

Taxi Consultation - Public Meeting

City Hotel, Londonderry

03 April 2007

Q1: Do you agree that option 2.1.1 is the most appropriate option for those to be affected by the introduction of the Taxi Driving Test?		
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The test should be for new taxi drivers only. • Inactive drivers should have to take the test (Insurance papers to prove active drivers). • Someone who holds a taxi licence should not have to take the test again. 		

Q2: Do you agree that DVTA should conduct the Taxi Driving Test in Northern Ireland?	Yes
Additional comments:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No problems with DVTA conducting the taxi driving test. 	

Q3: DVTA recommend option (b) for the taxi drivers' theory test. Do you agree with this recommendation?		
Additional comments:		

Q4: Do you agree that the pass criteria for a Taxi Driver taking a practical test should be stricter than that for a private car driver?		
Additional comments:		

Q5: Do you think the maximum number of driving faults should be reduced or that the assessment criteria should be similar to that for an Approved Driving Instructor (ADI)?		
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Against a test similar to the ADI test as the standards are too high. In favour of reducing the number of faults. • The average taxi journey is around 15 minutes. A simple 15 minute commentary drive would be more suitable and would assess basic maintenance and customer care skills. (It was argued that new drivers would not have the experience to complete this and it should only be necessary to assess driving skill). • Further consultation with the taxi industry is needed to determine by how many the faults should be reduced. • The test should be stricter than the normal driving test, but should not be longer, 10-12 faults for example. 		

Q6: Do you agree that a taxi driver should be assessed on their ability to put the passenger at ease with their practical driving?		
	No	
<p>Additional comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This assessment would be far to subjective / opinionated. • This would be covered by assessing the driver’s control of the vehicle. • There is no way of marking it. • Concerned as to how this would be assessed 		

Q7: Do you agree that a right hand reverse exercise should form part of the practical driving test for a taxi driver?		
<p>Additional comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you can do the left reverse exercise then there is no need for a right reverse exercise. • Suggest that the applicant should reverse left and right into a parking bay at the test centre. • On a main road the driver would have to cross a lane of traffic to do the manoeuvre. • Can see practical reasons for it, but including it the test would be a waste of time. • It was agreed that the best option would be for the examiner to choose either a left or right reversing exercise. (This would mean candidates requiring to practise both.) 		

Q8: Do you consider that a taxi driver should be able to demonstrate the ability to select a suitable position for a passenger to alight?		
<p>Additional comments:</p>		

Q9: Do you agree that the Taxi Driving Test should have both a theory element and a practical element?		
<p>Additional comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The theory test should be more specific to taxi driving. You will not have the same perception when driving as when you are doing a hazard perception test on a computer. • If someone has passed the theory test on customer service, then should that person not have to do the courses? This should be enough training for entry into the industry. (If someone has completed a theory test for taxi driving which includes questions on customer service, the training that person has done to complete the test should count towards the mandatory training.) 		

Q10: Do you agree with the proposal to assess drivers of accessible taxis to ensure they are able to assist the passenger?	Yes	0
	No	12
Additional comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are too many different types of disabilities. • I don't think it should be involved. If a driver/firm gets a contract for a specific area (where they would need to deal with disabled customers) then they should then apply for training of staff. • Theory is one thing, but you need to be physically able to assist disabled people. • Drivers should not be assessed in this as the training will cover it. • Taxi drivers already have experience in this. New entrants could do a separate course, with a certificate upon completion. • Incorporate this in the periodic training. 		

Q11: Should existing taxi licence holders who drive wheelchair accessible vehicles be required to take this test upon licence renewal?	Yes	0
	No	12
Additional comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, as he is already delivering this service. • All qualified drivers should not have to do this test. I have invested in this service – the problem would be having to do a test. • Drivers are already delivering this service and are trained in it. • It should be mandatory in the periodic training for drivers of wheelchair accessible taxis. For the new entrants into the industry, have it in the first period of the periodic training. 		

Q12: Do you think DVTA should conduct a wheelchair assessment test if introduced, and if not do you think it should be a stand alone test or form part of a training course?	Course	
Additional comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put people on training courses for disability awareness. 		

