

# Meeting of the Advisory Committee on SPSVs Minutes

27<sup>th</sup> March 2025, 10.30 am.  
NTA Office, Haymarket House, Smithfield, Dublin.

**Present:**

<b>Chairperson</b>	Mr. Cornelius O'Donohue
<b><i>Representing</i></b>	
<b>Small Public Service Vehicle and Driver Interests</b>	Mr. Shajedul Chowdhury  Mr. John Murphy,  Mr. Alan Cooley  Mr. Francis Doheny
<b>Special Interest or Expertise in Matters Relating to the Functions of the Authority, the Advisory Committee or Related Matters.</b>	Mr. Harpreet Singh  Mr. James O'Brien  Ms. Aisling Dunne
<b>The Interests of Consumers</b>	Mr. Adrian Cummins
<b>The Interests of Business</b>	Ms. Ann Campbell
<b>The Interests of An Garda Siochana</b>	Superintendent Tom Murphy
<b>The Interests of Persons with Disabilities</b>	Mr. John Fulham
<b>The Interests of Local Authorities</b>	Mr. Brendan O'Brien
<b>The Interests of Older Persons</b>	Ms. Mai Quaid
<b>The Interests of Tourism</b>	Mr. Paul Keeley

## **NTA Representatives in Attendance**

Mr. Kevin O'Brien, *Director of Transport Regulation* (partial attendance)

Ms. Roisin Cullinan, *Head of Licensing* (partial attendance)

Ms. Fiona Brady, *Head of Regulatory Compliance* (partial attendance)

Mr. Jakub Szynal, *Secretary to the Advisory Committee on SPSVs*

## **10.30am Advisory Committee**

### **1. Minutes of meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025 and actions arising**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025 were agreed with no amendments.

The Chair informed the Advisory Committee of his conversation with the Road Safety Authority regarding Novice plates. He noted that bus and truck drivers complete a CPC course, and bus drivers do not need to wait 1-2 years to gain driving experience before carrying passengers on the road. Taxi drivers require 1 year of driving experience before operating SPSV vehicles.

The question of Irish driving licenses being a requirement for PSV licenses was discussed. There are strict guidelines for ‘swapping’ driving licenses, and drivers coming from recognised EU countries need not complete the required 12 driving lessons.

The Chair discussed vacancies noting that many members will be finishing their term in June, and indicating the Department of Transport has committed to conducting a public campaign to fill the vacancies.

The Chair noted that Aisling Dunne is resigning from the Advisory Committee with effect from the end of March and he thanked her for her contribution to the Committee and wished her well in her future endeavours.

A member raised an item for AOB. There has been an increasing number of incidents recorded by DCC where drivers ignore school wardens, putting wardens and children at risk. It was stated that a sizeable percentage of those drivers have been taxi drivers. The member will provide statistics to the Advisory Committee with a view to the Committee recommending a message be communicated to taxi representative groups and all drivers within the industry.

*NTA Representatives joined the meeting*

### **NTA Update**

The Chair introduced Kevin O’Brien, who was recently appointed as Director of Transport Regulation at the National Transport Authority. Members of the Advisory Committee on SPSVs introduced themselves and gave a summary of the interests they

represent. The Chair gave an overview of the functions of the Committee and noted that NTA is welcome to join the discussion at any time.

### **1. Novice Drivers**

During the last meeting, the Committee discussed the matter of taxi drivers with N plates on their vehicles and the conversation was ongoing when NTA joined the meeting. The Advisory Committee agreed that currently there is not enough evidence to action any motion, though it may be revisited in the future. The topic was removed from the agenda.

### **2. Maximum permissible age of 2015 registered taxis**

NTA noted that the Board had signed off on the Maximum Permissible Vehicle Age regulations on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2025. Communications will be broadcast to drivers, and specific communications will be issued to licensees with 2015 registered vehicles.

This 1 year extension on 2015 registered vehicles will go into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025. Any driver whose vehicle license expired from Jan-March will be contacted directly and their vehicle license reinstated wherever applicable.

Some industry representatives on the Advisory Committee suggested that an extension would be warranted for vehicles registered in years after 2015 as well. NTA set out that the extension for 2015 registered vehicles is specifically required under the new Programme for Government.

### **3. Driver Apps – Acceptance of trips**

A Member of the Advisory Committee raised concerns over drivers accepting trips on apps, whilst already fulfilling a trip, which results in passengers waiting for a taxi much longer than specified on the app. This alleged practise also prevents other drivers, who are available, from accepting and completing those trips. The member clarified that these complaints came from drivers as opposed to passengers.

The Chair noted that any action on this issue would need to be evidence based. It was suggested that taxi apps could identify this practise through analysis of the discrepancy between the time when a passenger should be collected against the time the passenger was actually collected. Multiple issues affect driver timeliness including roadworks etc. It was also suggested that customer choice would discourage negative outcomes in this regard.

A member stated that some taxi apps often show on their maps that there are many drivers in an area. In reality, that is often not the case. It was queried if this was a case consumers are being misled, giving the consumer an illusion that many taxis are available in the area.

NTA noted that these matters do not on the face of it fall under its remit, however NTA will keep under review to see if there are related customer complaints received.

#### **4. S23(2) Taxi Regulation Act 2013 – Grounds to refuse a passenger [Link to Act](#)**

Grounds to refuse a passenger were discussed. It was queried to what extent a driver is entitled to refuse a passenger on the basis of suspected unlawful activities. It was suggested by the Advisory Committee on SPSVs that where a driver had reported a concern to AGS, this would strengthen their justification in refusing a passenger.

Grounds for refusing a passenger are set out in section 23 of the Taxi Regulation Act 2013.

Members of the Advisory Committee queried if the regulations are enough to protect drivers in instances like this. It was noted however, that if there is appetite in the industry, it could be explored further in future meetings.

#### **5. NTA update**

NTA noted that up to 850 SPSV WAV conversions could be accommodated in Ireland annually. With an average grant rate of €14,000, the total annual cost of grant funding should be approximately €11,900,000. Assuming the average conversion rate of 38% (2023 and 2024 averages), this would require an initial grant funding commitment of €31,315,000.

The Advisory Committee noted that with 20,000 vehicles requiring conversion in the fleet, it may take up to 25 years to achieve full WAV conversion.

The Advisory Committee raised an issue with the current WAV Grant application system, highlighting that there is no mechanism which allows for preferential treatment for existing WAV drivers who need to replace their vehicles. There is a risk of existing WAV drivers who have provided a WAV service, not continuing to do so because when they seek to replace their vehicle they are unsuccessful in obtaining a grant.

It was suggested that NTA consider a means whereby existing WAV drivers who are in need of a vehicle replacement can contact NTA to note their interest in receiving the WAV grant. NTA indicated it could give consideration to the points made.

The inability to identify the actual WAV service providers is a difficulty when attempting to target the grant. As private operators, NTA doesn't know if an existing WAV owner is as likely to provide the service as a new (grant aided) owner or not.

*NTA Representatives left the meeting*

The Chair informed the Advisory Committee that the draft report on the recommendations for NTA and DoT will be sent out to Members in 2-3 weeks.

The increasing sizes of wheelchairs was discussed, noting that there have been instances of modern electric wheelchairs being too big for WAV ramps.

**AOB**

The Chair had asked the Committee if there was any other business, there was none.

**Date of next meeting – Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2025, 10.30.**

**NTA, Haymarket House, Smithfield, Dublin D07 CF98.**