTA is a statutory body established by the Minister for Transport on 1 December 2009. The Commission for Taxi Regulation, having previously been a separate public body from 2004 to 2010, became part of NTA on 1 January 2011. NTA then became responsible for the regulation of the SPSV sector. This includes taxis, hackneys and limousines along with their drivers, owners and associated services such as booking services (app, telephone and walk-in).

What regulations cover the SPSV sector?

The sector is regulated under the following acts and laws:

- The Taxi Regulation Acts 2013 and 2016
- The Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015
- Small Public Service Vehicle (Emergency Measure Covid-19) (Expired Licence) Regulations 2021
- The Taxi Regulation (Maximum Fares Order) 2022
- Small Public Service Vehicle (Cashless Payment Facility) Regulations 2022
- Small Public Service Vehicle (Fixed Payment Offences and Driver Licence Period) Regulations 2022
- Small Public Service Vehicle (Contingency Measure - Vehicle Supply) (Maximum Permissible Age) Regulations 2022

Public safety is at the centre of all SPSV regulation. This includes, but is not limited to, providing a public register for all licensed SPSV vehicles and drivers. This allows members of the public to check the details of the SPSV vehicle and/or driver to ensure both are fully licensed in accordance with legal requirements. Here, “fully licensed” means the vehicle has been inspected for roadworthiness by the National Car Testing Service (NCT) and for suitability to provide passenger services by NTA at least once in the previous year, and that it is driven by a driver who has been vetted by An Garda Síochána. It also means NTA has seen the relevant insurance documentation at least once a year.

To operate as an SPSV:

- The vehicle must be licensed as an SPSV having passed the required inspections; and
- The driver must have an An Garda Síochána issued SPSV driver licence along with a valid standard driving licence.

What is NTA’s role in the SPSV Industry?

NTA is the licensing authority for SPSVs and dispatch operators (booking service providers) and works closely with An Garda Síochána, which is the licensing authority for SPSV drivers. NTA’s role includes granting, renewing, refusing and revoking licences for each vehicle and dispatch operator. NTA is also responsible for:

- All associated licensing, inspection and compliance activities;
- Issuing SPSV driver identification cards and updating the public register for consumers;
- Providing the SPSV Driver Skills Development Programme; and
- Setting the National Maximum Taxi Fare.

What is An Garda Síochána’s role in the SPSV Industry?

An Garda Síochána grants, renews, refuses and revokes driver licences, as required. As part of this, An Garda Síochána also holds responsibility for vetting drivers. An SPSV driver licence is issued for a period of up to 5 years. NTA works with An Garda Síochána in the administration of SPSV driver licensing, which includes the role of managing the driver-testing regime (SPSV Driver Skills Development Programme), processing driver licence payments, issuing identification and licensing cards to drivers and updating the public register so that the public can check the licence details of drivers and vehicles.

Post Covid-19

The SPSV industry was impacted heavily by the Covid-19 pandemic throughout 2020 and 2021. During that period, NTA implemented measures to support the industry and many of these remained in place for 2022. They included:

- The waiver of standard licence renewal fees 2020-2022;
- Temporarily extending the maximum permissible operational age of taxis and hackneys enabling them to remain in the fleet up to the end of 2022;
- Extending the period within which an SPSV licence can reactivate after it becomes expired, from 12 months to 24 months. Within this period an SPSV licence cannot operate, but the licence can be renewed to commence operations again;
- Administering electric vehicle and wheelchair accessible vehicle grant schemes;
- Administering a Motor Tax Refund Scheme allowing an SPSV owners to have their Motor Tax fees refunded between September 2021 and August 2022;
- Waiving initial NCT fees for SPSV operators between September 2021 and August 2022; and
- Ensuring SPSV licence holders continued to be prioritised in NCT centres where ongoing backlogs were being experienced.

Whilst the impact of Covid-19 was still seen in 2022, trends indicate that the industry entered a recovery phase. Following two years of a decreasing SPSV fleet size, 2022 once again saw the fleet growing by 1.8% compared to 2021. SPSV driver numbers remained steady in 2022 with little fluctuation compared to 2021 (a decrease of 0.1%). 2022 saw the number of new driver licences issued increase by 121% on 2021. These positive figures are further elaborated on later in this Bulletin.

Engagement with industry and stakeholders

- NTA engages with the industry individually by telephone, email, letter, industry newsletters, by the roadside and, as a whole, through our website, providing advice and assistance on all aspects of operation;
- NTA attended nine of the ten Advisory Committee on SPSVs meetings held in 2022; and
- NTA completed driver and user surveys throughout the year (February, September and October);
- NTA responded to 96 Public Representative and 62 Parliamentary Queries.

2022 Industry Challenges - Global Vehicle Shortage

As noted in the 'post Covid-19' section above, one of the measures taken to support the SPSV industry was the introduction of emergency regulations to temporarily extend the maximum permissible age of taxis and hackneys in the SPSV fleet. This was due to a lack of passenger demand during the Covid-19 restrictions, which decimated the earning capacity of SPSV operators and their ability to drawdown and/or service loans for replacement vehicles. Due to these emergency regulations, no taxi or hackney was required to exit the SPSV fleet as a result of vehicle age during the restrictions (2020, 2021 or 2022).

Although passenger usage returned to pre-Covid-19 levels in mid-2022, in fact for July and August demand surged temporarily by 40%, the year brought new challenges in relation to replacement vehicle supply in Ireland. Climate, energy and geopolitical challenges, in particular, made it unfeasible for all end of life taxis and hackneys to be replaced in 2022 and beyond. The factors facing vehicle licence holders for the replacement of end of life taxis and hackneys are many, including:

- Russia's military aggression against Ukraine leading to the unpredicted continuation of the global shortage of semiconductor chips, neon, nickel and palladium. Both countries are major producers of key raw materials used in semiconductor manufacturing;
- Energy rationing in Europe;
- Logistics disruptions in Germany;
- Covid-19 lockdowns in China; and
- Supply to Ireland.

As a result, NTA enacted temporary contingency regulations to facilitate the licensing of eligible taxis and hackneys for additional operation in excess of the usual maximum permissible age requirements. Further details are provided later in this Bulletin.

2022 Key Updates

In line with the strategic objective to mature the regulatory framework for the SPSV sector in order to enhance the quality, safety, sustainability and accessibility of these public transport services, NTA completed 5 regulatory reviews following public consultation in 2022.

- National Maximum Taxi Fares Order

The National Maximum Taxi Fare applies only to taxi journeys as taxis may be hired on the street or from a rank with no advance booking (public hire). All taxis must use a verified, calibrated taximeter to calculate the fare. Taxi drivers may charge the customer either the amount calculated on the taximeter or, of course, less. The National Maximum Taxi Fare does not apply to hackney or limousine journeys as they are pre-booked (private hire) and, therefore both hirer and driver have agreed the journey details and fare in advance.

NTA reviews the maximum taxi fare every two years to monitor and adjust for up to date operational costs and market changes in the taxi industry. The most recent Maximum Fare Review was completed in 2022. The output of that Review led to a new set of legal maximum taxi fares, replacing those last set in 2017, that reflected the increased costs on the industry to provide a continued high quality service to the public. This was an increase of a weighted average of 12% and it came into effect on 1 September 2022.

- Small Public Service Vehicle (Cashless Payment Facility) Regulations

In September 2022, NTA made it mandatory for all taxis to have an in-taxi, point of sale, cashless payment terminal and for cashless payments to be accepted when requested by passengers. This came into effect on 1 September 2022 along with a new €200 Fixed Penalty (fine) for failure to accept cashless payments.

- Small Public Service Vehicle (Contingency Measure - Vehicle Supply) (Maximum Permissible Age) Regulations

NTA enacted regulations to ensure any licensed vehicles due to reach their final date of operation/maximum permissible age between 13 March 2020 and 31 December 2024 were permitted an extension. This allowed those vehicles to remain in the SPSV fleet past the usual maximum permissible age requirements once all other licensing requirements continued to be met. This took effect on 18 November 2022. The rationale behind this regulatory change is covered in the “2022 Industry Challenges - Global Vehicle Shortage” section above and in more detail in the “SPSV Fleet Profile” section later in this Bulletin.

- Fines for the Non-Compliant - Focus on Safety, Consumer Protection and Services for Users with a Disability

NTA introduced a new Fixed Penalty (fine) for discrimination against service users with a disability. Where there is a refusal of a driver of an SPSV to carry a passenger in a wheelchair, they can be fined our maximum statutory Fixed Penalty (fine) amount of €250, reflecting the gravity and nature of the offence. As part of this same regulatory review and to promote consumer safety and protection, NTA also increased the Fixed Penalty (fine) prescribed amounts from four bands to five. Most Fixed Penalty (fine) amounts also increased. The previous bands were €40, €60, €80, €250, and these changed to €80, €100, €150, €200, €250. This new fine structure and the additional fine for discrimination against a service users with a disability took effect on 1 January 2023.

- SPSV Driver Licence Validity Period

As requested by An Garda Síochána, an amendment was made to the SPSV Driver Licence Validity Period set out in section 7(3)(a) of the Taxi Regulations (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015, from five years to ‘up to’ five years. This will allow the Authorised Officer (in this case, An Garda Síochána) to consider all parts of the application when issuing a licence. Where it may be required, it will allow the Authorised Officer to issue a licence for a period of less than five years. This took effect on 1 January 2023.

1

Overall SPSV Fleet



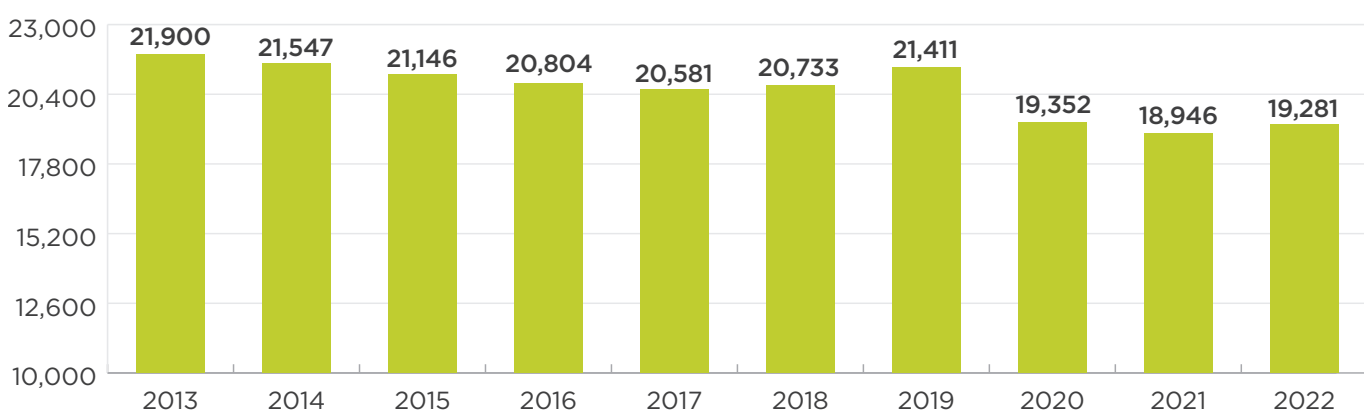
Small Public Service Vehicle Licence States

Broadly speaking, all SPSV licences exist in one of three states:

- **Active:** Where SPSV licences are active, the associated vehicles are licensed and may be used for the carriage of passengers for hire or reward (all other regulatory requirements being met). See Figures 1 and 2.
- **Inactive:** This means that the SPSV licence has expired. However, the licence holder is entitled to apply for a replacement, within twenty-four months of the expiry date. See Table 1.
- **Dead:** The SPSV licence can no longer be replaced. A new licence application must be made.