Q13: Do you agree with these proposals for the minimum test vehicle requirements for a Taxi Driving Test?	Yes	12
	No	0
Additional comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Agreed) 		

Q14: Do you agree that those drivers wishing to drive wheelchair assessable taxis should have their test conducted in an accessible vehicle?	Yes	0
	No	12
Additional comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Not agreed) 		

Q15: Do you agree that taxi drivers from GB should be required to take the DVTA Taxi Driving Test to obtain a Northern Ireland taxi license?	Yes	
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They should have to meet the Northern Ireland standard. • (Agreed) 		

Q16: Do you agree with DVTA’s proposal to introduce option 2.9.2 in order to keep the Taxi Industry on par with the other vocational transport industries?		
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not a bad idea, but the training should be around 10 hours rather than 21 hours. • It is a lot to ask providing training for taxi drivers and having to pay their wages. • It will be difficult for small providers. • I would want flexibility for the training timescales, ie. Split over a few days - night classes. • 21 hours training would be too much for taxis drivers. • If it is managed properly it would be OK. 		

Q17: Do you agree that larger operators would be able to get in-house training courses approved?	Yes	
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Agreed) 		

Q18: DVTA recommend option 2.10.3 for licensing drivers of ASLs. Do you agree with this recommendation?		
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It should be a test. • The fine of £2500 is too much. 		

Q19: If option 2.10.2 were chosen, do you think that existing ASL drivers should have to complete the test upon licence renewal?		
Additional comments:		

Q20: Do you agree that limousine drivers should carry a comment on their taxi driver card to indicate they are qualified to do so?		
Additional comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It should be another category on the driver’s licence. 		

Q21: Do you agree that limousine drivers caught driving with a regular Taxi Driving Licence should be dealt with as outlined above?		
Additional comments:		

Other comments

- The participants wanted it recorded that in their belief there is an issue with within charitable bus organisations of individuals acting outside the guidelines for hire or reward. They requested that we pass their concerns onto the appropriate authorities.

Belfast Taxi Consultation Public Meeting – Wednesday 4 April 07

Q1: Do you agree that option 2.1.1 is the most appropriate option for those to be affected by the introduction of the Taxi Driving Test?	Yes	11
	No	1
<p>Additional comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You should have to produce evidence that you are working as a taxi driver on renewal of your taxi licence, and if you can't you should have to take the test. The group felt inactive drivers should be able to renew their licence as long as they comply with the regulations without taking a test. It should be easy for someone to leave the industry for a period and to return later without having to take a test. The consultation proposals do not address the future pool of drivers who haven't taken a test and use their taxi licence part time or as a supplement to their main income. It has been too easy for such people to get licences. Taxi drivers do not need another test beyond the category B car test. Anyone who didn't pass the previous test should have to do this one. New drivers should do the test and existing drivers should receive an ADI-style check test by DVTA supervising examiners to assess their driving. The general consensus of the group, with these comments in mind, was that only new drivers should have to take a test. 		

Q2: Do you agree that DVTA should conduct the Taxi Driving Test in Northern Ireland?	
<p>Additional comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the test was conducted by the private sector there would be less problems with test waiting times The private sector would charge more, so DVTA should conduct the test Both DVTA and a private company should offer the test in case there is another strike, and to avoid a monopoly system with higher charges DVTA should conduct the test with a private sector company in reserve in case they can't meet demand. Generally the group was divided between these opinions. 	

Q3: DVTA recommend option (b) for the taxi drivers' theory test. Do you agree with this recommendation?	
<p>Additional comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most people felt a hybrid option would be best (option (c)) There should be separate tests for public and private hire Those who drive wedding cars will not have to deal with DDA so should not have to be assessed in it during the theory test Conflict resolution, effects of alcohol, emotion and stress of special occasions and communication with non-native English speakers should all be covered in the theory test 	

Q4: Do you agree that the pass criteria for a Taxi Driver taking a practical test should be stricter than that for a private car driver?	Yes	
	No	
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They shouldn't be assessed more strictly than a category B test • Another test is unnecessary • Items beyond standard car driving are items for periodic training and don't need to be assessed by DVTA. 		

