

Meeting of the Advisory Committee on SPSVs

26th March 2026, 10.30 am.

NTA Office, Haymarket House, Smithfield, Dublin.

Present:

Interim Chairperson	Ms. Catherine Flanagan
Representing	
Small Public Service Vehicle and Driver Interests	Mr. Alan Cooley Mr. Anthony Kelly Mr. Francis Doheny Mr. Shajedul Chowdhury
Special Interest or Expertise in Matters Relating to the Functions of the Authority, the Advisory Committee or Related Matters.	Mr. Harpreet Singh Ms. Christine O'Connor Mr. Der Calnan Mr. Alan Fox
The Interests of Consumers	Mr. Adrian Cummins
The Interests of Local Authorities	Mr. Brendan O'Brien
The Interests of Persons with Disabilities	Mr. John Fulham
The Interests of Older Persons	Ms. Mai Quaid

Apologies:

The Interests of Business	Mr. Paul Nolan
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NTA Representatives in Attendance

Ms. Roisin Cullinan, *Head of Licensing*

Ms. Jen Moran, *Secretary to the Advisory Committee on SPSVs*

1. Attendance, note apologies and any conflicts of interest

Interim chair noted apologies and clarified if there were any conflicts of interest; none were raised.

2. Correspondence

• Email to CCPC

Interim chair noted the email sent out to CCPC on 20th March, inviting them to attend a future Advisory Committee meeting had not yet received a response.

• Freenow report

Interim Chair requested additional info about Freenow report which had been presented to the Oireachtas Transport Committee in January 2026. Member who suggested the presentation said someone is willing to attend and present this report later on in the summer where they can discuss it in more detail. They explained the report is an effort to identify important areas to move forward on and to encourage continued growth in the taxi industry. Safety for drivers and safety for passengers are key priorities; extension of the 10km Local Area Hackney (LAH) radius also suggested to solve areas of low density supply. Report included a recommendation for a dedicated line for the drivers to AGS, and examination of the VAT liability treatment, which should be looked at as part of the Dispatch Operator (DO) review.

A Member pointed out the expansion of the supply post Covid and simultaneously drivers getting on board with Uber/Freenow apps. Interim Chair highlights the importance of drivers having a living wage from driving, and pointed out with the Fixed Fares framework, they're unable to surge-price at high demand times. A Member highlighted how Fixed Fares (i.e below metered fare) is an option available to drivers; they can choose to go by it or not.

Interim Chair pointed out pricing framework is there for clarity for consumers, how important it is that everyone is represented and to note the price structure that taxi drivers can avail of. Level of competition is between the platforms and their increasing globalisation.

A Member mentioned speaking at a Transport Joint Oireachtas Committee in 2025 as a consumer representative, recommending that a national taxi strategy be considered in 2026, and that it should be worked out this year when they intend to ask the NTA their perspective on it. Trade associations must be mindful of conversations on pricing from a competition law perspective. The platform/apps market has created a level of competition amongst itself.

A Member stated that there are young drivers picking multiple people up at night uninsured, presenting an increased risk of an accident, who have not been caught by Compliance despite doing it for years; would extending the LAH radius help address this? Concierge cars were also brought up and how some are in breach of the regulations with the jobs they carry out. In a 2024 case; a hotel in Cork offering courtesy car collections/drop-offs was fined.

A member observed that all drivers must display N plates for 24 months from passing their driving test, but drivers must only have a full driving licence for a minimum of 12 months before applying for a taxi licence, which may puzzle passengers.

3. Work plan and priorities 2026

If invitation to CCPC is accepted, the Advisory Committee will discuss and request further details from them about the report.

Freenow report to be presented later on in the summer.