Following an SPSV fleet decline of 6% from 2013 to 2017, NTA saw the industry beginning to grow in 2018 with a 4% increase between 2017 and 2019 with the upward trend set to continue. Covid-19 and the severe impact this had on the industry led to a reduction in 2020 and 2021, with an 11.5% decline in fleet numbers. 2022 saw this reverse once more with a 1.8% increase in fleet numbers during that year. Figure 1 illustrates the changes in SPSV licence numbers from 2013 to 2022.

Figure 1: Active Small Public Service Vehicle Licences by Year, 2013 – 2022



The SPSV fleet increased throughout 2022 at a steady pace, with nearly all months showing an increase on the previous month, as demonstrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Active Small Public Service Vehicle Licences by Month, 2022

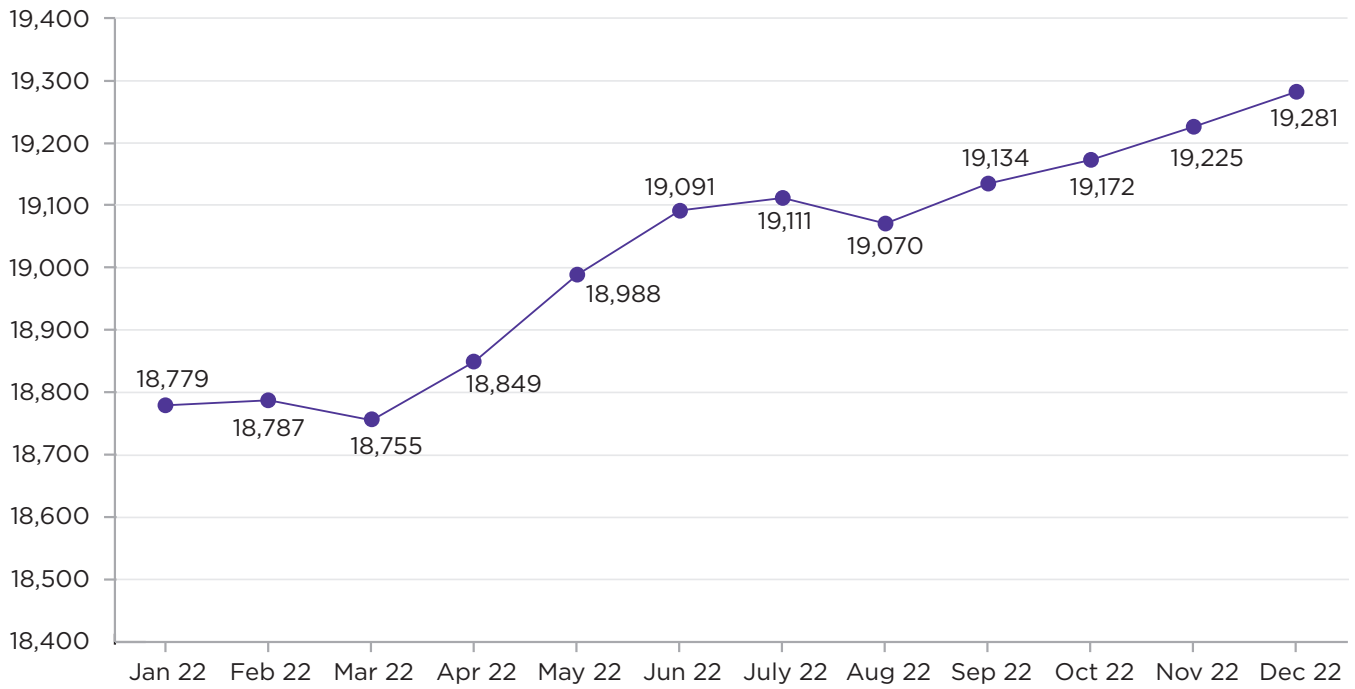


Table 1: Inactive SPSV Vehicle Licences, 2021 - 2022

SPSV Licence type	State	31 Dec-21	31 Dec-22	Difference
Vehicle	Inactive	3,270	2,149	↓34.2%

Table 2: SPSV Vehicle Licences Status that Changed to Dead by Month, 2022

	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22
SPSV Dead State	63	51	44	8	0	111	210	253	210	145	123	81

2

Vehicle Licences Issued



New SPSV licences can be granted for a Wheelchair Accessible Taxis (WAT), Wheelchair Accessible Hackneys (WAH), limousines and Local Area Hackneys (LAH). Since June 2010, it is no longer possible to apply for a new SPSV licence for a taxi that was not a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) under the Taxi Regulation Act 2003 (Grant of Taxi Licences) (Amendment) Regulations 2010.

Under the same law, the transfer of a licence was prohibited for all new SPSV licences granted. This was extended to all SPSV licence holders in 2014, which effectively meant a licence could not be sold or transferred from one licence holder to another. The only exception is where an SPSV licence holder appoints someone who can apply to take over that licence in the event of the original licence holder's death.

Figure 3 and Table 3 below reflect the number of new SPSV licences issued from 2013 to 2022. While this number was increasing year-on-year, driven in part by the Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Grant Scheme introduced in mid-2014, and NTA's 2018 driver recruitment campaign for new industry entrants (covered in more detail in the 'SPSV Driver licences' section of this Bulletin), Covid-19 in 2020 impacted this significantly. Compared to 2019, 2020 saw a 56% decrease on new vehicle licences issued and 2021 a 66% decrease. During this period, SPSV inspection centres were closed from late-March and early-June 2020 under HSE Covid-19 guidelines, resulting in no new licences joining the fleet in those months. 2022 did once again see an upward trend appear with a 10.5% increase on new SPSV licences issued compared to 2021.

Figure 3: New Vehicle Licences Issued by Year, 2013 - 2022

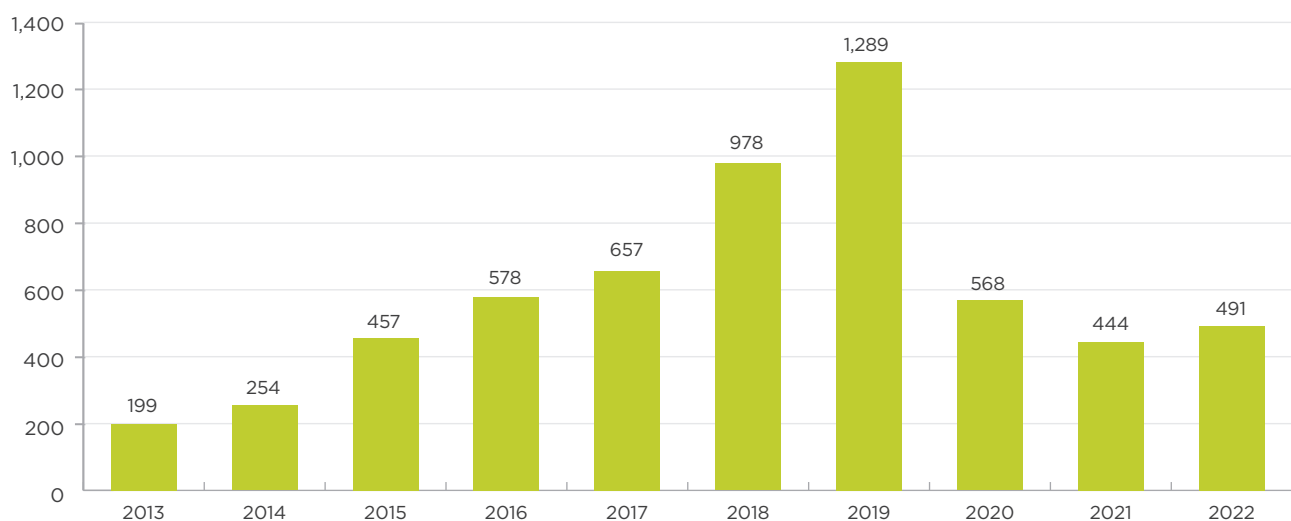


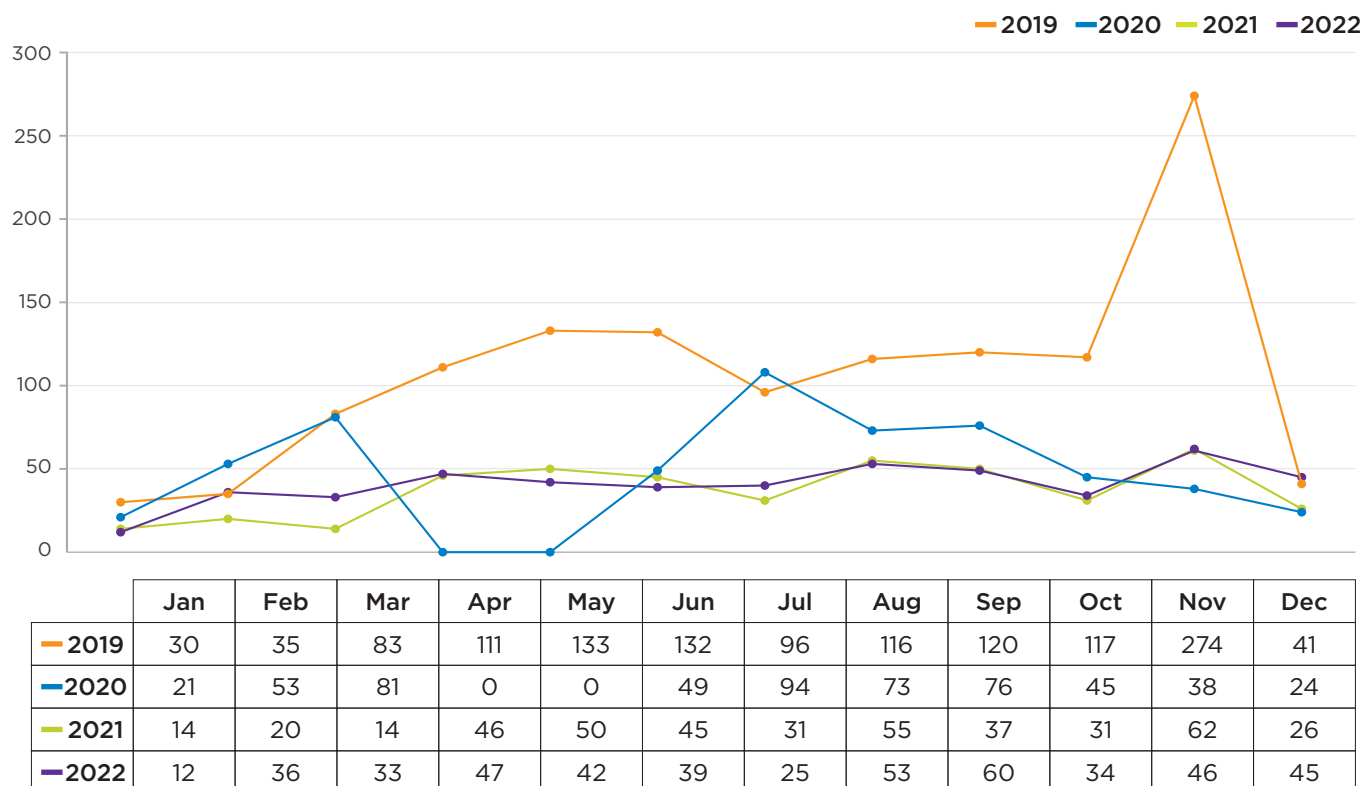
Table 3: New Vehicle Licences Issued by Year and Category, 2013 - 2022

New Vehicle Licences Issued							
Year	Taxi	Hackney	Limousine	Wheelchair Accessible Taxi	Wheelchair Accessible Hackney	Local Area Hackney	Total
2013	0	0	177	16	6	0	199
2014	0	0	190	52	5	7	254
2015	0	0	269	157	18	13	457
2016	0	0	293	261	22	2	578
2017	0	0	290	345	21	1	657
2018	0	0	236	713	25	4	978
2019	0	0	309	944	28	8	1,289
2020	0	0	146	404	12	6	568
2021	0	0	122	292	27	3	444
2022	0	0	231	231	21	8	491

Main point for 2022

The decrease in new SPSV licences issued since 2019 and the impact of Covid-19 is evident. 2022 saw the figure increase once more but brought with it new global challenges regarding supply of new and second-hand vehicles. Climate, energy and geopolitical challenges, covered in more detail in the “2022 Industry Challenges - Global Vehicle Shortage” section above and the ‘SPSV Fleet Profile’ section later in this Bulletin, resulted in long delays for new vehicles in Ireland as well as inflated prices for second-hand vehicles, making it unfeasible for some to enter the fleet. Figure 4 below, illustrates the licences issued monthly for 2019 and 2022. Regulatory measures introduced by NTA in 2022 in relation to increasing the maximum permissible age of vehicles sought to counteract the impact of these factors on the industry. This is discussed further in under ‘Vehicle Age Profile’ later in this Bulletin.

