

Meeting of the Advisory Committee on SPSVs

27th August 2026, 10.30 am.

NTA Office, Haymarket House, Smithfield, Dublin.

Present:

Chairperson	Ms. Catherine Flanagan
<i>Representing</i>	
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. Der Calnan Mr. Harpreet Singh
The Interests of Business	Mr. Paul Nolan
The Interests of Consumers	Mr. Adrian Cummins
The Interests of Persons with Disabilities	Mr. John Fulham
The Interests of Tourism	Ms. Karen Ronan

Apologies:

The Interests of Older Persons	Ms. Mai Quaid
The Interests of Local Authorities	Mr. Brendan O'Brien
Special Interest or Expertise in Matters Relating to the Functions of the Authority, the Advisory Committee or Related Matters	Mr. Alan Fox Ms. Christine O'Connor

NTA Representatives in Attendance

Ms. Roisin Cullinan, *Head of Licensing*

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

1. Note apologies, note any conflicts, approval of minutes of May and July meeting.

Apologies noted for Members who were unable to attend. No conflicts of interest raised.

Lyft's recent acquisition of Lynk was discussed and how as a result this would mean two of the current Members would be representing the same company. Chair informed the Committee that she had reached out to the Department about this and an update is expected in due course.

Minutes from May and June meetings confirmed and approved by Members.

Chair confirmed no update received yet from the Department on vacancies for AGS and Consumer still currently open.

2. Matters arising

Chair enquired if there were any other issues to raise regarding what was discussed in July's meeting. Member raised issue of vehicles with 2016 vehicles now reaching their Final Operation Date who were expecting the eSPSV grant to reopen; some already putting down a deposit in preparation. He queried if they will receive an age extension considering their situation.

3. Correspondence:

Confirmation of attendance of representatives from Office of the Data Protection Commissioner in September. Brief discussion on key points we would like them to address.

Chair discussed what challenges might be presented as a data protection officer. Benefits of devices such as dash cams for both drivers and consumers highlighted. It can clarify what exactly occurred in an accident, ensuring the outcome in liability claims is quick; Member confirmed it does not reduce the insurance premium. Member added another benefit would be a deterrent for potential anti-social behaviour.

Members' main query to Data Protection Commission is what their position is regarding people retaining this data and best practises that can be shared with the drivers. Member suggested that dash /in-vehicle cams could be a requirement for drivers (similar to the taxi meter), how this is now a requirement for small passenger services in certain urban parts of New Zealand. Chair brought up potential ramifications on those being surveyed within the car. Questions raised by Members regarding issue of privacy; what footage can be collected, how would it be kept and how consequential a data breach would be. Member highlighted the practicality of it needs to be considered regarding data protection and legislation, rules around it should be robust; the person would need to be informed beforehand.

Given the widespread usage of dashcams in the sector, it would be very helpful for drivers to have certainty on 'do's and don'ts' to ensure compliance.

Current complaints process was discussed in light of the recent publication of Compliance on the NTA website. Member confirmed as part of the Dispatch Operator licence, a complaints book must be provided. Chair clarified that you can only submit a complaint as a consumer i.e. if you were the passenger. Compliance was then discussed with a Member querying if there are

enough Compliance Officers at present with the Chair pointing out the dip in Compliance checks observed in last month's meeting. Member stated that he thinks the biggest issue not being dealt with is unlicensed and uninsured drivers; if the NTA are adequately resourced to approach this but instead there are a decreasing amount of Compliance Officers.

Member stated that when Compliance moved over from the remit of AGS to NTA; the standards dropped in his opinion. Inspectors do not have the power to stop drivers, unless they are accompanied by member of AGS.

Members agreed it would be useful if the NTA Compliance Manager Adam Connaughton attended October's meeting to discuss complaints in more detail; Chair noted this as an action.

NTA representative joined the meeting

11.00 am - NTA

4. Presentation by the NTA on SPSV Driver Entry Skills test (Roisin), followed by discussion.

The NTA spoke on the SPSV Driver Entry Test slides provided to the Advisory Committee. It was noted that the Test is reviewed annually by an external review committee to ensure clarity, relevance and accuracy.

Chair pointed out how difficulty to pass is presented as a negative when it is an indication of the high standard expected from drivers.

The NTA highlighted the number of applicants currently passing are the highest numbers in years so does not see the test as a barrier for this reason.

The NTA stated there could be an improvement in how they report on the pass rate numbers.

Member enquired if the study materials were available in other languages; they are not. Demographic data on applicants is not currently gathered.

The Driver Entry Test does not sit on the National Education Framework.

The NTA confirmed that around €70 million is the amount which has been provided to those in the taxi sector for eSPSV grants and confirmed there will be no age extensions for drivers with 2016 vehicles.

NTA representative left the meeting

Member queried if those who have received a grant can get it again, if there is data available for those who have received it more than once. Member discussed the possibility of certain criteria being required in order to apply for grants e.g: providing WAV service, length of time in the industry.

Chair discussed upcoming budget constraints, suggests more drivers getting a smaller amount could be a better option. Member enquired if the eSPSV grant is budgeted until 2029, confirmed it is looked at year by year.

5. Fuel support schemes and the exclusion of the SPSV sector

The topic of fuel support schemes was discussed, and how SPSVs are excluded from this.

Members confirmed drivers have not received any fuel support or discount. Chair enquired if there's been discussion among drivers to seek this out following the protests earlier in the year with Members stating there has not.

Member highlighted companies who own multiple SPSV vehicles cannot wholesale purchase fuel; SPSV drivers all purchase their fuel at public pumps at retail price. There is no particular lobbying group on this matter. Member confirmed his group sent a request to the Minister regarding it and were told they would not be included. Other public service vehicles in private ownership such as coaches were included in the Government fuel support scheme announced in April 2026. Some coach companies have government contracts but a lot are private ones. Member pointed out even though he provides a public service (hospital transfers), he would still not be considered for a subsidy. Another Member stated he does not think the optics would look favourable to the public if the taxi sector were looking for a subsidy. Member discussed drivers who took part in the Uber protests last year, that his group did not agree with it as it inconvenienced the public and did not want to be associated with it.

6. Newly qualified drivers (N plates) in the sector

Member brought up how those working in the taxi industry are considered professional drivers but now N plate drivers are operating taxis. In his opinion, they should be on the road for a least two years before they can enter the industry; confirmed this would require a change in law. Member highlighted the importance of having significant experience, something which is expected in other professions.

7. AOB

Member discussed suitability tests, how failing anything related to the vehicle is a complete fail and you are then required to repeat the test again. How they are not carried out by engineers, the inspectors follow through a checklist and the service is provided by a third party. He thinks a similar process to the NCT, whereby an observational recheck to confirm a correction has been made without requiring a full resit, should be applied for these tests.

Member enquired about an update regarding the appointment of a Vice Chair; Chair confirmed no further update has been provided yet.

Meeting concluded at 12.30pm.

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 24th September at the NTA offices.