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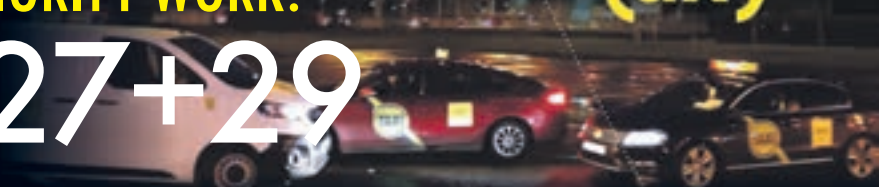
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taxy





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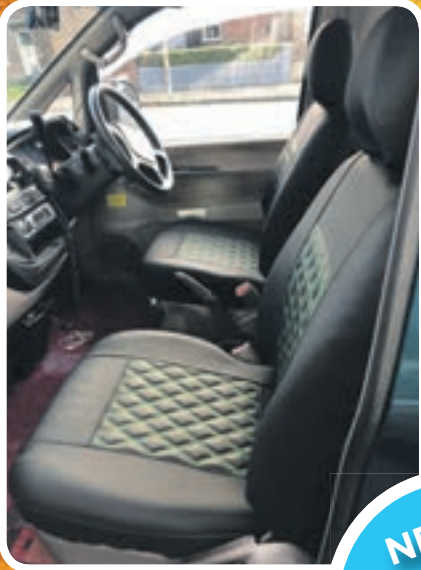
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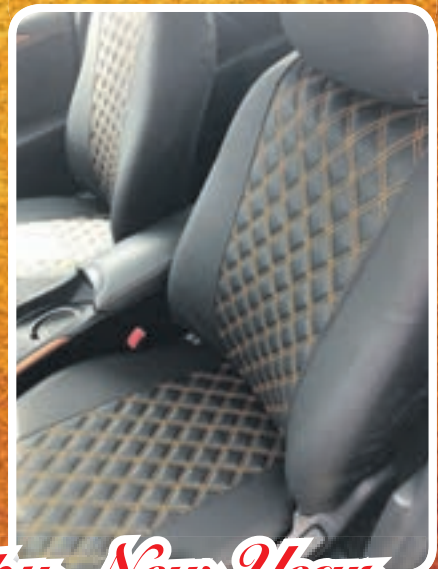
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CONTENTS

With all of the hardships faced by taxi drivers in recent years there is some good news. With COVID more or less in the past, the Taxi Drivers Children's Day Out is set to return next year. Having been cancelled three years in a row due to the pandemic and the tentative return to normality, PRO Paul Mathews told Tacsai magazine that there are plans to bring back the popular event next year, COVID willing.

Mathews himself has been keeping busy in the meantime; taking part in the Mo Bros charity walk from Bray to Howth Head alongside frontline workers and raising more than €15,000 for the charity. He is also set to play darts against five time darts world champion Raymond van Barnafeld in January to raise money for Pieta House.

In other news; Tony Roe Chairman of the National Transport Assembly Committee has called for clarification on the extension of the 10 year rule for taxis. While it was announced in

September that an extension would be made to the rule due to the unavailability of Electronic Vehicles, he has yet to see an amendment on paper and the National Transport Authority will not provide clarification. He also hit out at what he calls the backward approach of shutting down taxi ranks, forcing drivers to needlessly drive around wasting fossil fuel.

We at taxi magazine would like to take this opportunity to wish taxi drivers and their families all over Ireland a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

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We are now TaxiFair Insurances Limited

From 1st November 2022, we are now TaxiFair Insurances Limited as regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.

We had previously enjoyed a long partnership with Ben McArdle Limited and the plan was always for us to separate entities in due course.... We needed access to the market quickly in 2015 and we are grateful that Ben McArdle afforded us that. We didn't expect the partnership to last 7 years but with us now through various challenges such as bringing new entrants to the taxi insurance market and COVID, the time is right to drive the business forward.

Please rest assured that the same expert team – led by Luke Calvert and Gareth Logan – remains in place and from a practical standpoint nothing has changed day to day. Please watch this space as you can now expect new developments in the coming months via new product offerings and benefits to our customer base.

Protect Yourself in the Dark, Winter Months with a gift from TaxiFair

The first of such developments is a partnership we've forged with RE:SURE. They have a personal protection app which is perfect for Taxi Drivers. There is a panic button you can place in your vehicle and once this is pushed it alerts a 24/7 monitoring centre that can then check on your wellbeing and alert emergency contacts/services as required. There are a whole host of features in place to give added protection to you at a time of the year when things can sometimes get out of hand – duress codes, timers to set so that you receive a call to check on you if you're nervous about a fare etc.

Therefore, we are delighted to announce that every policy purchased from TaxiFair between 1st December 2022 to and 31st January 2023 will receive a free personal panic button and a 3 month subscription to the RE:SURE Go app. This is not just for new customers but for those renewing with us too.

TaxiFair and our insurer partners genuinely want to thank you for placing your business with us and provide protection that goes beyond the disc in your window.

Market Update – Costs moving in the right direction

At TaxiFair, we are delighted to be sending out reduced quotations to the majority of our customers as they've come up for renewal this year. Whilst a big factor of this is the work of our team to ensure we get the right price for you, there are also macro factors at play - increased competition, lower claim levels during COVID and the gradual impact of legislative changes in the sector.

There are exceptions to this of course, but at TaxiFair we ensure that renewals are only seeing a premium increase where it is fully justified. At present, this tends to be where there have been claims paid (and sometimes no claims discount reduced/lost) or an issue with their driving licence (penalty points, convictions etc). On occasion, a significant change in vehicle can also prompt a premium change, too.

We will be keeping a close eye on costs as we enter 2023. We understand how Taxi Drivers have been impacted by inflation and so far, insurers have not added to that cost. But, we must bear in mind that insurers are not immune to inflation and this is likely to become a factor in 2023.

Electric Vehicle Discount agreed with FBD Insurance

We are seeing more and more drivers migrate to Electric Vehicles and naturally, many are concerned about the insurance costs of going from a 2012 Toyota Avensis or Prius to a brand-new Kia Niro, MG5, Nissan Leaf or even a Tesla.

We are therefore delighted to announce FBD's new 'Green' initiative includes a discount for those purchasing an electric taxi. It's making a significant

difference to prices on offer for these high performance, high value vehicles, so give us a try when you're going electric.