Figure 4: New Vehicle Licences Issued by Month, 2019 - 2022



3

SPSV Fleet Profile

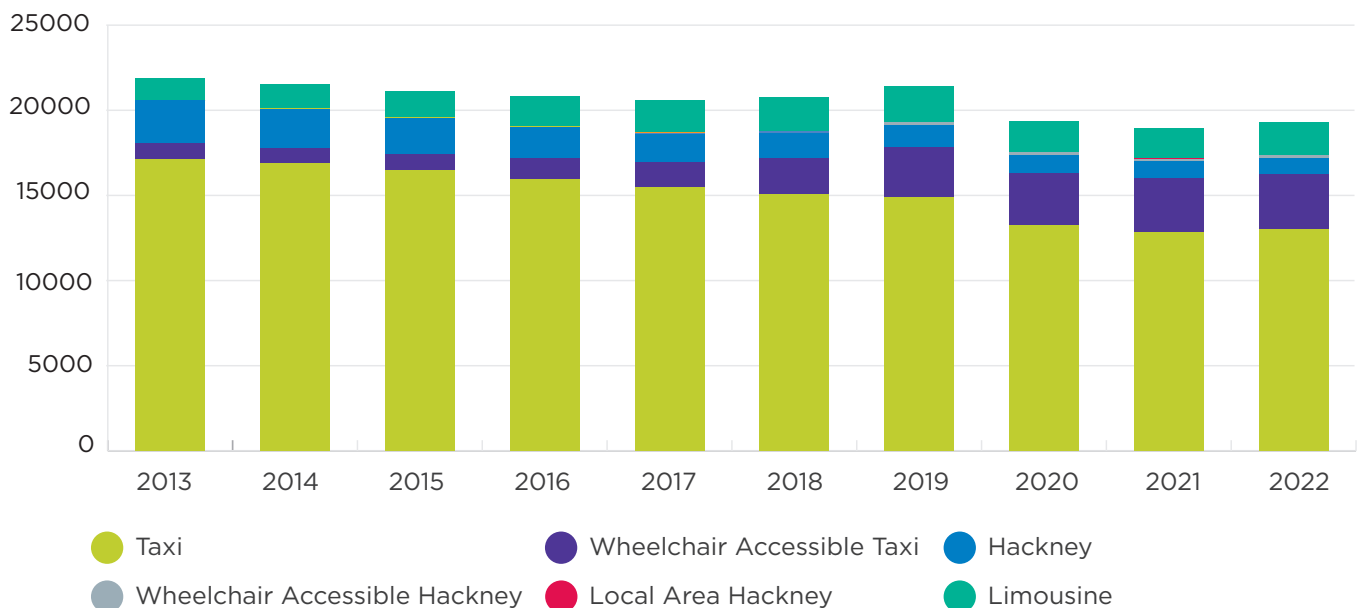


The SPSV fleet is made up of taxis, hackneys, and limousines. Table 4 and Figure 5 provide a breakdown of the overall makeup of the SPSV fleet from 2013 to 2022.

Table 4: SPSV Fleet by Vehicle Category by Year, 2013 - 2022

	Taxis		Hackneys			Limousines	Total
	Standard	Wheelchair Accessible (WAT)	Standard	Wheelchair Accessible (WAH)	Local Area (LAH)		
2013	17,136	898	2,532	18	n/a	1,316	21,900
2014	16,899	889	2,281	34	7	1,437	21,547
2015	16,460	969	2,081	48	17	1,571	21,146
2016	15,961	1,185	1,838	69	10	1,741	20,804
2017	15,490	1,471	1,631	84	11	1,894	20,581
2018	15,064	2,115	1,477	105	13	1,959	20,733
2019	14,863	2,951	1,349	119	19	2,110	21,411
2020	13,255	3,015	1,115	118	21	1,828	19,352
2021	12,861	3,118	1,025	132	21	1,789	18,946
2022	13,014	3,206	949	141	23	1,948	19,281

Figure 5: SPSV Fleet by Vehicle Category, 2013 to 2022



Training and information programmes including the JAM (Just A Minute) scheme, dementia awareness, mobility issues awareness and guide and assistance dog recognition and awareness are provided for drivers. Service accessibility for wheelchair users is another core strategy for NTA. All vehicles which are suitable to be licensed as taxis, hackneys and limousines have a boot size and shape which can carry a folded wheelchair. For those passengers who travel seated in a wheelchair, the fleet contains Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAV).

In June 2014, wheelchair accessible vehicle numbers were at a low of 850 in a fleet of 21,604 SPSVs (4%). New regulations were introduced which reduced the legal size specification for WAVs to enable SPSV operators to provide wheelchair accessible services in smaller vehicles (5-6 passenger seater vehicles, to accommodate one passenger using a wheelchair with just one other passenger, rather than the previous much larger and more expensive 8 passenger seater vehicles). In July of the same year, a very easy to complete Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Grant Scheme (WAV14) was launched to assist licence holders to purchase a WAV. The WAV Grant Scheme, which has run each year since 2014, has assisted in funding 3,655 new or replacement/upgraded vehicles to year-end 2022. The WAV14 - WAV22 Grant Schemes offered financial aid of up to €7,500 nationwide for the purchase or conversion of a new or replacement WAV.

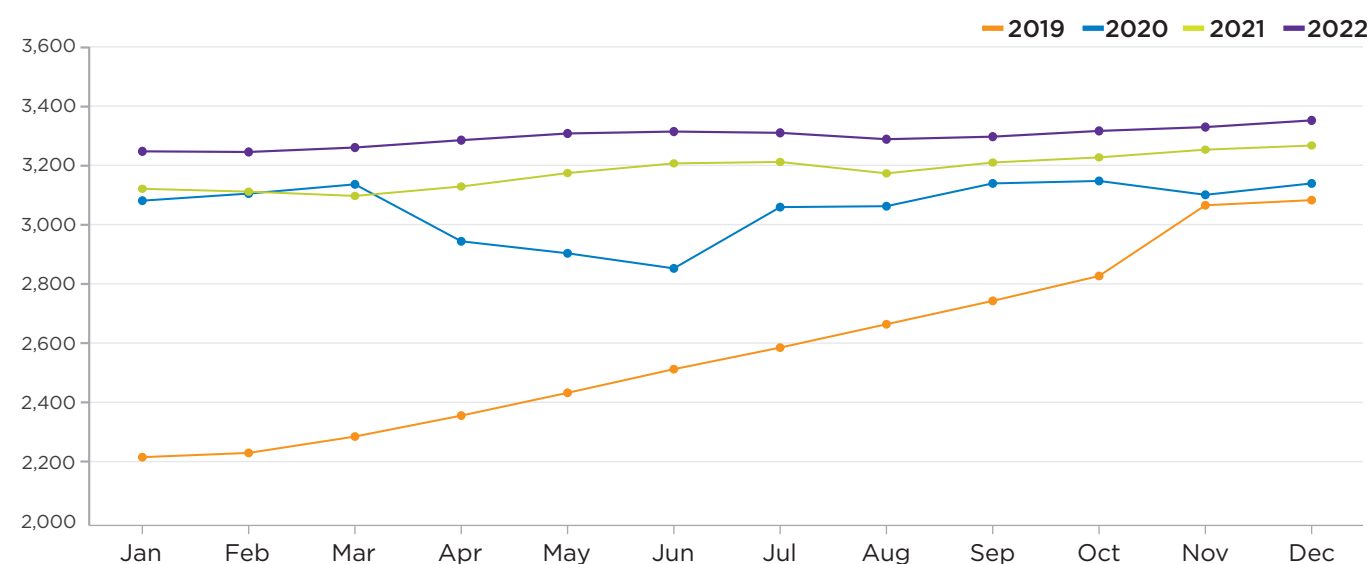
The 2022 WAV scheme opened on 1 January 2022 and 312 grants disbursed with each grant either bringing a new vehicle into the fleet or enabling the replacement of an older licensed vehicle. Table 5 below represents the grants issued each year from 2014 to 2022.

Table 5: Grant Assisted Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles, 2014 - 2022

	Grants	Capital	New WAV to Fleet	Replacement of WAV within Fleet
2014	128	€819,000	92	36
2015	153	€871,000	134	19
2016	335	€1,987,500	284	51
2017	284	€1,747,500	233	51
2018	761	€3,366,000	679	82
2019	1,039	€4,420,000	907	132
2020	264	€1,240,500	227	37
2021	379	€1,605,500	271	108
2022	312	€1,320,500	231	81

Although Covid-19 affected the fleet heavily, WAV licences continued to increase nonetheless. 2022 saw the highest number of WAVs active in the fleet each month when compared to the last 4 years as illustrated in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6: Wheelchair Accessible Licences by Month, 2019 - 2022



At end 2022, the Irish fleet penetration rate for WAVs was over 17%. This is high compared to other similarly regulated countries, i.e. those countries where WAV service provision is mandated through the taxi and hackney fleet, rather than only by discrete health or public authority paratransit, contracted or ambulance services.

NTA has committed to increasing WAV penetration by 25% from 31 December 2021 (3,250) by 31 December 2025. In our continued efforts to improve accessibility for passengers travelling in a wheelchair, our current WAV service improvement programme includes, at a high level:

- a prohibition on granting new vehicle licences for taxis or hackneys which are not wheelchair accessible since 2010;
- much reduced WAV licence application and renewal fees;
- mandatory and free disability awareness training provision for all grant recipients, which includes a practical assistance module;
- a commitment to greatly enhanced grant levels for 2023 (up to €17,500 per vehicle or €42,500 if the WAV model is electric) which, combined with the anticipated improved availability of such specialised vehicles, NTA believes will further increase the numbers of WAVs in the fleet;
- enacting legislation to increase the fine for an unreasonable refusal to provide services to a wheelchair user to the maximum permitted under our legislation, €250 per offence;
- specifically trained NTA compliance and enforcement team members for WAV service related investigations (noting that complaints received have reduced in 2022);
- the WAV Register available on the Transport for Ireland (TFI) website, which shows the contact details for all WAV licence holders by county with their contact details for direct bookings, with a link directly to our Complaints Page for users who do experience poor service;
- dedicated accessibility group representatives on the Advisory Committee for SPSVs and NTA's Transport Users Advisory Group (TUAG); and
- consistent messaging for industry members on their duties and responsibilities towards passengers with a disability through our newsletters and website updates.