Safety will be a focus point for 2026, Interim Chair stated NTA to provide information regarding data protection. A Member brought up in-vehicle cameras, how they think it encourages good driving habits and is a deterrent to anti social behaviour so would encourage more drivers to work at night. Interim Chair pointed out how this area is for the DPO Commissioner and would not be NTA's remit. Standardised data protection policy related to this; consumer doesn't know what driver does with the footage and the length of time this footage is kept for needs to be clarified. Suggestion that data should be centralised, Members suggest the NTA be involved in this aspect. It was suggested that practice in other EU countries be looked at.

A Member highlighted the protective screens left over from COVID could be a safety issue, how they are obstructive as passengers cannot exit out the front or side.

Interim Chair discussed consumer input regarding safety. A Member mentioned a Transport Committee they're on raised an issue regarding older people unable to get their mobility aids into vehicles, adding that general feedback is that drivers treat older passengers very well.

A Member told the Committee how people in rural areas are fundraising to buy a car to bring people to the hospital (not part of the NTA Community Car Scheme) due to a lack of taxis available, though issues exist around volunteer drivers and the insurance required.

NTA Representative joined the meeting

4. NTA Update

• Call For Inputs

The NTA highlighted how this has potential for a lot of change, so want as much input as possible. Six optional aspects of Dispatch Operator (DO) licensing were provided to respondents to use as a basis for their submission. Following review of the responses to the Call for Inputs, the NTA will come up with proposals to amend the legislation which will go into formal consultation.

A Member asked about the legal framework element of the Call; if a DO is required to have a physical premises. The NTA stated this is an open question, as raised, but gave an example of the need for a premises to conduct audits at. Interim Chair asked about role of the Advisory Committee regarding the Call for Inputs. The NTA suggested that the Advisory Committee could make a combined submission or Members could submit individually.

The NTA spoke on the monthly slides provided to the Advisory Committee.

Interim Chair pointed out how Compliance statistics for February appear down compared to previous years. The NTA said they will revert and provide more information regarding this.

A Member asked about an appeals process as he knew a driver whose application was rejected due to a previous complaint he had. The NTA stated there is not an appeals process as it's a grant and therefore is based on meeting the Terms and Conditions. This applicant was found to have not been compliant with the Terms and Conditions and so was rejected for this reason. The NTA also noted that it cannot speak to third parties about licence holder matters.

- **Data protection; in the context of in-vehicle cameras and their role in driver/passenger safety**

Interim Chair asked about security cameras, to confirm its remit to the DPO Commissioner, looking for clarification from the DPC.

The NTA clarified it is not a requirement under the taxi legislation and that the DPC requirements must be followed if drivers use CCTV or similar. The entire rigour is under the DPC.

- **Pricing Framework 2026**

The NTA stated that the next Max Fare review will be carried out in 2027 as the results of the Dispatch Operator review have the potential to impact it. Interim Chair enquired if it is unusual for something to be pushed back. The NTA clarified that the Max Fare Review is not a two year requirement; it has just been carried out at this frequency so far and it was also postponed during Covid.

A Member asked for clarification of labour costs. The NTA explained how it is based on the Taxi Cost Index; 70% cost is for the labour cost of the drivers themselves.

NTA Representative left the meeting

5. AOB

A Member raised an issue of drivers based in rural areas going to Dublin for work. This means the rural area is not being served, in addition to Dublin-based drivers having increased competition.

A Member pointed out how data shows a lot more drivers out there than vehicles, that it is not reflecting the industry accurately. A Member highlighted how insurance companies will not insure multiple people using the same vehicle, and that the process of having multiple drivers on one vehicle is actually quite complex. A Member said there are a lot of people with the PSV licence who have never operated a SPSV, that they only got them as another income option.

A Member raised the issue of passengers not allowed to sit in the front.

The complaint process was then highlighted by a Member, stating they considered it to not be an easy process. A Member outlined how the process is easier with a DO using the apps. A Member talked about the Driver Check App and how there is a real disparity when providing a complaint; that it is not user friendly and people are put off, with response times being an issue too.

The meeting concluded at 12.30pm.

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 30th April at the NTA offices.