Market News – Is your no claims bonus fully protected?

If you are purchasing 'full no claims bonus protection' make sure that your no claims bonus really is protected. In practice, this means that if you make a claim against your policy that your no claims bonus (or more commonly referred to as 'no claims discount' by insurers) is not lost, nor stepped back.

However, at least one insurer in the market is now adopting an approach where you pay for full bonus protection, but your bonus is stepped back (i.e. reduced) if a claim is over €45,000 in value. That's not full bonus protection, so make sure you know what you're buying.

As with all insurance policies, the devil is in the detail, so make sure you check those details with qualified staff that understand how important these matters are for those who drive for a living. This is not just another insurance policy, it's a business expense you can't afford to increase significantly and unexpectedly.

Multi-Plate Owners – do you know what you're buying?

New 'Fleet' or 'Open Drive' policies have not been available in the Irish Taxi insurance market for numerous years now and it's helped to stabilise the market. Fleet policies in the past saw short term thinking, drivers who were not accountable (had a claim? Doesn't matter, just go on another fleet policy as you don't need to provide any bonus proof) and this combined to make the space loss making for insurers.

In recent years, rental policies have in 95% of cases been rented to a single full-time driver, who is keen to stay for the year and build his driving experience – a better risk than a short-term driver. Crucially, each driver was insured on their own policy (under the plate-owners name to meet National Transport Authority regulations) and priced solely on the driver's experience/no claims bonus.

However, around 6 years ago we saw 1 insurer to decide that despite pricing policies on an individual driver's experience, they would move the goal posts. They decided that despite pricing policies on driver's individual experience, if several drivers from the same multi-plate owner had a claim the insurer would increase prices for all drivers under that renter – so, despite buying a 1 driver policy, you had in fact purchased a fleet policy where all drivers were interlinked. This meant 1 driver with a large claim could suddenly drive the costs of all policies up, even for drivers without claims. Some multi-plate owners were nearly put out of business at the time, as costs became unsustainable.

I reference this as we are starting to see history repeat itself. Having sold and priced policies on an individual driver basis, a different insurer is now deciding to take the same approach, as confirmed by numerous sources. A reassuring note on the insurers headed paper was then circulated, stating 'if a policyholder has multiple policies insured with us and one or two of these drivers have an accident and make a claim, no other policy will be affected'... but what if there are three claims across your 10 or 20 drivers? What if there are large claims? Suddenly it seems all your policies could be affected and if drivers cannot purchase competitive insurance under your plate, they may seek to rent elsewhere. As a multi-plate owner, both you and your drivers need certainty and stability, especially in the current economic climate. Make sure you have an insurance policy that provides that.

We deal with Liberty Insurance and FBD Insurance and have commitments from these insurers that a claim on an individual policy will only affect the individual driver's price and no claims discount. We've operated this way since 2015 and will only operate with insurers working with us on this basis.



Taxi shortage to leave partygoers with long waits this Christmas - Free Now boss

The global boss of taxi firm Free Now has said there will be shortages of lifts in Ireland this Christmas.

Speaking to the Irish Independent's Big Tech Show podcast, Thomas Zimmermann said it now looks unavoidable and blamed a lack of drivers in the market.

"There's always a Christmas shortage, because a lot of drivers go on vacation," he said. "We have seen post-pandemic shortages in supply [of drivers] across Europe. A lot of drivers needed to change profession during the pandemic. Many did not come back."

Mr Zimmermann said it remains hard to recruit enough drivers to meet the post-pandemic demand, which has risen by a third since the lockdowns ended.

There's competition for drivers, especially in the Irish market," he said. "There are also quite a lot of formalities you need to do."

He said that while he did not think Irish taxi regulations were too strict, the "motivation" of officials creating policy could be better.

I think it's more about maybe the motivational aspects from the city or the Government," he said.

"If you see there's a shortage in drivers, you want to motivate that ecosystem because something besides public transport plays a very big role in the general infrastructure of the city. Therefore, it should be in the interest of the minister or the municipalities as well."

Mr Zimmermann said there was disappointment in the industry that the Government had delayed legalising e-scooters, which

still officially require a driver's licence, tax and insurance under traditional motoring laws in Ireland.

Free Now is one of a number of "mobility" firms that has been trying to launch scooter rental services in the Irish market.

"To a certain extent it is a disappointment," he said. "Because we can provide that service to Irish users. If you compare it to other countries where we have already brought a mobility offering, you can see the beauty for the end user in terms of cross-usage."

He also doubted whether Free Now would be able to expand a new service integrating its taxis, e-bikes and e-scooters with public transport ticketing, as it has just done in Germany's largest transit zone.

"Dublin doesn't have a central API [application programming interface] for public transport systems," he said.

"There's definitely a plan to go to more European cities to integrate public transport, but in Dublin it's hard to tell. The public transport system in Ireland is comparatively small."

Mr Zimmermann said autonomous taxis are unlikely to be seen as a mainstream service in the coming years.

He also said the public debate over Uber's private-hire model had evolved in markets to accommodate a shortage of public hire vehicles.

NO ONE GETS LEFT BEHIND

Eircab is a new Irish company, set up by taxi drivers, for taxi drivers operating in the Irish taxi market.

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We have now commenced our Beta Test Program on our app and back-end systems. This will continue until the end of December and will operate in the Blanchardstown area only. Our nationwide launch will commence shortly and we will keep you updated on the 'go live' date in your area.

Fees, Payments & Job Allocation

Eircab charge a 10% commission fee to drivers on all jobs completed the previous week. Payments are made weekly on Wednesdays for all jobs completed the previous week (Monday AM to Sunday PM). All drivers will be treated fairly and equally regarding job offers, with no favouritism / priority on job allocations. All drivers will have equal access to all pre-book jobs. Our success depends on our drivers providing a Reliable and Professional service to all our customers.

On behalf of all our staff members and company founders, we would like to invite you to register on the eircab driver app and welcome you on board.

Stay safe and best wishes.
David Knox, Gerry Hand, Dave Heeney, and Peter O'Brien





"Fairness and competition are pillars of our business at TaxiFair and it's fantastic to see a company in the ride hailing space with these same core values, reducing costs for drivers when everything else is increasing."
Luke Calvert Managing Director



"The National Taxi Forum was set up to help and support our fellow taxi drivers. Over the past few years we have seen major shifts in the way the public and drivers interact through booking apps entering the market. David Knox and his team have just launched a great new booking app eircab guaranteeing drivers a better deal and bringing real competition into the market which can only be good for drivers.