Sustainability

One of NTA's strategic objectives remains to transition the SPSV fleet to lower/zero emission technologies in line with the Department of Transport's National Sustainable Mobility Policy Action Plan 2022 - 2025. To do this, NTA aims to increase the number of sustainable vehicles in the SPSV fleet. The Electric Small Public Services Vehicle (eSPSV) Grant Scheme was available in 2022 once again, having originally launched in 2018 by the Department of Transport and administered by NTA. 2022 once again saw €15m committed to this scheme by Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan.

The eSPSV 2022 Grant Scheme proved extremely popular with 2,604 applications received from 26 counties, 1,667 of which were from Dublin. This is a 75% increase on applications received in 2021 (1,490). 636 grant applications received funding as outlined in Table 6 below. The previously mentioned constrained vehicle supply experienced internationally meant many of the applicants who received offers of grant funding were ultimately unable to source vehicles by the year of 2022 and grant closure. These applicants were encouraged to apply for the 2023 grant.

Table 6: Overview of eSPSV Grant Scheme per Year, 2018 - 2022

	Grants	Grants - Finance	New eSPSV	New eSPSV to Fleet - Finance	Replacement eSPSV	Replacement eSPSV to Fleet - Finance
2018	46	€279,000	3	€12,000	43	€267,000
2019	35	€189,000	2	€8,500	30	€180,500
2020	20	€159,000	0	€0,000	20	€159,000
2021	689	€13,332,500	1	€20,000	688	€13,312,500
2022	636	€11,900,000	4	€50,500	632	€11,849,500

Main point for 2022

Prior to the 2018 scheme, there were five sustainable vehicles (battery electric powered) in the national SPSV fleet. As of 31 December 2022, there were 1,369 fully electric sustainable vehicles in the fleet, compared with 674 in 2021. This represents over a 100% increase year on year. There are also 3,539 hybrid vehicles operating.

Table 7: Low Emission Vehicle (LEV) Numbers as of December 31, 2022

Fuel Type	Number in the Fleet
Battery Electric	1,369
Plug-In Hybrid	45
Petrol/Electric Hybrid	3,494

Vehicle Age Profile

In accordance with Regulation 31 of the Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015, the “maximum permissible age” of a vehicle means the age of a vehicle beyond which that vehicle may not be licensed as a taxi or hackney. Once a vehicle reaches its maximum permissible age, the licence holder may not apply to NTA for the renewal of a licence on that vehicle. A younger replacement vehicle must be purchased, and both a roadworthiness test (NCT) and an SPSV initial suitability test completed.

Under those regulations, for safety, emissions and quality grounds, taxis and hackneys must be less than 10-years old to operate. Wheelchair accessible taxis and hackneys can operate up to 15-years old. No maximum age is set for limousines due to the vintage nature of many of these vehicles, and the reduced mileage they do due to their ceremonial and prestigious roles. Some limited exceptions, specifically concerning vehicles associated with SPSV licences before the introduction of the Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicles) Regulations 2015, apply to these timeframes. All vehicles must pass both a roadworthiness and a suitability inspection every year.

The maximum permissible age of taxis and hackneys was considered by NTA throughout Covid-19 when licence holders could not gain an income from SPSV service provision. As a result and following public consultations, NTA enacted two emergency measures in 2020 and another in 2021 which ultimately meant that no SPSV would be forced out of the fleet due to reaching its maximum permissible age before the end of 2022. From 01 January 2023, all legal maximum permissible age limits were to return to 10/15 years.

However, 2022 brought new and unexpected challenges. End of life taxis and hackneys that were required to be replaced in 2022, were unable to do so due to the severe diminution in global new and used vehicle supply. The factors licence holders faced for the replacement of end of life taxis and hackneys created a perfect storm. These included, but were not limited to:

- An unpredicted global shortage of semiconductor chips and palladium:
 - Russia and Ukraine are major producers of key raw materials used in semiconductor manufacturing. Pre March 2022, Ukraine produced 70-80% of the global supply of neon, and Russia produced 35-45% of world's palladium supply. The palladium shortage is key as it is essential for the production of catalytic converters;
 - 92% of the world's most advanced semiconductors were manufactured in Taiwan. The geopolitical unrest there from August 2022 impacted global semiconductor supply in the short term, while making recovery uncertain in the medium to long term;
- Energy rationing in Europe:
 - Russia's suspension of the Nord Stream Gas supply on 5 September 2022 resulted in energy rationing in Europe (particularly in auto manufacturing Germany). Residential use was prioritised over heavy industry, further depressing vehicle production and increasing overall costs;
- Logistics:
 - Drought left the water level of parts of the Rhine and the Danube too low for ships to pass, causing further significant disruption to supply chains, in particular the transport of oil and coal;
- Covid-19:
 - the Chinese lockdown policy continued to impact the supply of raw materials and components;
- Supply to Ireland:
 - as Europe's largest right-hand drive car market for auto-manufacturers, the UK is more attractive for new car sales (with lower taxation and stronger sterling);
 - the shortage of new cars in the Irish market (and very significant lead times) created a shortage in internal used car supply;
 - the demand for used cars could not be met, resulting in higher prices;
 - a much reduced new and used car supply post Brexit as UK imports attracted higher taxation (customs duty, VRT, VAT); and
 - the pent up demand for new premium vehicles was serviced by auto-manufacturers before the demand for mass produced hackney and taxi suitable vehicles.

As a result and through public consultation, NTA enacted the Small Public Service Vehicle (Contingency Measure – Vehicle Supply) (Maximum Permissible Age) Regulations 2022 in November 2022. This permitted all SPSVs with a final operation date in 2023 and 2024, some of which would have already benefitted from the previous Covid-19 emergency measures, to operate for a period beyond the maximum permissible age set out in Regulation 31 of the Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015.

Overview

- These Regulations ensure no taxi or hackney associated with a vehicle licence on 18 November 2022 will be required to exit the SPSV fleet solely as a result of age until 2025 at the earliest.
- The new maximum permissible age of such vehicles will be between 2025-2027, depending on the original final operation date of the vehicle.

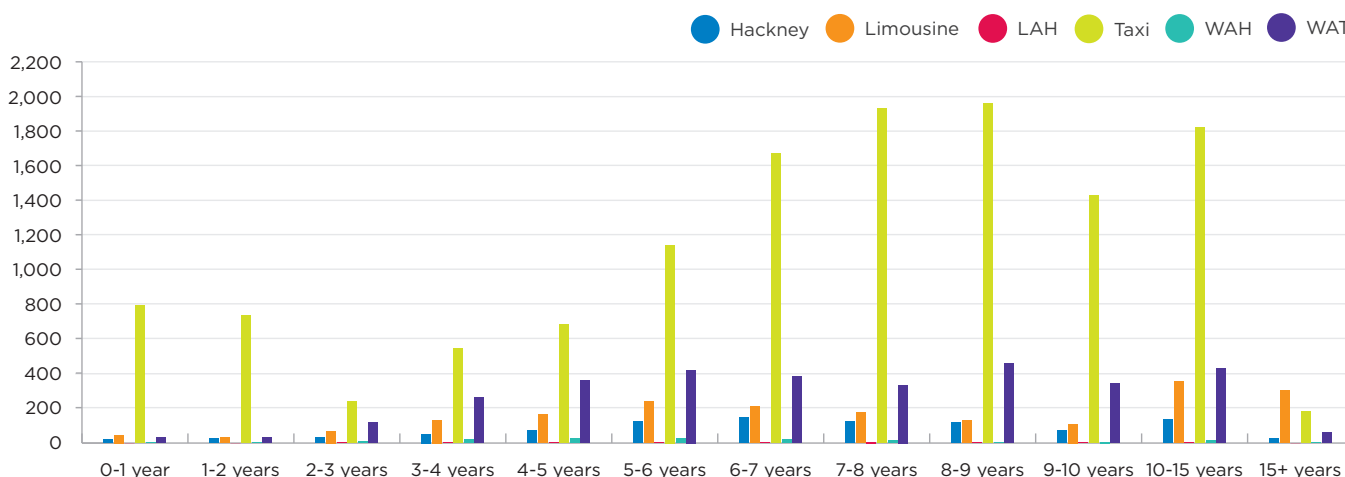
Original Final Operation Date	Extension (Years)	Contingency Final Operation Date
2020*	5	2025
2021	4	2025
2022	4	2026
2023	3	2026
2024	3	2027

*From 13 March 2020 when the Covid-19 pandemic began to impact the SPSV industry

Table 8: Age Profile of the SPSV Fleet at 31 December 2022

Vehicle Age	Hackney	Limousine	LAH	Taxi	WAH	WAT	Total
< 1 year of age	21	46	0	789	1	34	891
1 to < 2 years of age	26	30	0	727	3	30	816
2 to < 3 years of age	32	69	1	236	7	115	460
3 to < 4 years of age	52	132	1	540	20	260	1,005
4 to < 5 years of age	73	162	1	680	27	358	1,301
5 to < 6 years of age	121	236	3	1,133	25	418	1,936
6 to < 7 years of age	147	209	4	1,655	20	380	2,415
7 to < 8 years of age	122	174	6	1,912	13	332	2,559
8 to < 9 years of age	120	129	4	1,940	5	453	2,651
9 to < 10 years of age	71	109	1	1,415	6	339	1,941
10 to < 15 years of age	137	353	2	1,804	13	426	2,735
15+ years of age	27	299	0	183	1	61	571
Total	949	1,948	23	13,014	141	3,206	19,281

Figure 7: Age Profile of the Taxi and Hackney Vehicles at 31 December 2022



The Small Public Service Vehicle (Contingency Measure - Vehicle Supply) (Maximum Permissible Age) Regulations 2022 are a temporary exceptional contingency provision in direct response to the unresolved state of ongoing vehicle supply shortages in the interests of supporting an industry to continue to provide a public transport service. From 2025 onwards, the standard maximum permissible ages will be phased back in when it is expected vehicle supply will have normalised once more.

4

SPSV Driver Licences



An Garda Síochána is the licensing authority for SPSV driver licences and grants, renews, revokes or refuses licences. An Garda Síochána is solely responsible for vetting each applicant for a new SPSV driver licence or a renewal. Each SPSV driver licence permits the holder to drive all categories of SPSV (taxi, hackney and limousine). The licence is valid for a period of up to five years and can remain expired for one year after which it cannot be renewed.

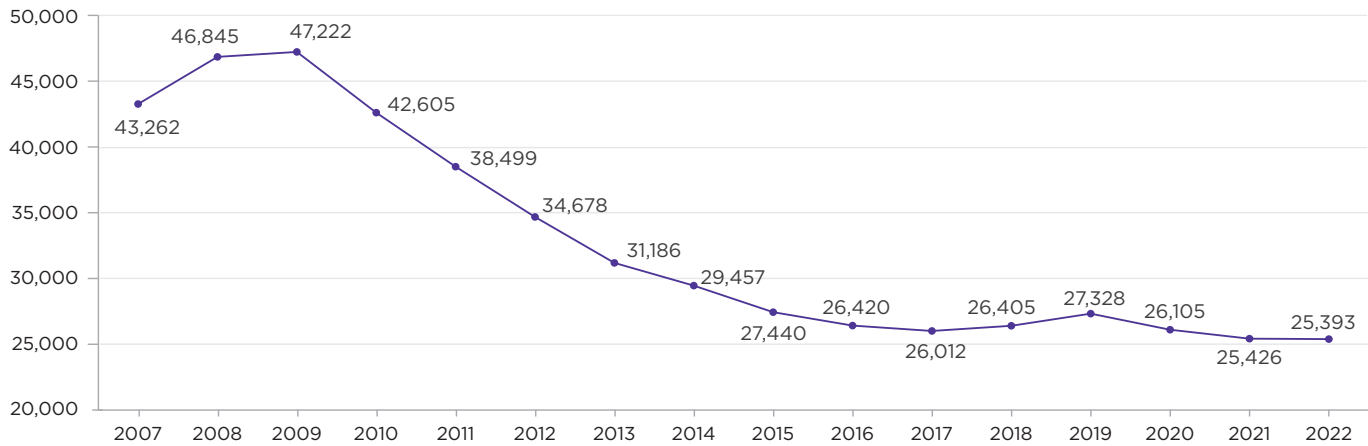
In 1963, the SPSV Driver Licence first application fee was IR£1, rising to IR£10 for a first application fee with a IR£3 new licence grant/renewal fee in 1977. It remained at that level until 2009. As a result of the minimal outlay, many SPSV drivers continued to hold a licence during this period but did not necessarily provide SPSV services, resulting in inflated licence numbers which did not represent licences available for hire to the public.