Q5: Do you think the maximum number of driving faults should be reduced or that the assessment criteria should be similar to that for an Approved Driving Instructor (ADI)?	Yes	
	No	
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be a middle ground in terms of standard, which assesses comfort and customer service. A higher standard alone will not address these issues. • An ADI standard is acceptable and it will bring professionalism to the industry • Tests are not the issue, it is attitude and post-test actions that count • Category B standard is fine • In the long term the test should be brought to ADI standard, but the industry needs things to be done gradually so the test should not be as difficult as this to begin with. 		

Q6: Do you agree that a taxi driver should be assessed on their ability to put the passenger at ease with their practical driving?	Yes	
	No	
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most people agreed this should be the case 		

Q7: Do you agree that a right hand reverse exercise should form part of the practical driving test for a taxi driver?	Yes	
	No	
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taxi drivers rarely conduct a right hand reverse • Problems of going against normal traffic flow dissuade from this manoeuvre 		

Q8: Do you consider that a taxi driver should be able to demonstrate the ability to select a suitable position for a passenger to alight?	Yes	
	No	
Additional comments:		
(Not asked at forum)		

Q9: Do you agree that the Taxi Driving Test should have both a theory element and a practical element?	Yes	13
	No	0
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All agreed, since this is the format for the ordinary driving test. 		

Q10: Do you agree with the proposal to assess drivers of accessible taxis to ensure they are able to assist the passenger?	Yes	
	No	
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree since more wheelchair users are carried in PCVs Since bus drivers involved in contract work for disabled passengers are trained so taxi drivers should be too. Taking a test asks taxi drivers to achieve something other drivers doing the same job do not have to do. Taxi drivers need clarification on their legal obligation, as some disabled passengers don't want to use the restraints and just want home quickly. Drivers are currently afraid of litigation. Training is more appropriate than assessment. Manual and automatic vehicles should be treated differently in terms of the test. It should be part of all taxi tests, and where a saloon type vehicle is presented the driver should be able to show they can safely fold and store the wheelchair for the passenger. This wouldn't take long enough to justify a separate module. These vehicles are expensive so if someone buys them they will ensure they know how to use its features themselves, without testing or assessment. Not all public hire vehicles can use the equipment without assistance from other drivers, as it is not always easy to do. In general the group felt training would be better for covering this 		

Q11: Should existing taxi licence holders who drive wheelchair accessible vehicles be required to take this test upon licence renewal?	Yes	
	No	
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Its shouldn't apply to drivers of saloon cars There should be public and private hire licences to distinguish the two Everyone should be aware of DDA and different disabilities, but common sense should apply A separate module is required for accessible vehicle drivers Often the person being carried leads the driver in how much assistance they require and in what form. A best practice guide is needed for the industry. 		

Q12: Do you think DVTA should conduct a wheelchair assessment test if introduced, and if not do you think it should be a stand alone test or form part of a training course?	Yes	
	No	
Additional comments:		

- All agreed it should form part of a training course.

Q13: Do you agree with these proposals for the minimum test vehicle requirements for a Taxi Driving Test?	Yes	
	No	
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those vehicles just under 1600cc should still be acceptable • Non-saloon types such as estate or MPV should be permitted 		

Q14: Do you agree that those drivers wishing to drive wheelchair assessable taxis should have their test conducted in an accessible vehicle?	Yes	13
	No	0
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All agreed. 		

Q15: Do you agree that taxi drivers from GB should be required to take the DVTA Taxi Driving Test to obtain a Northern Ireland taxi license?	Yes	
	No	
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers should be able to transfer their taxi licence across the UK • GB should be required to achieve an equal standard to Northern Ireland • This is an EU issue, not just a UK issue • Perhaps existing GB taxi drivers should be exempt but new ones required to take the test • The group was divided with some feeling they should be exempt and others thinking they should be tested. 		