On behalf of the members of the NTF we want to wish David and his team well with the launch of their EirCab app"



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Drivers are Being Left in Limbo

Tony Roe, Chairman of the National Transport Assembly Committee (NTAC), and Spokesperson on Taxis, speaks out on the current review for Transport for Ireland.

“While drivers would welcome progress, changes that would be beneficial to the public and also to public service operators; the European Commission’s recent contributions, while good on paper, does not do a lot for progress in the transport industry. The taxi industry has been impacted by COVID 19, and it hasn’t fully recovered. It needs consultation, support and negotiation. The opposite is applying here, drivers are looking for direction on the year of their cars, which are reaching the 10 year rule and are being put off the road. Drivers are being left in Limbo. When direction is needed, all of the Department’s kick the can down the road, and drivers have no clarification here. The taxi industry has been paralysed during COVID and it needs attention for drivers to carry on servicing the public,” said Roe.

“Giving grants for electric cars to drivers is a good way to continue to purify our cities. We have over 30, 000 taxis on the streets of Dublin, this is a lot of vehicles, and it has not helped our contaminated air. And as taxis pay €90m a year to our Government, it makes sense to rectify the current situation, and clean up the air, which was so bad that the EU upon arriving in Dublin, fined the Irish Government after a survey €15, 000 a day. This must be looked at. We’re hearing complaints from drivers that must be addressed and not just swept under the mat,” Roe said.

“Extensions to the taxi license, concerning the 10 year rule must be addressed. Putting good cars off the road is a waste of resources. Extending the license makes sense. Garages we are talking to are telling us that they can’t get electric cars, citing that the war is a contributing factor here on this, so it makes sense to extend the license on the car. These cars undergo stringent tests; that’s two NCT’s, two SGS tests. It’s a no brainer, and something we at the National Transport Assembly Committee are going to continue to target and campaigning for in everyone’s interest. The situation here is very serious for taxi drivers, and a lot of drivers are contacting us now and they’re worried and say that contacting the National Transport Authority (NTA) is no help. Meanwhile drivers are leaving the industry; experienced drivers who are a great credit to the industry,” said Roe.

“A grant for electric cars can’t be accepted in a lot of



cases due to the unavailability of cars, so an extension is a good way to keep drivers in the industry until the current situation changes. Protocols must be put in place here to sustain the fleet. Having a camping to get new drivers into the industry is pointless, and it’s a let down to the system. Drivers are being put out of the industry. We are urging all drivers to contact their elected representatives who have the power to act on these issues. The question has to be asked; why aren’t members of Government speaking out on these important issues.”

“The other issue we have here is the taxi rank problem. Taxi ranks are closing down at an alarming rate. We’ve seen 27 taxi ranks being put out of commission. Tourists are complaining to us continually. The high profile taxi ranks in the city centre which were main arteries are gone. Typical examples are O’Connell Street and Grafton Street where there are thousands of tourists and the mass closure of these ranks is a great disservice. The damage to the environment of forcing taxis to drive around is astronomical, and this ridiculous process must be addressed. Special pressure now must be put into place here to progress this issue. Forcing taxi drivers to needlessly drive around the city wasting fossil fuel adding to the contamination of our air is lunacy. The damage done by rank closures must be addressed. All the authorities seem to be turning a blind eye to this problem and it must be addressed. Politicians running off to summits on fossil fuels and doing nothing at home. Putting all the taxis out on the roads wasting fuel is needless. Taxi drivers are in need of attention here, and are being put out of business and a full review of these important issues is needed here by the present Government,” said Roe.

It was announced in September that up to 4,000 vehicles that were set to be put off the road next year are now expected to continue operating as taxis next year.

Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan confirmed the National Transport Authority (NTA) had extended the 10-year rule, which limits the age of vehicles drivers could use.

However, according to Roe he has not been able to get confirmation of this.

“I’ve been on to the NTA myself looking for confirmation and they’re saying they can’t give it. So we’re hearing this, and nobody seems to have it in writing,” he said.



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Taximesse 2022

Here's a selection of photos from the recent International European taxi fair in Cologne, by Emmet O'Reilly of Vibord Electronics.



DRIVER IN COURT OVER REGENCY MURDER

A taxi driver accused of participating in the murder of Kinahan Cartel member David Byrne said “thank God” when gardaí arrived at his house to tow his car two weeks after the shooting and blessed himself, the Special Criminal Court was told recently.

Garda witnesses also told the court of being informed that defendant Paul Murphy was suspected of having driven one of the gunmen away after the Regency Hotel attack.

The three-judge court also heard that a mobile phone registered to Mr Murphy was turned off between 1.20pm and 3pm on the day that Mr Byrne was shot dead which detectives believed was “unusual” in comparison to the “normal usage” of the accused’s mobile device. The court has heard that the attack at the hotel began at 2:28pm that day.

Gerard Hutch (59), last of The Paddocks, Clontarf, Dublin 3, denies the murder of Mr Byrne (33) during a boxing weigh-in at the Regency Hotel on February 5th, 2016.

Mr Hutch’s two co-accused – Paul Murphy (61), of Cherry Avenue, Swords, Co Dublin and Jason Bonney (50), of Drumnigh Wood, Portmarnock, Dublin 13 have pleaded not guilty to participating in or contributing to the murder of Mr Byrne by providing access to motor vehicles on February 5th, 2016.

Transit van

It is the prosecution’s case that a silver Ford transit van containing six people left the Regency Hotel after the shooting, including three persons dressed in tactical garda clothing. The raiders then made good their escape by using a number of parked vehicles at St Vincent’s GAA club.

Sean Gillane SC, prosecuting, said in his opening address that “an integral part of the operation” which led to Mr Byrne’s death was the means by which the tactical team escaped, which is central to the case of Mr Bonney and Mr Murphy.

Detective Sergeant Alan McGovern told Mr Gillane on Monday that he was on duty as member in charge at Ballymun Garda Station on the evening of May 30th 2016, when Detective Sergeant Brian Hanley arrived with Mr Murphy. “He told me that Paul Murphy is the registered owner of a gold green Toyota Avensis and that it was suspected that he transported in his taxi a number of participants in the murder to Buckingham Village on the morning of February 5th, 2016,” he said.