On 1 May 2009, the Taxi Regulation Act 2003 (Small Public Service Vehicle Skills Development Programme and Driver Licence Fee) Regulations 2009 came into force. These regulations set both the application and the five year renewal fee for a licence to drive an SPSV at €250, a fee that has remained in place since. These Regulations also made it necessary, from 1 July 2009, for an applicant for a new SPSV driver licence to first undertake and pass a standardised SPSV Skills Development Programme and examinations provided by the Commission for Taxi Regulation (now NTA). While An Garda Síochána is the SPSV driver licensing authority, since 2009 NTA has been responsible for managing and providing this SPSV Driver Skills Programme, as well as taking payments and issuing receipts, issuing driver ID & display cards to licence holders and updating the Public Register/Driver Check app. Both of these enable passengers or intending passengers to check or confirm SPSV driver and vehicle licence details.

The number of active SPSV drivers licensed in Ireland was at its peak in May 2009 (47,529). The decline in active licences seen in the subsequent years can be attributed in part to that fee change and the retention of more fulltime SPSV drivers in the fleet. In a little over two years since the change, SPSV Driver Licence numbers fell significantly from 47,529 to 39,792 and the same significant decline continued for many years. Given an SPSV Driver Licence renewal is required every 5 years, the impact of the increased renewal licence fee for existing driver licence holders caused the number to drop significantly each year, with active driver licence numbers standing at 29,457 at the end of 2014 (a drop of 18,072 active driver licences).

The trend downwards began to slow then but it wasn't until 2018, with an NTA radio and press recruitment campaign for new drivers, that a significant increase in SPSV Driver Skills Test candidates and licences applications was evidenced. This continued on an upward trend through 2019 and 2020 until the Covid-19 pandemic hit.

Figure 8: Active SPSV Driver Licences by Year, 2007 – 2022



As of 31 December 2022, the number of SPSV Drivers is 25,393. This represents a 6.7% decrease (1,835) compared to pre-Covid (March 2020). The majority of drivers (58%) are entitled to stand and ply for hire (can be hailed on street or pick up at a taxi rank) in Dublin.

SPSV Driver Entry Test

The first step in becoming an SPSV Driver is to pass the SPSV Driver Entry Test. With the introduction of this standardised test, all applicants were now subject to the same standard application process. Previously, each jurisdiction had its own local geography test and requirements. The overall purpose of the national SPSV Driver Entry Test is to offer any potential licensed driver the tools needed to provide an effective and efficient service to the public. The Test is designed to verify that all new entrants to the industry:

- are familiar with the regulatory framework in which the SPSV industry operates as outlined in The Official Manual for Operating in the SPSV Industry; and
- have a good working knowledge of the county in which they wish to operate taxi services.

The test has two modules, the Industry Knowledge module and the Area Knowledge module; and comprises 90 randomly generated questions from a large bank of multiple-choice questions. The Industry Knowledge module makes up 54 questions in the test and the content relates to regulations and good practice in the industry, the driver's rights along with the rights of the customer. The Official Manual for Operating in the SPSV Industry, available on the NTA website to download free of charge, is the only required study material for this module. The Area Knowledge module makes up 36 questions in the test and is for the county chosen by the candidate. The content focuses on direct routes, major landmarks, transport hubs and so forth for the county in question. To pick up passengers on the street drivers must have passed the area knowledge test for that county. It is possible to be licensed for several counties. All information regarding the area(s) a driver is licensed to operate is available for passengers to check via the Transport for Ireland, Driver Check App.

Since its introduction in July 2009, 18,181 candidates have attempted the SPSV Driver Entry Test. 68% of candidates were successful. The average test attempts for those who passed is 2.8 with 34% doing so on the first attempt and 25% on the second. Of those who did not pass, 53% made only one attempt to do so.

Main points for 2022

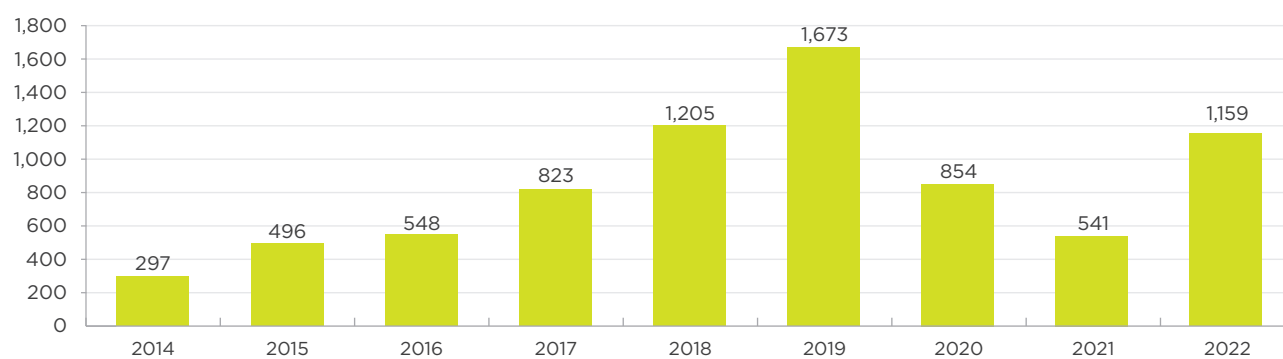
NTA temporarily stopped providing the Skills Development Programme in mid-March 2020 on public health advice arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. In May 2021 the programme reopened but at a reduced capacity to allow increased social distancing in the test centres. The centres were once again opened to full capacity in mid-May 2022. 2022 saw 4,997 SPSV Driver Entry Tests completed by 2,461 candidates. This is a 96% increase on the number of tests completed in 2021.

Table 9: SPSV Driver Entry Tests Delivered, 2021 - 2022

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2021	Closed due to Covid-19				183	461	340	292	354	311	336	272	2,549
2022	285	288	357	350	396	470	460	488	535	448	507	413	4,997

In 2020 and 2021, the number of new drivers joining the sector was impacted because of the Skills Development Programme being closed as well as the decrease in work available for SPSV drivers due to the nationwide restrictions. 2022 saw this moving towards pre-Covid-19 levels once again with 1,159 new SPSV driver licences granted by An Garda Síochána. This is over a 114% increase compared to 2021. Of those, 62% (735) relate to new applications to drive in Dublin.

Figure 9: New SPSV Driver Licences Issued, 2014 - 2022



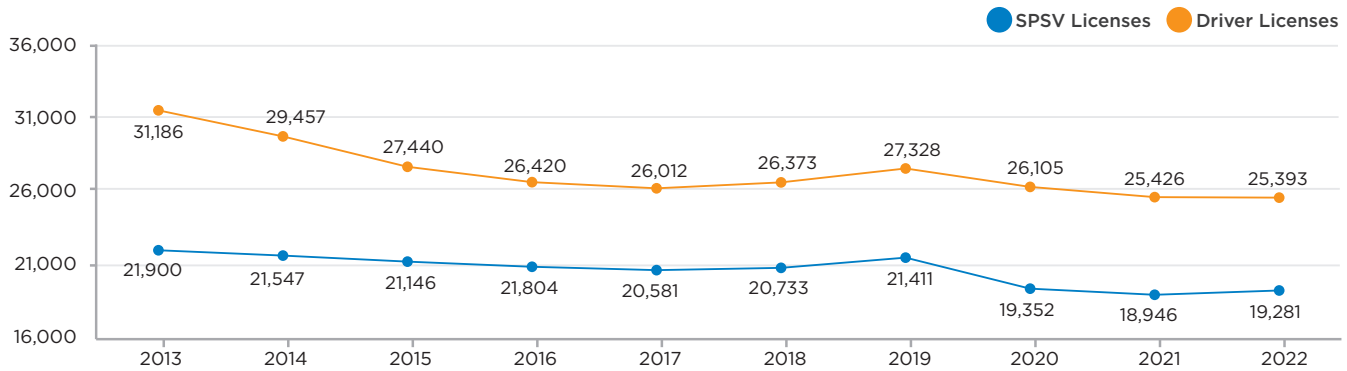
Main points for 2022

To promote working within the SPSV sector, NTA completed a one month driver recruitment campaign across radio, press and social media in July 2022. This outlined the steps on how to enter into and highlighted the benefits of working in the industry. This was previously carried out by NTA in 2018 when it then saw a 46% increase in new drivers for 2018 and a 103% increase in new drivers for 2019 when compared to 2017.



Figure 10 below outlines the overall trends for SPSV vehicle licences and SPSV driver licences from 2013 to 2022.

Figure 10: Comparison of SPSV Driver and Vehicle Licences 2013-2022



The number of SPSV driver licences surrendered remained steady in 2022 at 25 compared to 20 in 2021. 1,400 SPSV drivers allowed their licences to lapse permanently in 2022 compared to 1,651 in 2021 and 645 in 2020.

A driver licence can remain inactive (expired) for 12 months after the licence expiry date. When in this status the licence holder cannot operate but can apply to renew for another 5 year period at any point during this time. Table 10 shows that the overall number of inactive licences is decreasing when comparing 2022 to 2021.

Table 10: Inactive SPSV Driver Licences, 2021 - 2022

SPSV Licence type	State	31 Dec-21	31 Dec-22	Difference
Driver	Inactive	1,513	1,333	↓11.8%

Driver Age Profile

Figure 11 provides the full breakdown of the SPSV driver age profile for Ireland, with the majority shown to be within their 50's and above. This indicates that a career in taxi driving may be popular as a second career, post retirement.