Q16: Do you agree with DVTA's proposal to introduce option 2.9.2 in order to keep the Taxi Industry on par with the other vocational transport industries?	Yes	
	No	
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The industry is concerned with the costs associated, especially as not all drivers are full time • Could the drivers not be updated through a newsletter rather than compulsory training? • Employers will not assess which training is most appropriate for drivers • This should be considered once the test is introduced, as this would be too big a jump from the current level of costs for the industry • Raising the standards too high too fast will dissuade new drivers. • Training should be off-peak • Literacy and numeracy problems need to be addressed • The seven hour blocks should be more flexible • Drivers should be able to group together and hire trainers rather than paying a fee 		

<p>per driver trained. This would cost the industry less, and legislation would set a maximum course fee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait and see periodic training in operation in the bus sector before considering it for taxi drivers • Some agreed with the proposals and felt the fact drivers have three years to complete it will be a phasing in approach.

<p>Q17: Do you agree that larger operators would be able to get in-house training courses approved?</p>	Yes	
	No	
<p>Additional comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, as there isn't enough large firms who could do this • In-house trainers would be under pressure to pass all drivers 		

<p>Q18: DVTA recommend option 2.10.3 for licensing drivers of ASLs. Do you agree with this recommendation?</p>	Course	
	Test	
<p>Additional comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These drivers should take their taxi test in an ASL. • New drivers won't be able to get an ASL for their test • The industry should not be allowed to remove the front seat, or else it should be replaceable for testing purposes • The off-road option is best • ASLs should not be admitted into the PSV regulations • ASL owners should be responsible for ensuring drivers are skilled to drive them, and an ordinary taxi licence should be sufficient 		

<p>Q19: If option 2.10.3 were chosen, do you think that existing ASL drivers should have to complete the test upon licence renewal?</p>	Yes	
	No	
<p>Additional comments: (Not asked at forum)</p>		

<p>Q20: Do you agree that limousine drivers should carry a comment on their taxi driver card to indicate they are qualified to do so?</p>	Yes	
	No	
<p>Additional comments: (Not asked at forum)</p>		

<p>Q21: Do you agree that limousine drivers caught driving with a regular Taxi Driving Licence should be dealt with as outlined above?</p>	Yes	
	No	
<p>Additional comments: (Not asked at forum)</p>		

Other Issues

The compliance and sanctions section was queried. A fixed notice isn't seen as a severe enough penalty.

One driver asked if a full RIA was ever completed for the first consultation.

Newry Forum – Thursday 5 April 07

Q1: Do you agree that option 2.1.1 is the most appropriate option for those to be affected by the introduction of the Taxi Driving Test?	Yes	0
	No	10
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those who haven't taken the previous taxi test should complete this, as all taxi drivers should be advanced drivers • There should be a grace period of existing drivers who haven't passed the previous test. If they haven't passed by the deadline their licence should be removed. • You can't take someone's licence away if they've been driving for years • Those who have held their licence for less than 3-5 years should take the test • Those who have received a licence within the last 3-5 years should have to prove they are using it to exempt them from the test • Those who have done the previous test or can demonstrate experience should be exempt • The group was not happy with the recommendation. 		

Q2: Do you agree that DVTA should conduct the Taxi Driving Test in Northern Ireland?	
Additional comments:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All agree • Whoever does the enforcement should conduct the test 	

Q3: DVTA recommend option (b) for the taxi drivers' theory test. Do you agree with this recommendation?	
Additional comments:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A local knowledge test should be introduced • Local knowledge is outdated given satellite navigation • The theory test should cover "do's" and "don'ts" for taxi drivers, first aid, customer service, wheelchair friendly assessment and types of wheelchairs (e.g. brakes, ramps etc) • All agreed with the recommendation. 	

Q4: Do you agree that the pass criteria for a Taxi Driver taking a practical test should be stricter than that for a private car driver?	Yes	
	No	
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harder criteria but not to the level of the ADI test. 		