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Det Sgt McGovern said Det Sgt Hanley showed him CCTV footage of a taxi arriving at Buckingham Village in Dublin's north inner city at 10.54am, 12.02pm and 12.10pm on February 5th.

The witness said that Det Sgt Hanley also informed him that Mr Murphy had previously admitted to being the sole driver of the taxi on that date. "He also said that three vehicles had left Buckingham Village in convoy and that the taxi was part of the convoy. Also in convoy was a silver Ford Transit van believed to be used in the murder," he outlined.

St Vincent's GAA

Det Sgt Hanley had also told the witness that Mr Murphy had parked outside the Beachcomber Pub at 1.22pm on February 5th and that the taxi joined up with a convoy including a BMW believed to be driven by his co-accused Mr Bonney. A black Skoda taxi was part of the convoy and the three vehicles went to St Vincent's GAA grounds in Marino, he added. "Det Sgt Hanley said Mr Murphy took away the gunman from that area," he added. Det Sgt McGovern also testified that Det Sgt Hanley said a mobile phone registered to Mr Murphy was turned off between 1.20pm and 3pm on February 5th, which "appeared to be unusual in comparison to the normal usage of his mobile phone".

Chief Superintendent Finbar Murphy testified that he had a telephone conversation with Det Sgt Brian Hanley regarding the arrest of Mr Murphy at 5.58pm on May 30th, 2016. The witness said Det Sgt Hanley had outlined that Mr Murphy had been the driver of a light-green Avensis car which was seen prior to the murder of Mr Byrne at the Regency Hotel, that he had driven in convoy to St Vincent's GAA grounds in Marino and that he had driven "one of the assassination or assailant team" after the shooting from the gaelic grounds in that car.

Now retired Detective Garda William Armstrong told Mr Gillane

that he was driving an unmarked official garda vehicle on February 19th 2016 when he arrived at Cherry Avenue in Swords.

He said he observed a Toyota Avensis parked on the roadway and he believed at the time that the vehicle was sought for the murder of Mr Byrne at the Regency Hotel.

Having observed the vehicle, Mr Armstrong said he made a phone call to have the vehicle towed for a forensic examination. The witness spoke to Mr Murphy at 6.50pm that evening and identified himself. "When we spoke to Mr Mr Murphy at 6.50pm that evening and identified himself. "When we spoke to Mr Murphy, he asked if we were gardai and he said 'thank God' and blessed himself," said Mr Armstrong.

The witness said he asked Mr Murphy if he owned the Avensis vehicle and the accused indicated that he did. Mr Murphy then removed the key for the Avensis from a bunch of keys and handed the key to the witness. Mr Armstrong informed Mr Murphy that the vehicle was being seized, that it would be towed and taken to a secure location for forensic examination.

Mr Murphy asked the witness if it would take long and Mr Armstrong said he did not know. Mr Armstrong did not examine or search the vehicle.

Mr Byrne, from Crumlin, was shot dead at the hotel in Whitehall, Dublin 9 after five men, three disguised as armed gardai in tactical clothing and carrying AK-47 assault rifles, stormed the building during the attack, which was hosting a boxing weigh-in at the time.

The victim was shot by two of the tactical assailants and further rounds were delivered to his head and body.

Mr Byrne died after suffering catastrophic injuries from six gunshots fired from a high-velocity weapon to the head, face, stomach, hand and legs. The trial continues this afternoon before Ms Justice Tara Burns, presiding, sitting with Judge Sarah Berkeley and Judge Grainne Malone.

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Taxi drivers avoiding ‘violent’ city centres at night due to fears about assaults

Representatives have warned drivers will continue to leave the sector unless greater supports are put in place.

Taxi industry representatives have said drivers are avoiding peak periods of demand or leaving the job altogether because they are concerned for their safety in “violent” cities at night.

Over the summer, revellers in Dublin reported a significant shortage in the number of taxis available at the end of their nights out in the city centre. A survey by the National Transport Authority earlier this year found that 93% of licensed drivers were working but only 29% were working Friday and Saturday nights.

Jim Waldron of the National Private Hire and Taxi Association (NPHTA) said the main reason drivers have given for avoiding nighttime work, particularly over weekends, is safety.

“A lot of drivers won’t work nights now, across the country the cities in particular have become very violent places,” he told The Journal.

“Even in terms of the public feeling safe, there seems to be very little visibility of guards on the streets. For years now we’ve been

calling for a liaison officer so the guards can work with taxi drivers on safety issues but it’s fallen on deaf ears.

“If you ask drivers, most of them will have had some kind of incident and if they’ve been attacked sometimes they just go home, they don’t even report it.”

He said the new requirement to accept card payments, introduced at the start of this month, was also increasing the risk of conflict between passengers and drivers if a card does not work or Wifi drops out and the driver’s machine does not function.

His comments were echoed by David McGuinness, chairperson of the taxi driver representative organisation Tiomanai Tacsai Na HEireann (TTnH), who told The Journal that, while he hasn’t noticed a particular increase in passengers using credit or debit cards to pay their fares, he expects it will cause “friction”.

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the signal, so that'll cause a bit of friction," he said.

"We had put in proposals with the National Transport Authority to have some kind of pre-approval on cards before a journey starts but they rejected that."

McGuinness said he has also been hearing from drivers about their concerns relating to safety.

"Even though there have been some serious assaults on taxi drivers, I don't remember the last time one was brought to court or there was a criminal conviction," he said. "I don't think it's the guards' fault, it seems like it may be treated differently in the courts, if someone had a few pints on them at the time it excuses the behaviour."

He said drivers are often isolated when these incidents happen, without a way of quickly seeking assistance.

"If there's an incident on a bus or train, there's nearly an instant response from the guards or security but we're on our own out there," he said.

Taxi driver Tony Rowe, who is chairman of the National Transport Assembly Committee, said he has been engaging with officials to encourage a change to seatbelt regulations for drivers.

He told The Journal that many serious assaults in taxis begin with passengers pulling the driver's seatbelt up around their necks to overpower them.

"If you go up the road to Newry, taxi drivers are exempt from wearing a seatbelt for that very reason, it makes them vulnerable to assaults," he said.

