Taxis for Ireland Coalition Manifesto – Delivering more taxis

Increasing taxi supply for communities, commerce and connectivity

INTRO

The Taxis for Ireland Coalition Manifesto is a call to Irish policymakers to recognise that there is a significant shortage of taxis in the Irish market, and to take steps to increase licensed taxi driver and vehicle supply to support the urban, rural and night-time economies, by at least 30% by 2027.

In 2024, Ireland has 10% less Small Public Service **Vehicle** (SPSV) licences than it had in 2013.[1] In contrast, SPSV numbers in the UK have increased by 25% in that time.[2] There has been a reduction in SPSV **driver** licences from a height of 47,529 in May 2009 to 34,678 in 2012 to the latest figure of 27,017.[3] From 2012 to 2024, this is around a 24% decrease in 10 years.

WHAT

Taxis represent a key component of Ireland's public transport mix, and as such, their absence at peak times is keenly felt by businesses and customers alike. To better understand the problem and to explore potential solutions, we formed a Coalition of six organisations representing the tourism, hospitality and enterprise sectors, including two dispatch operator platforms.

While the Coalition acknowledges that taxi availability at peak times presents a significant part of the issue, lack of availability remains constant in urban and rural areas across the country, at all times. The numbers of both SPSV driver and vehicle licences in Ireland have declined whilst the CSO indicates that Ireland's population has increased by 14.4% from 2013 to 2023 and volumes of tourism have increased.[4]

WHY

Taxis represent a critical element of Ireland's public transport network, and represent the only door-to-door public transport service. Ireland is an outlier in terms of taxi numbers, as demand is far outstripping supply. Recognition of the issue by politicians, government and the NTA is crucial; the difficulty citizens face in trying to get a taxi is impacting businesses across the country, and affecting Ireland's tourism offering. The Coalition is keen to work with Government

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[1] SPSV-Bulletin-2022-Final-Web.pdf (nationaltransport.ie), p.7.
[2] Taxi and private hire vehicle statistics: England and Wales 2013 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk); Taxi and private hire vehicle statistics, England: 2023 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
[3] SPSV-Bulletin-2022-Final-Web.pdf (nationaltransport.ie), p.18; Tables are correct as of 30 April 2024 - National Transport
[4] Key Findings Measuring Ireland's Progress 2022 - Central Statistics Office; The Competitiveness of Irish Tourism – Review & Outlook – June 2023 – ITIC – Industry Recovery Roadmap

to identify solutions to enhance the supply of taxis in Ireland, some of which we have outlined below.

HOW

The Taxis for Ireland Coalition is seeking to grow the current regulated industry by 30% by 2027. This will go some, but not all the way towards ameliorating the impact of significant decreases in driver and vehicle numbers over the past decade combined with double-digit population growth over the same period.

The Coalition is supportive of the taxi market as regulated in Ireland, and is not seeking deregulation whatsoever.

Delivering more taxis for Ireland – 3 Key Asks

1. An increase in licensed taxi driver and vehicle supply to support the urban, rural and night-time economies, by at least 30% by 2027.
2. Remove the current requirement for all newly registered taxi vehicles to be wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs).
3. Reform the specific geography-based knowledge in the SPSV Driver Entry Test due to the advancement and ubiquitous nature of technology.

What we are <u>not</u> proposing:

The Coalition recognises the value of the current regulations in ensuring safety and standards. The Coalition's focus is on addressing the taxi shortage through targeted measures that do not compromise regulations, and is supportive of the retention of Garda vetting, and driver licensing.

The Coalition is not seeking a deregulation of the taxi market - we simply want more licensed, regulated drivers working in the industry, across the country.

ABOUT THE TFIC

The Taxis for Ireland Coalition was formed in 2023, and counts the Restaurants Association of Ireland (RAI), Vintners' Federation of Ireland (VFI), Licensed Vintners' Association (LVA), Irish Tourism Industry Confederation (ITIC), Bolt and Uber among its members. Our mission is to deliver for our members and the wider Irish economy by seeking an increase in the supply of taxis.

FURTHER INFORMATION: Taxis for Ireland Coalition | taxisforireland@hanovercomms.com