Q5: Do you think the maximum number of driving faults should be reduced or that the assessment criteria should be similar to that for an Approved Driving Instructor (ADI)?	Yes	
	No	
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ADI standard is too high and would scare people from the industry. A middle ground is required. • Hazard perception pass rate should be as for ADIs • Heavier enforcement is required or new drivers won't comply 		

Q6: Do you agree that a taxi driver should be assessed on their ability to put the passenger at ease with their practical driving?	Yes	
	No	
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All agree with recommendation. 		

Q7: Do you agree that a right hand reverse exercise should form part of the practical driving test for a taxi driver?	Yes	
	No	
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't use too often as the passenger would be open to the traffic • Include a U-turn instead or in addition to the right hand reverse, as these are more common • Include motorway or dual carriageway driving in all tests 		

Q8: Do you consider that a taxi driver should be able to demonstrate the ability to select a suitable position for a passenger to alight?	Yes	
	No	
Additional comments: (Not asked at the forum).		

Q9: Do you agree that the Taxi Driving Test should have both a theory element and a practical element?	Yes	10
	No	0
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All agreed. 		

Q10: Do you agree with the proposal to assess drivers of accessible taxis to ensure they are able to assist the passenger?	Yes	10
	No	0
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often the disabled passenger gives a lead on the assistance they require • This should be in the theory test • The recommendation is a good option 		

- Those who purchase such vehicles should be trained on the use of the equipment by the vender.
- The onus shouldn't be on the operator to ensure their drivers are trained, but on the driver themselves.
- Operators should have some responsibility
- In general the recommendation was agreed and such drivers should have a separate certificate given to them

Q11: Should existing taxi licence holders who drive wheelchair accessible vehicles be required to take this test upon licence renewal?	Yes	10
	No	0
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All agreed. 		

Q12: Do you think DVTA should conduct a wheelchair assessment test if introduced, and if not do you think it should be a stand alone test or form part of a training course?	Yes	10
	No	0
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It should form part of the taxi test, otherwise a two tier licensing system will exist • This should be a compulsory periodic training module for drivers of these vehicles • DVTA should conduct this test 		

Q13: Do you agree with these proposals for the minimum test vehicle requirements for a Taxi Driving Test?	Yes	10
	No	0
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed 		

Q14: Do you agree that those drivers wishing to drive wheelchair assessable taxis should have their test conducted in an accessible vehicle?	Yes	10
	No	0
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed. 		

Q15: Do you agree that taxi drivers from GB should be required to take the DVTA Taxi Driving Test to obtain a Northern Ireland taxi license?	Yes	
	No	
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unless the GB test was of the same standard or higher they should have to re-do the Northern Ireland test. 		

Q16: Do you agree with DVTA's proposal to introduce option 2.9.2 in order to keep the Taxi Industry on par with the other vocational transport industries?	Yes	
	No	
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training itself is ok, but the costs could be a problem for drivers • Include the training cost in the licence fee • Training is better than retesting • Part time drivers will leave the industry which will exacerbate recruitment problems, and these drivers are essential to the industry and it cannot sustain full time drivers • The operator could pay for training for a driver who will then move to another employer • Only enforcement will make better taxi drivers, not training 		

Q17: Do you agree that larger operators would be able to get in-house training courses approved?	Yes	
	No	
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companies should train their own employees so drivers can't move firms as easily • Agree with the recommendation 		

Q18: DVTA recommend option 2.10.3 for licensing drivers of ASLs. Do you agree with this recommendation?	Course	
	Test	
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASL drivers shouldn't be treated any differently or have additional requirements • Most people agreed with the proposal 		

Q19: If option 2.10.3 were chosen, do you think that existing ASL drivers should have to complete the test upon licence renewal?	Yes	10
	No	0
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. 		

Q20: Do you agree that limousine drivers should carry a comment on their taxi driver card to indicate they are qualified to do so?	Yes	10
	No	0
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. 		

Q21: Do you agree that limousine drivers caught driving with a regular Taxi Driving Licence should be dealt with as outlined above?	Yes	
	No	
Additional comments: (Not asked at forum.)		

Other Issues

All the new measures are good, but it seems that the legal taxi drivers are being penalised more and more and given more cost burden.