"It's something that's going under the radar. I know of a driver who was savagely beaten in a car, a seatbelt was used in that attack. He's left taxi driving now and he's working as a security man, he says it's less dangerous."

A number of taxi driver representative organisations addressed the Oireachtas Transport Committee yesterday, including the National Private Hire and Taxi Association (NPHTA) and Tiomanai Tacsai Na HEireann (TTnH).

Driver safety was one issue raised during the meeting.

Representatives also explained to the committee that there are a number of other factors that are pushing drivers out of the industry or discouraging new drivers from coming in.

Jim Waldron told committee members that the rule requiring drivers to have a car that is less than 10-years-old should be loosened.

Representatives at the start of the Covid pandemic had requested a five-year extension for all vehicles.

Waldron said if the government wants to keep drivers in the industry they need support and time to recover from the impacts of the pandemic.

"Used cars costs have increased 60% according to car magazines," he said. "Fuel costs have reached an all time high. Service costs have risen and use of cashless payments mean less take home pay for drivers despite the recent fare increase

Taxi drivers are facing the same cost of living challenges as all other sectors. These conditions are screaming out for a further extension of age limits to allow drivers time to recoup losses and build a financial footing to move forward with a newer vehicle preferably electric."

A relaxation of this rule would also give drivers more time to procure electric vehicles, he said, which are currently in short supply.

David McGuinness told the committee that the sector needs to be incorporated into the public transport system.

"Taxis are the only 365 days a year, 24-hour, door-to-door transport service," he said.

"This incorporation into the public transport system would lead to inclusion at large scale events resulting in temporary taxi stands and set down and drop off facilities. Currently large venues throughout the city have no taxi stands or set down or drop off areas resulting in operators [drivers] not offering their services at the venues.

"Difficulties with parking and the threat of being fined are some of the reasons operators quoted."

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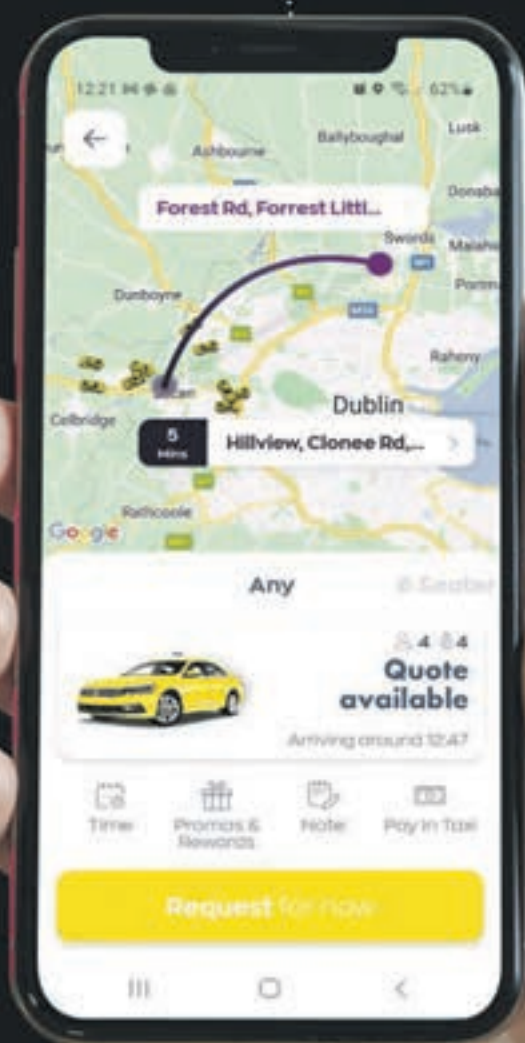
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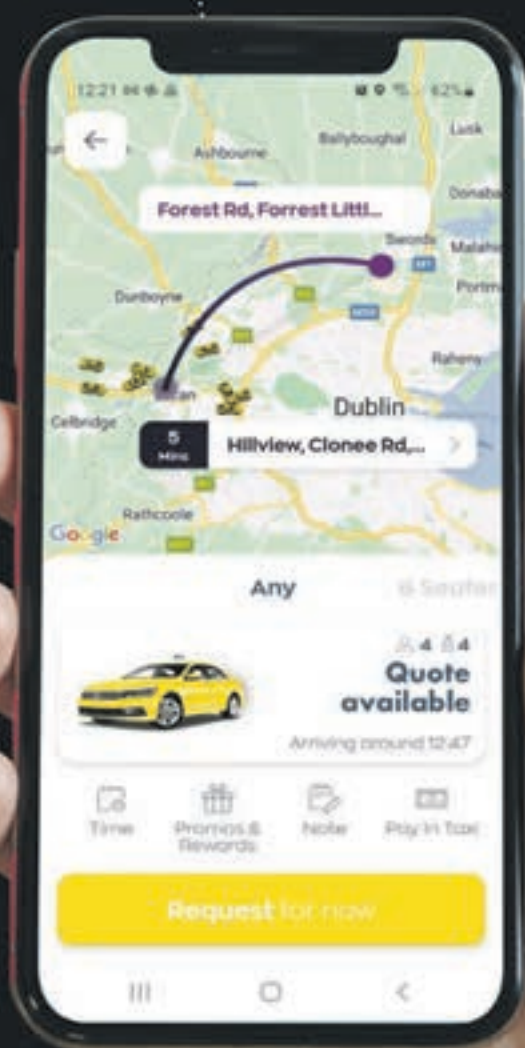
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How Taxis have changed the way of life and let's respect that for evermore

Recognizing the responsibility of every Taxi driver, we always strive to maintain high standards, give customer satisfaction and improve the taxi station's working conditions. All our presentations must encourage business turnover and excel in the marketplace!