Figure 11: SPSV Driver Age Profile as at 31 December 2022

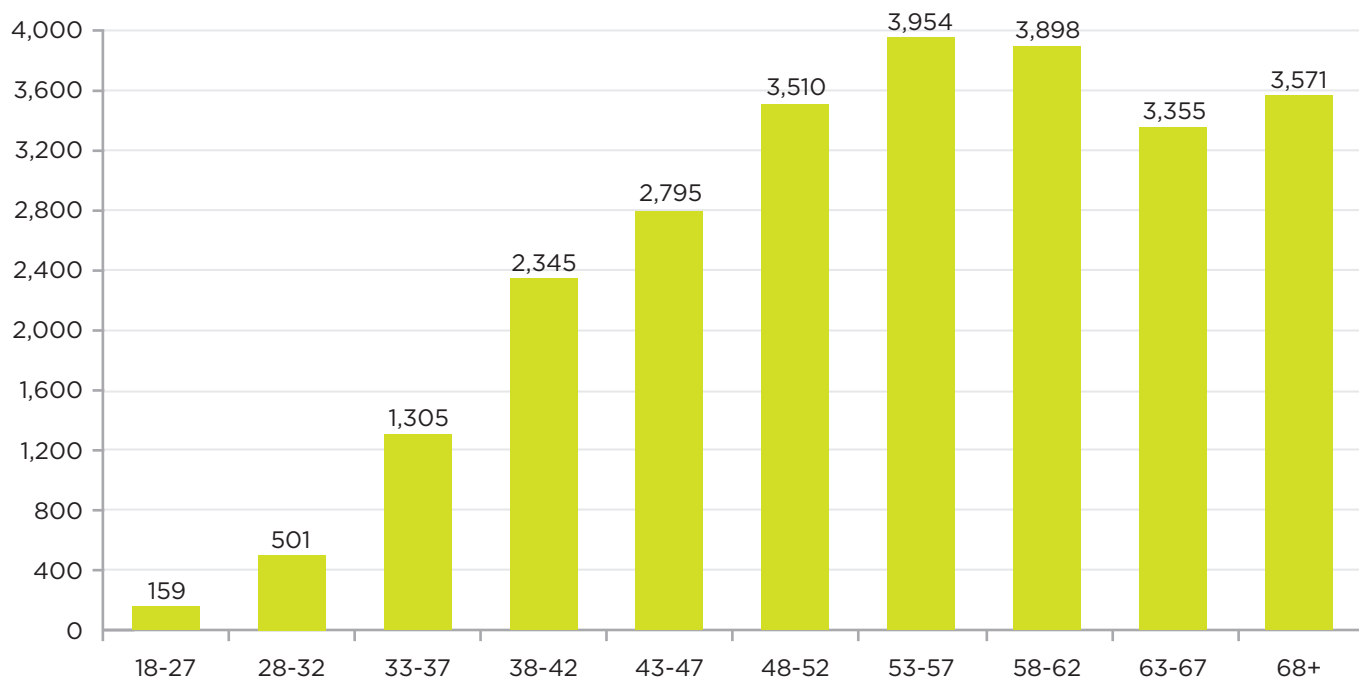
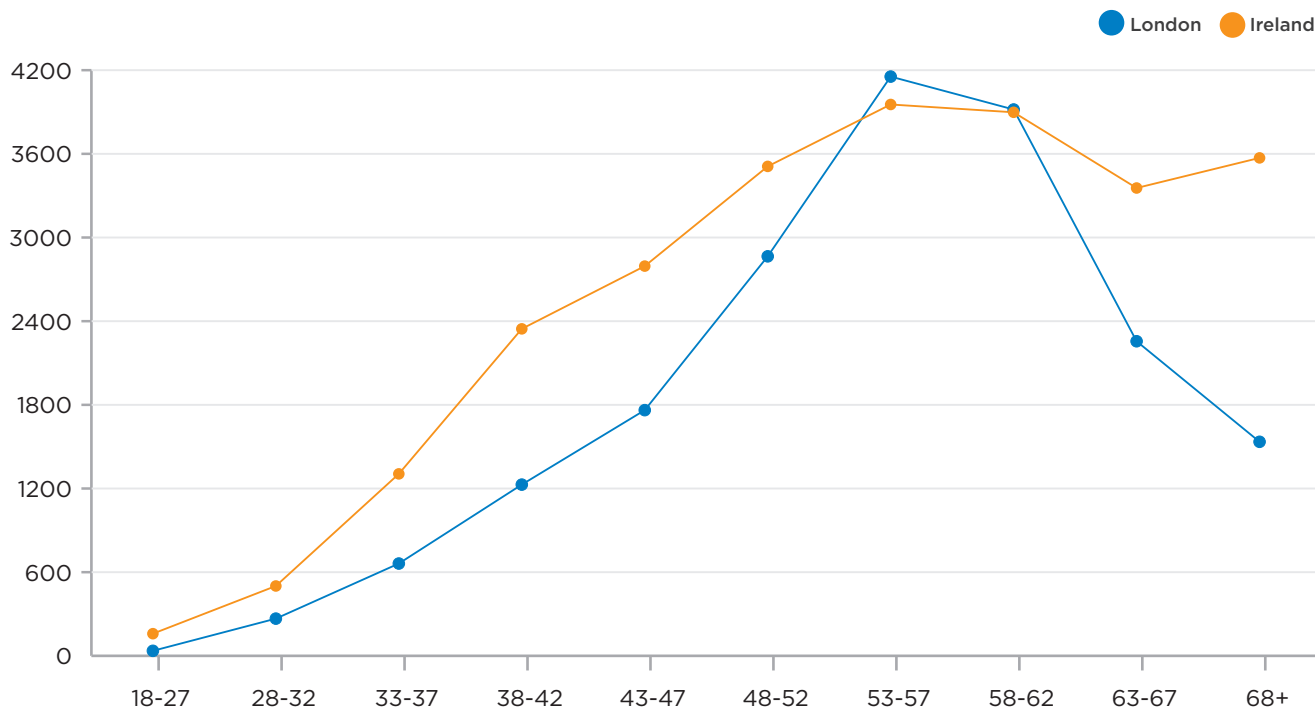


Figure 12 illustrates the alignment in terms of SPSV driver age profile in Ireland compared with London taxi drivers.

Figure 12: SPSV Driver Age Profile Comparison Ireland and London at December 2022



Driver Linking and the Driver Check App

The Driver Check App is a consumer public safety app and is free to download to any smartphone. It allows passengers to receive real-time licensing information, including a photograph of the driver they are about to travel with. If a passenger notices that a driver or vehicle are not showing as registered with NTA when in use, they can report it to NTA through the App. NTAs compliance team then investigates all such reports and takes action as appropriate. The passenger can also use the app to share the licence details (without driver photograph) with a friend via email. 2022 saw 18,928 downloads of the app for use.

When an SPSV driver starts operating their vehicle, they are legally required to notify NTA. This is to ensure that their driver and vehicle details appear on the online public SPSV Register and on the Driver Check App for the public to view. This is commonly known as 'driver linking' within the industry. A link can be created for as long or as short a period required by the driver. Any link created or broken will update the public SPSV Register in real-time. Therefore, a consumer can see those details immediately via the Driver Check App.

5

SPSV Contact Management



SPSV industry members and consumers can contact NTA in a number of ways including an SPSV Information Line, online forms, email and only where expressly requested by the licence holder, by post. In 2022, NTA issued 878,946 emails, letters and SMS to SPSV industry members regarding licensing notifications (e.g. renewal reminders, booking confirmations), SPSV alerts (e.g. confirmation of a driver to vehicle link being created/broken) and industry news and updates (e.g. the quarterly newsletter, notifications regarding NTA grant schemes, the law and public consultations). This is a 25% increase on such notifications compared to 2021.

Table 11: Breakdown of Industry Communications Issued

	Industry Updates	SPSV Alerts	Licensing Notifications	Total
Email	218,700	223,519	71,528	513,747
Post	0	265	16,420	16,685
SMS	329,872	18,642	0	348,514
Total	548,572	242,426	87,948	878,946

More than 100,000 telephone calls were received to the SPSV Information Line in 2022, 99% of which were from industry members. Table 12 and Figure 13 below detail a breakdown of industry and consumer calls for 2013 to 2022.

Table 12: SPSV Information Line Calls by Year and Source, 2013 - 2022

Year	Industry Members	Consumers	Total calls
2013	123,340	3,319	126,659
2014	123,657	8,904	132,561
2015	115,053	2,348	117,401
2016	99,919	2,758	102,677
2017	101,406	3,762	105,168
2018	115,606	4,465	120,071
2019	116,458	4,674	121,132
2020	92,748	1,095	93,843
2021	95,951	1,109	97,103
2022	107,009	824	107,833

Figure 13: SPSV Information Line Calls by Year and Source, 2013 - 2022

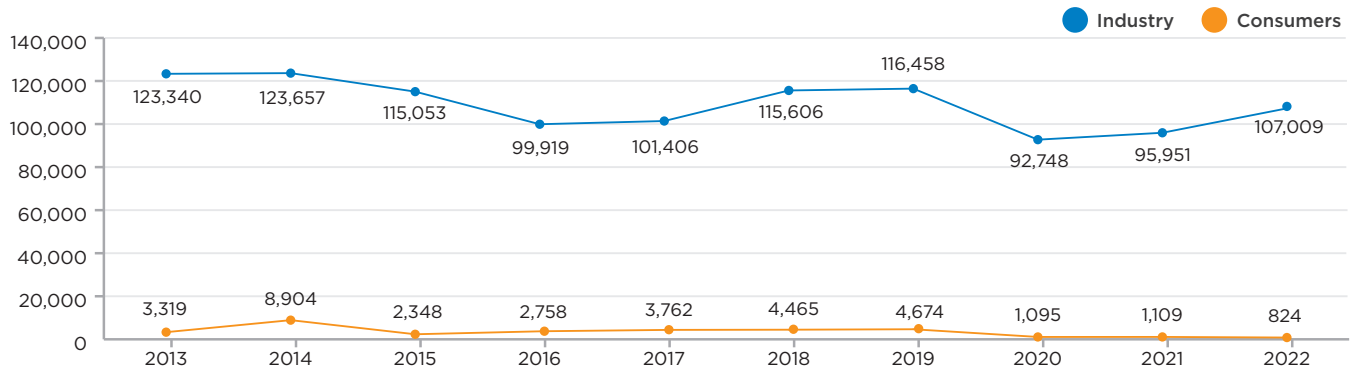
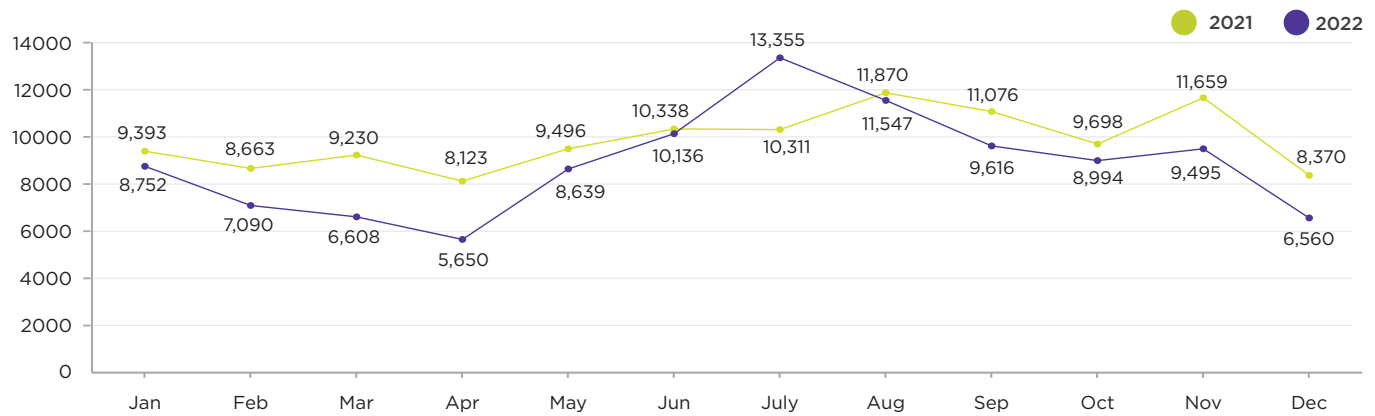


Figure 14 below details the overall call trends in 2022 compared to 2021 which includes all received calls and outbound calls to the SPSV Information Line. Although calls handled via the SPSV Information Line increased by 11% compared to 2021, overall trends remained consistent over both years.