Taxi drivers nowadays face many costs and difficulties in providing a service, coming under demand pressure due to City Management interference, such as street closures, unwanted cycle lanes, new traffic flow arrangements which are not practical or economical for passenger hiring payments. Taxis are unable to "drop off" or "pick up" passengers on some roads of house frontage due to these alterations, Northbound distribution is totally fouled with many "no right" turning lanes and the non-provision of bus corridors which taxis can use! The City Management is playing with footpath, street and road plans have caused traffic congestion, serious movement delays, which means the taxi service is not available at times on days and at night due to street closure, accessibility, and crowd confusion, etc. Taxi drivers have no guaranteed income and in the present city centre conditions are under stress driving and under pressure to avoid accidents, plus the behaviour of people at night-time is getting out of control. The Gardai are not visible and they have not got the "arrest storage" with instant summons, plus city centre barring orders. Now you know why there is a downfall on taxi numbers out working, it's just not worth it! Why changes, when a city is working, but must be improved for business standards, catering for crowds, car parking, bus services and prominent taxi ranks, i.e., banning street dining out on the middle of the roads, big safety elements here and ugly scenes, etc. Cork City Council claim there was public consultation on these matters, but some of the traders that are victimised or had to "close down", say they ignore your petitions, so much for our baby Council operations, Staff and City Councillors Elected, who are constantly damaging our wellbeing in industries. N.T.A. also claim they had a Public Consultation Process about recent taxi issues and enforcements, etc. how could this be true because the public taxi users would not agree to a fare increase in our public transport, everyone complains taxis are too dear, long journeys too costly on meter runs, etc. We have lost all long-distance work, but the "cowboys" come in and collect and work cheaper outbound (taxis and hackneys from other counties). Long Distance Fares were always price work, based on equal distance rates and agreed holding time charges, therefore there is no such thing as a National Taximeter Area – contract hiring outside your Taximeter Area was always agreed pricework, hirer always needs to know what he/she is going to pay for in business/customs practice, etc. The present-day fare calculation is not helpful to our marketplace and the hirer in most cases is confused over the amount to be payed, this is why we have lost all rural and country work, plus many young people and old age people can't afford taxis – is this what Public Transport means? The N.T.A. have different divisions dealing with the S.P.S.V. Industry and Subcontractors coping with issues and progress, but nothing is free, will this taxi hire travel survive or be convenient and economical for public usage! Again, as I have previously pointed out, the State should make special capacity vehicles available for Taxi

drivers, removing all taxes from the purchase price. Complications are always arising from when dealing with the N.T.A. and Local Government staff in the Production of Vehicle & Driver Licensing, Hiring Bases and Permanent & Occasional Taxi ranks, therefore, recently Taxi drivers have complained to the Ombudsman, who have investigated and acted successfully. We may have to go one further, to the European Transport Commission for better support and assistance in the 24Hr production field, similar to the Insurance Cartel that had to be investigated recently – insurance offices raided – coincidentally after the taxi raid, taxi insurance began to go down and a refund was given by some insurers, etc.

In my last article of July/August 2022, I gave a sample briefing on the Cashless Society and forthcoming Credit Card issues regarding taxi payments, the Central Bank is working on protection policies for Credit Cards at present, in particular your IBAN protection, banning mobile phone credit card payments, and separate credit card code figures for online buying, also credit card failures and protection measures including non-service areas, introducing advanced payments for Taxis! Taxi drivers also seek a surcharge on credit card payments. I also mentioned how a drone could be used to kill you through the RFID chip inside your right hand known as spyware. The EU parliament is currently investigating the disturbing and intrusive use of Pegasus Spyware by agencies to monitor community and political activists. Pegasus has been implicated in the death/execution of several opposition leaders and journalists worldwide. Meanwhile, a new scandal has been exposed involving the Greek Government at the highest level. Predator spyware (a competitor of Pegasus) has been used to monitor the phones of Greek opposition leaders. High level spyware used on mobile phones, or desktop computers, can record all interactions, switch on camera and audio recording covertly and allow any data to be copied from devices, including emails and video, etc. A random security check at the EU Parliament in late July discovered spyware on the phone of the Pasok Party Leader/MEP in Greece. Greece's security chief has already resigned, others will follow.

The restructuring of our Public Hire for the intending passengers, service providers, allocation of Taxi ranks and Advanced Booking Centres, calls for Law reform within our Transport Departments and Garda Carriage Offices, practical requirements, economic costs with driver support and freedom of operations. Our investment is too great and our work apprehension is too severe to be putting up with bad Local Government administration, these people are only taking the advantage, making the system awkward, difficult and too costly, they must now bring about a legal programme to assist and direct taxi drivers in prioritising public transport for the various supply areas, linking in with Office Distribution Bases and City Councils appointed site locations (taxi ranks) for passenger freedom of hiring, therefore the dual hiring systems for taxi travel must work and meet demands without traffic disruption – usage of bus lanes, contraflow bus lanes



and bus only streets as outlined in sub-article (2) shall not apply to a taxi or a wheelchair accessible taxi which is being used in the course of business – this means, that Article does not apply to taxis, restrictions are for other motorists, etc. Our cities are being crucified nowadays, with the present-day changes and planning layouts, the work of a confused generation with no traditions or customs, even common sense, thus we all suffer with our town councillors and shop/store owners just “sleep walking”! Preparing a city to suit themselves, not catering for merchant purposes, vehicle holding and traffic flow inbound and outbound (school timetables clashing with work people, deliveries, buses and taxis), people support, transport removal, visitor support and shopping sales promotion, this “runaway” environment also allows state taxation to be increased for its behaviour and production, continuing high cost city management? Let’s all contribute here, no more criticism, get preparations revised, supervised, with site reports from all businesses and Local Government Inspectors (City Engineers, Gardai, N.T.A. officers, Traffic Officers, Health & Safety Supervisors, Tourist and Business Associations, Behavioural Scientists, Transport Representatives and the Planning Departments City and County, etc.). Developing our City Structure with promotions and expansions, non-productive areas must be developed, no more site or land wastage, property idleness must stop! First step is Mid-Cork Ring Road needed, i.e. Model Farm Road (Melbourne Avenue), new motorway on to Carrigrohane Road to Lee Road to Blarney Road onto Limerick Road connection for West of Ireland Traffic and Business, the answer to long term City expansion for Industrial Estates, Shopping Malls, Housing Estates, Schools, Churches, Public Houses and Restaurants, Sports Grounds, Office Blocks, Public Transport Routes, Farming and Market Gardens, all by demands for the future! Then our Taxi business will develop and expand because cities will not be able to cope as the years roll on!, especially in the area of entertainment the transport business will have to be incorporated in the city expansion programme, in order to maintain successful travel movements for people, passengers, on a 24 hour basis, meeting demands at all times.

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3. Our Taxi Vehicle Licence must be for a 12months span, not for

reduced number of months.

4. Private motor car road tax yearly licence should not be allowed in taxis, return to our special road tax premium.
5. Loss of business in operating your taximeter on long/remote area fares, too costly, return to set quotation fixed for each destination applying outside a “taximeter area” for better public value and affordability – more work rewarding for taxi drivers.
6. Return to advanced payment regulations – safe and secure must also apply to the credit card payment system, which is causing many problems at present, card is not active or fully active, also fails in the non-service communication areas, etc. Trouble with credit cards, abuse, tricks, delays and non-function (also runners).
7. Taxi ranks, extra day ranks needed and in particular night ranks, with a “heavy fine”, 150 Euro for parking or stopping on a taxi rank applicable to private motorists, more street access needed in order to provide this economical transport service to the public, in welfare effects with a varying demand, etc.
8. It appears that a credit “surcharge fee” has been dropped in the recent taxi fare increase, while taxis in the EU are allowed to charge a cost transmitter for A.E. and D. Club Cards also business and corporate credit cards, they agree with this fee which is in the legislation.
9. Our printout taximeter receipts are not explanatory enough for the business person claimant total expenses, requisitioning their total pay-out, adjust fares for tolls, tips, discounts and surcharges, expressing the total amount for recoupment, etc. This is another reason why they request the handwritten receipt.
10. Carriage of passengers “power of taxi drivers” must be revised, advanced payments in cash or the credit card proposition, therefore “Passenger Identification” must also be made Law in taxi hirings etc.
11. Since Deregulation, the Taxi Systems and Taxi Marketing is confusing everyone, under this new management and hidden influence of Taxi Representatives (step inside you Merchants) having no Business Knowledge & Organisation and don’t understand road transport to support passenger travel and taxi drivers costs with location hirings and advanced booking methods. Moving towards an efficient and socially feasible regulation of Road Transport Externalities.

Better Engagement Needed with Drivers

BY DARREN O'ROURKE TD

Easing of ten-year rule welcome, but better engagement needed with taxi drivers



Sinn Féin's spokesperson on Transport, Darren O'Rourke TD, welcomed the NTA's decision to ease the ten-year rule, but said the NTA and the Minister for Transport need to improve engagement with taxi drivers.

The Meath East TD said; "Since I was elected to the Dáil in 2020, I've been constantly raising the need to change the ten-year rule, so I very much welcome the NTA's recent decision.

It has been clear for a long time that this rule was putting taxi drivers under significant pressure and forcing many out of the sector entirely. We've been losing taxi drivers over the past two years at a worrying rate, but the NTA and the Minister have been very slow to react.

While the change is welcome, other issues affecting the taxi sector remain unaddressed.

I want to see the Taxi Advisory Committee scrapped and replaced with a proper forum that is representative and has the confidence of the taxi industry.

Taxi drivers need a seat at the table where decisions are being made, as there is a clear detachment between the NTA and Minister and what is actually happening on the ground.

Drivers are still facing huge petrol and diesel prices, and the recent announcement that tolls are set to increase again in January, will push up fares for customers and costs for all motorists.

The Insurance industry needs to be held to account to ensure the reforms that have been introduced, that are saving insurers millions, are passed onto drivers through lower premiums.

As our party's spokesperson on Transport, I pushed back against Fine Gael's recent promotion of ride-sharing apps as a solution to the current taxi shortage.

The government should be taking action to fix challenges facing the taxi sector and working to make it a viable career for more people – not seeking to deregulate the sector, undercut thousands of workers and start a race to the bottom when it comes to terms and conditions.

However, Chairperson For the National Transport Assembly Committee and Spokesperson on Taxis, Tony Roe has expressed his concerns as to the legitimacy of this announcement as he has been unable to get confirmation from the National Transport Authority about this reprieve.

Darren O'Rourke is Sinn Féin spokesperson on Transport and TD for Meath East.





Passenger robbed of phone and €1300

Others have come forward with similar experiences.

A Dublin man has spoken out about his phone and €1300 being stolen in a taxi scam and is urging others to be careful.

“Matthew” (not his real name) spoke to RTE Liveline today about the ordeal, which happened over the weekend. He left a pub in Ranelagh late on Saturday night/early Sunday morning after socialising with some friends and tried to order a taxi on the apps but they kept failing or cancelling.

He explained: “I got a bit frustrated and decided to walk home. On my way, a taxi beeped at me and I thought it’s been a long night so I may as well hop in.

“There was a plate there so I assumed it was a taxi. As I hopped in, a girl was getting out. Looking back, it seems a bit unusual.

“Anyway, the driver proceeded to take me close to my destination and then claimed he didn’t know where my address was. He asked to have a look at my phone on Google Maps and shortly after, he dropped it into the passenger side footwell. He claimed he had a bad back and couldn’t get it.”

Matthew said the driver asked him to get out to retrieve it. Once he was out of the taxi, the driver drove off with his phone still inside.

That was bad enough, but unfortunately my wife was out at her work Christmas party staying in a hotel so I had no way to contact anyone to cancel the phone or contact my banks or anything,” he said.

“I woke up in the morning to find that money had been taken from three of my bank accounts and passwords were changed. It was an absolute nightmare to be honest with you. About €1300 was gone.”

Matthew described the incident as “an experienced scam” and said others have come forward with similar experiences. “My wife has an Instagram page with her twin sister and she posted a public service announcement the next day and about five or six men contacted them directly saying the same thing had happened to them,” he said.

“There were slight variations. Some people were pickpocketed by the girl as she was leaving the cab. One fella said there was a guy in the back of the taxi cab, they drove him off to an area and demanded his money, pin code and all of his details.

“It’s amazing. It all happened on the same weekend as well.”

Matthew said he notified gardai about the incident. “They were absolutely fantastic, to be honest with you. They’ve taken it extremely seriously and have contacted all of the individuals involved.

“The difficulty is with trying to identify these people. They picked me up in a spot outside of Ranelagh where they knew there were no cameras, they dropped me off at a spot where there’s no lights or cameras.”

Matthew said he wanted to share his story so as to make others aware and hopefully prevent something similar from happening again.

He said: “I’m a very trusting person and I think maybe a little bit of caution (is needed). If someone doesn’t have their own Google Maps, take a bit of warning. If there’s someone else in the taxi... that’s a big flag, big warning.