Figure 14: SPSV Information Line Calls Handled Comparison, 2021 & 2022

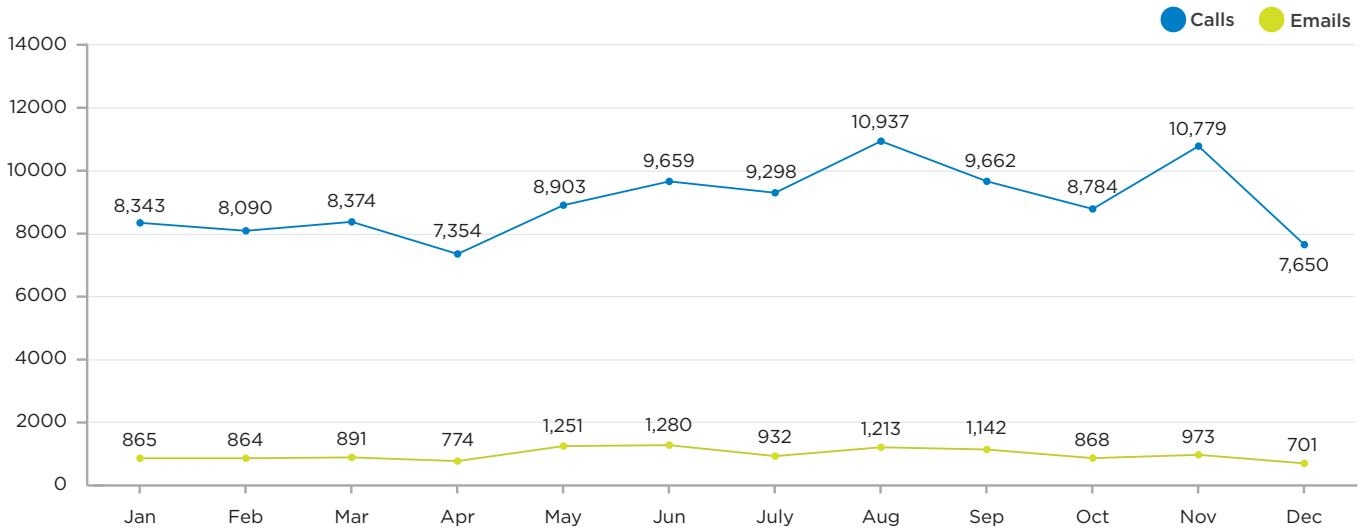


The top three industry call queries were:

- Vehicle licence renewal bookings
- Driver to vehicle link requests
- Vehicle licence unsuccessful renewal bookings

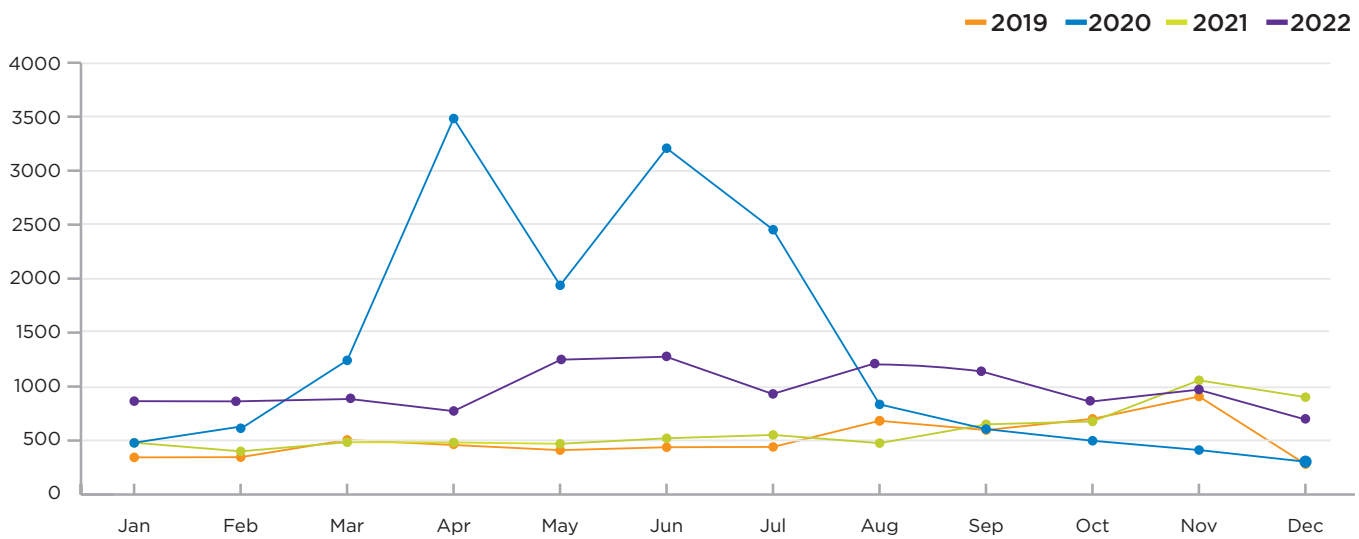
Figure 15 below illustrates the industry communication patterns throughout 2022.

Figure 15: Communications Received by Phone and Email per Month, 2022



Due to Covid-19 in 2020, the volume of emails received increased for that year as illustrated in Figure 16 below. 16,087 emails were received that year. This increase was for a number of reasons, but include the reduction of call agents in the SPSV Contact Centre in order to adhere to HSE Covid-19 guidelines and therefore, licence holders chose to email. SPSV licence holders could also create and break links via email during that period as well as the option to 'Suspend' their SPSV licence during that time. 2021 saw a return to pre-Covid-19 email volumes with 7,152 emails received throughout that year. 11,754 emails were received in 2022 which is a 64.3% increase compared to 2021.

Figure 16: Comparison of Volume of Emails Received, 2019 -2022



	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
— 2019	344	346	506	465	411	438	441	683	597	701	908	281
— 2020	478	629	1243	3483	1938	3208	2453	835	606	498	412	304
— 2021	480	400	484	482	470	521	552	476	650	677	1058	902
— 2022	865	864	891	774	1251	1280	932	1213	1142	868	973	701

6

Compliance



Through a focus on education, deterrence and enforcement measures NTA continues to maintain high levels of compliance by SPSV operators with the regulatory framework. During 2022, NTA's compliance team was made up of 25 authorised persons (compliance officers) along with an extended administration team:

- 7 were employees of NTA
- 18 were subcontractors

An Garda Síochána can also investigate and prosecute all SPSV offences.

How NTA checked that SPSV operators are complying

Our compliance activities included:

- Contactless line-of-sight vehicle and driving licence checks via a bespoke enforcement app
- Face-to-face roadside vehicle and driver audits
- Covert and overt detection operations
- Investigating consumer complaints
- Multi-agency compliance operations, for example, with:
 - An Garda Síochána (National Roads Policing Bureau and National Immigration Bureau)
 - Revenue
 - The Department of Social Protection

Contactless Checks, Face-to-Face Audits and Fixed Payment Notices

Over 204,000 vehicle and driver licence checks were carried out during 2022 in respect of 17,296 individual vehicles (i.e. 90% of active SPSV licences were seen operating and checked).

With Covid-19 restrictions easing, Compliance Officers were able to carry out 12,688 face-to-face audits at the roadside, a 150% increase on 2021 and a return to pre-Covid volumes.

Because of these compliance activities, 655 Fixed Payment Notices (on the spot fines) were issued in 2022 for offences cited in Schedule 8 to the Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicles) Regulations 2015. This is a 317% increase on 2021 but is not yet at pre-Covid levels. This is due to the fact that during the pandemic NTA took the approach of 'educating and informing' licence holders recognising many SPSV operators had stopped working for prolonged periods due to the pandemic. Once these approaches were exhausted, those who remained noncompliant received Fixed Payment Notices (fine).

The top four Fixed Payment Notice (“fine”) offences made up 56% of fines issued in 2022 (370). 21% of fines issued relate to drivers “failure to notify details of small public service vehicle being operated” to NTA with 138 fines issued. Drivers must supply this information to support the Driver Check App (see the “Driver Linking and the Driver Check App” section above), which allows passengers or intending passengers to check the licence for both vehicle and driver. A further 13% of fines issued relate to “vehicle standards” with 88 fines issued. This is a wide-ranging fine, which includes the requirement to carry boarding aids and restraints for wheelchair passengers, the cleanliness and condition of all vehicles, official vehicle signage etc. Thereafter, both “unreasonable refusal by the driver to carry a passenger” and “failure to print and offer a taxi receipt” both with 72 fines issued, making up a further 11% each.

85% of Fixed Payment Notices issued were paid promptly in 2022, with the remainder being referred for court prosecution in the District Courts nationwide.

Table 13: SPSV Checks, Audits and Fixed Payment Notices 2013 - 2022

Year	Contactless checks	Roadside audits	Fixed Payment Notices
2013	N/A	18,103	835
2014	N/A	42,722	1,369
2015	29,123	11,765	692
2016	90,243	12,012	1,099
2017	151,561	10,959	1,512
2018	199,369	17,610	1,878
2019	196,868	14,589	1,600
2020	102,773	3,707	494
2021	185,585	5,068	157
2022	204,795	12,688	655

Criminal Prosecutions

NTA began 146 prosecutions in 2022 of which over half (55%) related to the operation of an unlicensed service. In 2022, 4% of prosecutions taken were due to a failure of operators to pay fines received for other breaches of legislation. NTA was successful in 89% of cases presented in 2022.

Not all cases when successfully prosecuted result in a criminal conviction being recorded by the court. The court may decide that the appropriate penalty is a fine, charitable donation and/or costs against the accused. The accused may not receive a formal criminal conviction due to the impact of such a conviction on their life. In 2022, the nation’s courts were still affected by the backlogs caused to cases by the Covid pandemic. Following the lifting of restrictions in early 2022, longstanding cases were finalised alongside new cases prosecuted by NTA during the year. The financial impact of the pandemic on defendants and the fact that some cases were now being finalised long after the date of the offence were often reflected in the judgements of the court.

Table 14: Prosecutions by Offence Category, 2019 - 2022

Offences		2019 Cases	2020 Cases	2021 Cases	2022 Cases
Operation of unlicensed SPSV	No driver and no vehicle licence	36	15	14	54
	No driver licence	28	18	33	12
	No vehicle licence	51	41	13	14
	Allow an unlicensed driver/vehicle to operate/failure to keep accurate records	7	16	15	20
Overcharging (addition of unwarranted but legal 'extras' to a fare for example adding a booking fee to a fare that was not pre-booked)		3	3	2	2
Vehicle condition		2	0	1	0
Duties of drivers of SPSVs		0	8	1	1
Illegal display of taxi sign/Failure to remove signage from unlicensed vehicle		27	16	16	22
Advertising an unlicensed SPSV service		2	3	5	2
Exceeding the maximum number of passengers		4	1	0	3
Knowingly giving false or misleading information to an authorised person		0	3	5	3
Hackney/limousine standing for hire		4	3	0	7
		164	127	105	140
Additional Prosecutions					
Fixed Payment Notice Offences Prosecutions (see Table 15 below)		93	34	48	6
Total		257	161	153	146

Table 15: Fixed Payment Notice Offences Prosecutions by Category, 2019 - 2022

Offences	2019	2020	2021	2022
Fixed Payment Notice Offences Prosecutions				
• Failure to comply with vehicle standards	15	2	9	1
• Removal of tamper-proof disc from SPSV	0	1	0	0
• Failure to display in-vehicle information	0	3	1	0
• Failure to comply with taxi roof sign requirements	12	4	8	1
• Failure to notify details of SPSV being operated	31	12	12	0
• Failure to comply with taximeter requirements	12	1	5	2
• Failure to print and offer a receipt	3	1	2	1
• Unreasonable refusal to carry a passenger	2	4	2	0
• Standing for hire in a taxi otherwise than at an appointed stand	8	6	2	1
• Displaying unauthorised sign on a hackney or limousine	0	0	1	0
• Standing at appointed stand while vehicle is not available for hire	1	0	1	0
• Failure to display driver ID	2	0	2	0
• Failure to operate taximeter while taxi is on hire	1	0	1	0
• Operating taximeter while taxi is standing for hire or plying for hire	3	0	2	0
• Failure of the driver of a hackney/limousine to carry booking record	2	0	0	0
• Standing or plying for hire in an area without a licence for that area	1	0	0	0
Total	93	34	48	6

7

Compliments and Complaints



Investigating complaints helps to ensure that the standards in the industry remain high. It also protects the compliant majority of the SPSV industry and provides a level playing field for all industry members. Compliments received are highlighted in the quarterly SPSV Industry Updates to licence holders as well as directly to the individuals.