“But I suppose the thing is, it’s such a shame that there is such a lack of available ways home at the moment, taxis and buses and things like that. The alternative is walking home on your own and that’s not safe for everyone.

“There’s no quick answer to it but I suppose coming up to Christmas, maybe be a little careful.”

Matthew said he has been refunded from one of the three bank accounts that was targeted and is hopeful about the other two.

He added: “99.9% of taxi drivers that I’ve ever come across are fantastic and would do anything they can to get your goods back to you if you leave them behind. It’s just unfortunate that this has soured it a bit.”



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RE:SURE GO app has existed since 2015. However, it is only this year that it has been possible to accurately pair a Bluetooth button to the app and so allow it to be used by Taxi drivers.

MD, John MacMahon comments “We always knew that this would be a great solution for taxi drivers, with personal safety becoming an ever-increasing issue. So, whilst we have some long-standing clients such as Sherry Fitzgerald, Cluid and Waterways Ireland, we knew that without the button, it wouldn’t be a runner for the Taxi Driver market. Now though with a low cost and easy pair Bluetooth button, creating an alert is a cinch. We have drivers with it on their dashboard, on their keys and on their steering wheel”.

RE:SURE GO was designed to use “on-demand”, so the idea is that a driver will log in when starting a shift and switch it off again at the end, when back home safe. When logged in, the app is connected to the RE:SURE 24-7 Control Centre.

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Their response involves phoning you, your emergency contacts and the Gardai if deemed necessary.

John comments again, “The idea is that all taxi drivers can start

feeling more comfortable picking up that fare that they might have thought twice about before, knowing that calling for help is just a button push away. We always remember the tragic case of Martin Mulligan who was stabbed outside Dundalk in 2015. I remember thinking at the time, if he had had our app, I’m almost certain he would be alive today.”

RE:SURE have partnered with **TaxiFair** to improve driver safety with a double promotion. From 1st December until 31st January, all new policies and renewing policies with TaxiFair Insurance will get 3 months of the service totally free and also get the RE:SURE Bluetooth button free too. Luke Calvert, Managing Director of TaxiFair states “TaxiFair Insurance are delighted to partner with RE:SURE and offer taxi drivers added protection this Christmas. Driving a Taxi is a vital part of the public transport network, yet it is a very isolated job for drivers. RE:SURE GO gives drivers an immediate and constant support network. It’s something that is important for any taxi driver to have but especially in the dark winter months over Christmas time, as we enter the first restriction free Christmas since 2019”. After the trial period of 3 months elapses, they can continue the service for a discounted rate of just €7.99 per month

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By transforming your phone into a personal panic alarm, you can stay connected to our 24/7 control team who can connect local authorities when you might not be able to.

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Our handy, easy-to-use Bluetooth button means that creating an alert is simple and easy the moment you need is the most.

JUST
€9.99 PER
MONTH

FREE 1
MONTH NO
OBLIGATION
TRIAL

CREATING AN ALARM...



ALERTS OUR
24/7 TEAM



SEND US YOUR
GPS LOCATION



SEND US VIDEO
& AUDIO

CREATES AN IMMEDIATE RESPONSE



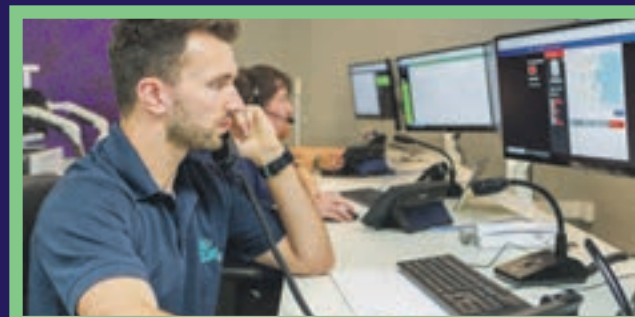
WE CALL
YOU



WE CALL YOUR
EMERGENCY
CONTACTS



WE SEND THE
GARDAÍ IF
NECESSARY



"I used to worry about a fare going wrong, but now I know that with just one action, RE:SURE could be calling the Gardaí within seconds if the situation needed it."

Hughie Balfe, Dublin

VISIT: [RESURE.CO/GO/TAXI](https://resure.co/go/taxi)



All TaxiFair customers that renew before 31st January get the Bluetooth button and 3 months RE:SURE GO subscription absolutely free.

TAXI RENTALS

- 087 115 5530 -



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TOYOTA PRIUS HYBRID

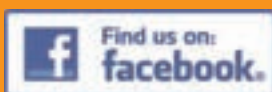


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8 SEATER TAXI

- TAXI AVAILABLE ON LONG & SHORT TERM RENTAL
- WE LOOK AFTER EVERYTHING IN OUR OWN DEDICATED WORKSHOP



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KIA NIRO ELECTRIC

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- **FINANCE:** Can be approved within 2 hours
- **CAR SOURCING:** Can't find the car you want? We also specialise in sourcing all makes and models of cars.

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READY FOR
DELIVERY!**

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ALL HOUSEHOLDS NOW QUALIFY

EcoplexEnergy.ie

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We're a team of 20+ energy experts and innovators dedicated to improving the way you create and use power. We take care of everything. From system design, installation right through to helping you with all the paperwork and guiding you through the SEAI grants.



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Our home electric vehicle car chargers start at €500 including installation (with the SEAI grant).

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Protect yourself this Christmas with a gift from TaxiFair!

Free RE:SURE GO personal protection subscription for 3 months and a personal panic button.

Free with every policy purchased (whether a new customer or renewal) until 31st January 2023

Protect yourself in the dark winter months across the impending silly season.



What is
RE:SURE
GO?



Scan
to learn
more!

It converts your smartphone into a sophisticated panic alarm with 24/7 monitoring.

One push of the Bluetooth button alerts the RE:SURE 24/7 monitoring system, sends your exact GPS location and records video/audio clips of what is happening.

You receive a call to ensure you are safe (you can set a duress code) and RE:SURE liaise with emergency contacts or emergency services as required.

Contact us today for more information

21A Clanbrassil Street Lower, Dublin 8 | Tel : 01 485 1996 | Email : help@taxifair.ie

TaxiFair Insurances Limited T/A TaxiFair Insurances is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland

Terms and Conditions: Only policies purchased/paid for - both new policies or renewals - between 1st December 2022 and 31st January 2023 will be entitled to this offer.