NTA receive complaints and information through reports from:

- Members of the public
- Licenced operators
- An Garda Síochána
- Other agencies
- NTA Compliance Officers

Compliments and complaints relating to the SPSV industry are accepted directly via the website, through the online 'Compliments and Complaints' form as well as by post, e-mail, information and confidential telephone lines, the WAV Register on our website and through the Driver Check app. Every submission received is assessed and investigated to confirm if there is any evidence to suggest that an offence may have been committed. A complaint must relate to an alleged breach of SPSV legislation, see Table 16 below. NTA cannot consider complaints that are not within the remit of NTA, e.g. criminal allegations, road traffic offences, which are primarily dealt with under other legislation. In such cases, the complainants are referred to the appropriate enforcement agency.

There are five categories of complaint which can be dealt with by NTA under Section 64 of the Taxi Regulation Acts 2013 and 2016.

Table 16: Complaint Categories

Category	Sample complaint
Condition, roadworthiness and cleanliness of the vehicle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interior or exterior dirt • staining, malodour • rubbish
Conduct, behaviour and identification of an SPSV driver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • failure to prominently display the required driver identification • acting in a manner that is perceived to be a nuisance or • a danger to any person • malodour or poor hygiene
Overcharging and other matters relating to fares	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • failure to issue a receipt • overcharging or no change • route selection • taximeter not working or not used • failure to accept cashless payment

Category	Sample complaint
Hiring and booking of the SPSV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • refusal of fare, typically due to the short nature of the intended journey • unavailability of wheelchair accessible vehicles • poor service from a dispatch operator • late arrival of pre-booked vehicle
Identification and general appearance of the SPSV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • location of logos, stickers or advertisements • content of logos, stickers or advertisements leaflets or • other advertising matter

Main points of 2022

In 2022, NTA received the highest number of complaints received in a single year at 1,625 with December representing the highest number of complaints ever received in a single month. See Tables 17 and 18 below. This is mainly due to the:

- Introduction of a new requirement in September 2022 for taxi drivers to provide cashless payment terminals for fares. This resulted in an increase in the number of complaints received for “overcharging and other matters relating to fares”. This complaint category made up 49% of all complaints received in 2022.

78% of complaints received in 2022 fell under two categories, “overcharging and other matters relating to fares” and “conduct, behaviour and identification of an SPSV driver” (see examples in Table 16 above). The same two categories were highlighted in 2021 where again they made up 79% of all complaints received for that year.

Table 17: Complaints by Month 2022

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Condition, roadworthiness and cleanliness of the vehicle	3	1	2	4	4	4	6	1	3	5	6	3	42
Conduct, behaviour and identification of an SPSV driver	26	34	24	32	27	62	47	38	51	42	44	54	481
Overcharging and other fares	12	30	34	47	63	59	54	49	105	98	102	140	793
Hiring and booking of the SPSV	9	15	17	27	26	35	22	13	18	47	25	54	308
Identification and general appearance of the SPSV	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	50	80	77	111	120	160	129	101	177	192	177	251	1,625

Table 18: Complaints by Category, 2013 - 2022

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Condition, roadworthiness and cleanliness of the vehicle	30	47	53	34	72	50	78	11	31	42
Conduct, behaviour and identification of an SPSV driver	369	465	491	444	445	529	496	204	228	481
Overcharging and other matters relating to fares	221	327	297	348	380	470	529	189	215	793
Hiring and booking of the SPSV	122	113	83	172	248	261	277	61	86	308
Identification and general appearance of the SPSV	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	1	0	1
Total	742	952	924	998	1,146	1,312	1,383	466	560	1,625

- 40% of complaints concluded with the SPSV operator being issued with a fine, a warning, advice or a summons for prosecution,
- 57% did not proceed following investigation. The reasons further action was not taken, included:
 1. No evidence of any offence on the part of the driver;
 2. The complainant chose not to pursue the complaint;
 3. The complainant did not provide correct contact details; and
 4. Mistake or misunderstanding on the part of the complainant.
- Another 2% of those complaints received in 2022 were referred to other agencies, following initial investigation:
 - An Garda Síochána
 - The Department of Social Protection
 - Revenue
- The final 1% of cases were referred back to Dispatch Operators (booking service providers) to resolve through their own complaints processes.

Figure 17: Complaints by Category Received, 2019 - 2022

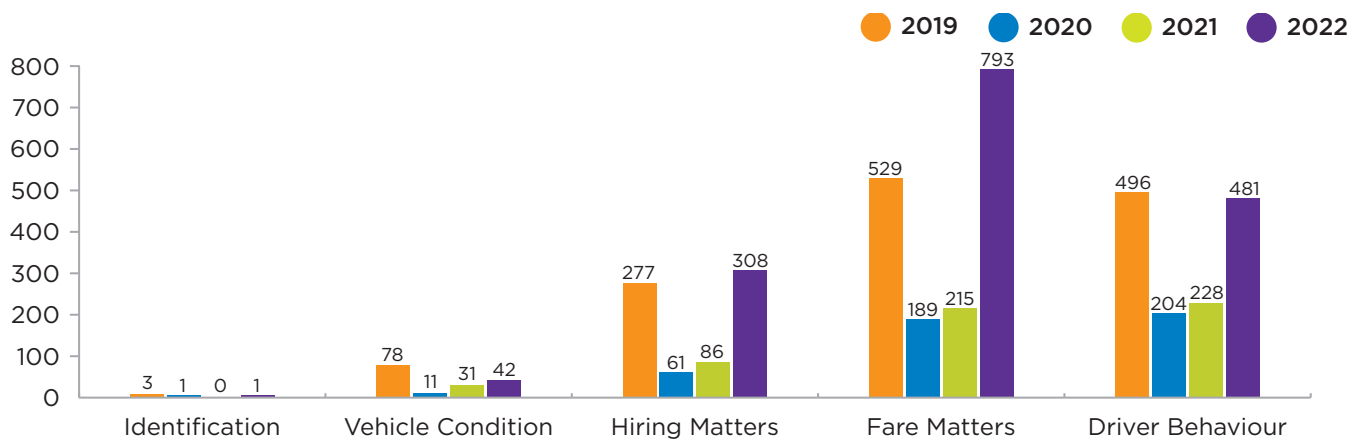
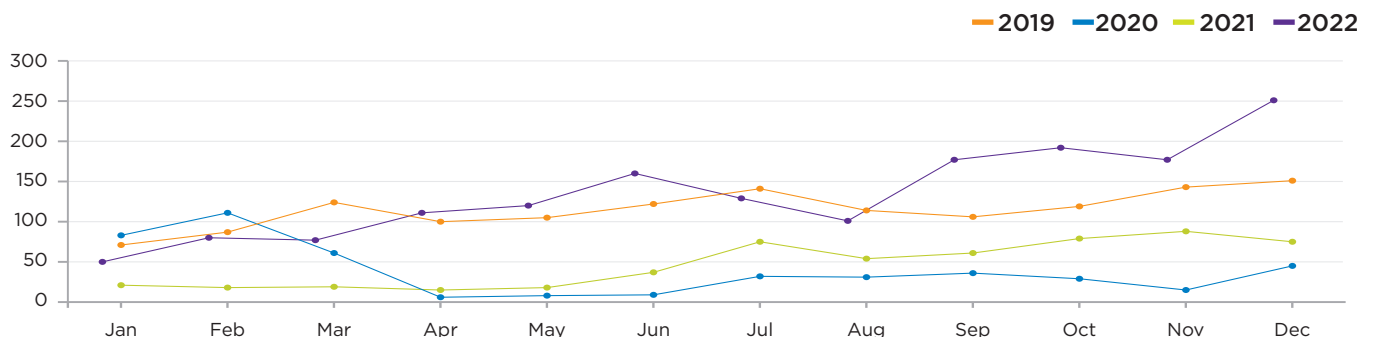


Figure 18: Overall Complaints Received Per Year, 2019 - 2022



	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2019	71	87	124	100	105	122	141	114	106	119	143	151
2020	83	111	61	6	8	9	32	31	36	29	15	45
2021	21	18	19	15	18	37	75	54	61	79	88	75
2022	50	80	77	111	120	160	129	101	177	192	177	251

8

Advisory Committee on Small Public Service Vehicles

What is the function of the Advisory Committee?

In general, the Advisory Committee is tasked with advising NTA or the Minister, as appropriate, on matters relevant to the SPSVs and their drivers. These functions are set out in Section 73 of the Taxi Regulation Acts.

What is the Advisory Committee on Small Public Service Vehicles?

The Advisory Committee was established in accordance with Part 9 of the Taxi Regulation Acts 2013. The committee comprises a chairperson and up to 17 ordinary members. Each ordinary member represents prescribed interests, for example:

- Consumers
- SPSV
- Persons with disabilities
- Tourism
- Business
- Older persons
- Or in the opinion of the Minister for Transport, the ordinary member has a special interest or expertise in matters relating to the functions of NTA, the Advisory Committee or related matters.

Only the Minister for Transport can appoint members to the Advisory Committee and a member may serve a three-year term with one reappointment permitted. The membership of the Advisory Committee on Small Public Service Vehicles during 2022 is outlined below:

Chairperson: Mr. Cornelius O'Donohue

Representing	Ordinary Member
Small Public Service Vehicles	Mr. Kevin Finn ended June 2022
Small Public Service Vehicles	Mr. Alan Cooley appointed June 2022
Small Public Service Vehicles	Mr. Shajedul Chowdhury
Small Public Service Vehicles	Mr. John Murphy
Small Public Service Vehicles	Mr Francis Doheny
Local Authorities	Ms. Mary Henchy term ended June 2022
Local Authorities	Mr. Brendan O'Brien appointed September 2022
An Garda Síochána	Superintendent Thomas Murphy
Consumers	Mr. James Cawley
Consumers	Ms Michelle Reid

Representing	Ordinary Member
Persons with Disabilities	Ms. Joan Carthy
Business	Ms. Ann Campbell
Older Persons	Mr. Peter Fleming ended June 2022
Older Persons	Ms. Mai Quaid appointed September 2022
Tourism	Mr. Al Ryan
Special interest or expertise	Mr. James O'Brien
Special interest or expertise	Mr. Noel Ebbs
Special interest or expertise	Ms. Fiona Brady
Special interest or expertise	Mr. Paul Gregan appointed June 2022

With regard to NTA, the Advisory Committee may provide advice on:

- Proposals for licensing or SPSV regulations
- Matters relating to the delivery of quality services
- Any other matters related to the functions of NTA or submitted for advice with the exception of individual cases

With regard to the Minister, the Advisory Committee may provide advice on:

- Policy relevant to SPSVs and their drivers
- Proposals for legislation or regulations submitted to them
- The assignment of specific functions relating to the industry
- Other matters of relevance to the effective performance of the Advisory Committee or NTA

Main points of 2022

The Advisory Committee met on 10 occasions during 2022. Early in 2022, Covid-19 and the return to work for drivers remained a focus with discussion around the government mandates regarding mask wearing being lifted. SPSV licence 'transferability', WAV service and availability of transport in certain rural communities, roof signage and technology also featured during these meetings. NTA consulted the Advisory Committee of all ongoing policy and strategy work throughout the year.

All minutes for these meetings are published online at the following link:-

<https://www.nationaltransport.ie/about-us/advisory-committee-on-spsvs/>



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