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Isn't every day the same? You just drive a passenger from A to B, collect their money (or push a button to take their money these days) and head off to the next job. It's a common misconception, because as a taxi driver, you know that no two fares are ever the same.

There's the dash from town through rush hour traffic where you're pressured to go faster than you should, so they can make their flight. There's the 400 meter fare which barely seems worthwhile but for the fact that the passenger has their best high heels on. Or, the Saturday night 4am fare where you're nervous whether an intoxicated passenger may need to pull over at any time to avoid soiling your vehicle! Then you have the chatty customer, the customer with their headphones in, the silent customer and the loud customer who is mid-zoom call entering the car and barely able to tell you where they want to go. As we said at the start, no two fares are

ever the same.

The same goes for insurance. Just like you've seen all possible fares inside your vehicle at different times, we've seen all possible circumstances for customers seeking SPSV/Taxi insurance. That's because SPSV insurance is, quite simply, all that we do.

We pride ourselves on our different approach. You want to work. You need insurance to work. Our job is therefore to be an enabler. Understand your circumstances, whatever they may be, and give you that opportunity to work. At TaxiFair, we don't believe in that most frustrating approach of 'computer says no'.

Whilst we embrace technology with a system built solely for us to administer taxi insurance, we still actively engage in traditional insurance broking. Speaking to insurers, pitching customers cases to underwriters to ensure we can achieve the best possible solution for you.

So, what do different fares look like to us, from an insurance standpoint?

Owner drivers: whether you own your own taxi or are investing in a new wheelchair accessible taxi, we are here to help you.

Rental risks: insurance to protect both the vehicle/plate owner and the driver. Driving is typically restricted to the rental driver only and priced on the drivers details.

Multi-driver risks: more than 1 driver working a vehicle? No problem. Whether it's a husband and wife or a local service with drivers working different shifts, cover can be arranged.

Multi-plate owner policies: Own more than 1 taxi plate or vehicle? We can cover you also. Generally restricted to 1 driver per policy, we are able to try and leverage the buying power of multiple policies with insurers to your benefit.

New entrants: Another area we can help with. In recent months we've covered a range of drivers here in different circumstances at very different prices – from a 21 year old with little experience, to a 60 year old finishing up driving with Dublin Bus.

Electric vehicles: Many drivers are availing of the EV grant and we have comprehensive and competitively priced products to cover these vehicles.

What else? Whilst the above list may seem exhaustive, it's not. We haven't mentioned Local Area Hackneys, School Transport Vehicles and even Declined Cases Agreement (DCA) policies – yes, we can even help you through the DCA process, if required.



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EDITOR LETTER

Thank you for picking up the latest edition of Tacsai magazine.

It has been an interesting two months since our last edition; from alleged cartels operating at certain ranks throughout Dublin, to taxi drivers allegedly injuring clampers, to coalitions forming to agitate for reform, and all points in between. We hope you enjoy reading.

A Dublin driver has informed Tacsai magazine that drivers who, it seems once operated on behalf of the now defunct Mill Cabs in Clondalkin are refusing to allow other drivers to pick up fares outside the Mill shopping centre saying; "Mill cabs only", despite the fact that Lynk acquired Mill Cabs some time ago. See inside for the shopping centre's response, along with several other areas where similar things are happening.

Meanwhile; over by the airport an altercation involving a taxi driver and a clumper in the McDonald's car park resulted in a dislocated shoulder for the latter. Representing himself; the driver refused to acknowledge the jury's guilty verdict, alleging body and dash cam tampering. He has vowed that; "The truth will come out." The clumper has understandably left the profession.

Over on the business side of things, a coalition of businesses groups seeking reform of the taxi industry is proposing a series of recommendations to the National Transport Authority (NTA) aimed at alleviating the current shortage of taxis. The Taxis for Ireland Coalition has, among other recommendations; requested that a specific strategy be developed for the Small Public Service Vehicle (SPSV) sector.

We at Tacsai magazine would like to thank all of our contributors, advertising partners and especially taxi drivers for their support this year. This publication would not exist without you. We wish you a very happy holiday season and a prosperous New Year.

Sincerely

The Taxi Magazine Team

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The National Transport Assembly Committee: The Power of Taxi Drivers in the Community

For decades, taxi drivers have been an essential but often overlooked part of the public transport system. Now, thanks to the National Transport Assembly Committee (NTAC) and the collective power of the taxi community, their contributions are being recognized like never before.

Taxi drivers are more than just transport providers; they are frontline responders in many urgent situations. One incredible example is the story of Harry White, an 83-year-old man whose life was saved by a Dublin taxi driver.

Tony Roe, Chairman of the National Transport Assembly Committee, shared this remarkable incident:

“This taxi driver saw a man collapse, put him in the car, and rushed him to the hospital. When they got there, hospital staff started asking bureaucratic questions—his age, insurance, medical card. The driver didn’t waste time. He kicked the door down and demanded attention. Security was called, but by then, doctors were working on him. They later told the driver, ‘If you hadn’t done this, the man wouldn’t have survived.’”

This is just one of countless instances where taxi drivers have stepped up when the system failed.

Taxi Drivers Making an Impact in Government

Another proud moment for the taxi community came with the election of taxi drivers into local government. Tony Roe highlights their growing influence:

“We encouraged drivers to vote for people who understand their struggles. And now, thanks to the power of 18,000 taxi drivers in Dublin—and their families—we have representation in government. We’ve seen the impact of voting as one community, and it’s a force to be reckoned with.”

By mobilizing their community, taxi drivers are ensuring their voices are heard on issues that directly impact their livelihoods and safety.

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The Fight Against Forced Card Payments

One such issue is the enforced use of card payments, a policy that has led to dangerous situations for drivers. Tony Roe explains:

“We have drivers being assaulted because of card payment disputes. Passengers—often drunk or on drugs—find out their card isn’t working and take it out on the driver. Many women have left the industry because of safety concerns. This is a recipe for disaster.”

He argues that forcing taxi drivers to accept card payments without ensuring a functional system is unfair and unsafe:

“If I go to a pub and the bar charges me a transaction fee for using my card, nobody questions it. So why can’t taxi drivers have the same right? Instead, if a taxi driver refuses a card due to past issues, they’re fined €200. That’s not regulation—that’s fascism.”

This policy is driving many experienced taxi professionals—especially

women—out of the industry.

A Call for Unity and Action

The National Transport Assembly Committee is calling on all taxi drivers to unite against harmful regulations and fight for their rights. They are actively engaging with the government, the European Commission, and transport authorities to push for fairer policies.

Tony Roe urges drivers:

“We need to stand together. The power of our community has already been proven in elections. Now, we must use it to fight against unfair treatment and ensure our safety.”

The National Transport Assembly Committee is proving that taxi drivers are more than just drivers—they are essential members of society, lifesavers, and a political force. Their work continues, making roads safer, fighting for fair treatment, and ensuring their voices are heard where it matters most.

WAV GRANT SCHEME 2025

Once again, NTA has seen incredible demand for the Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Grant Scheme, with Round 1 of WAV25 closing early on opening day.

This demand for financial support to upgrade and licence small public service vehicles such as taxis and hackneys, continues to show a strong interest in the SPSV sector from prospective and existing licence holders. NTA is pleased to confirm that the level grant funding for WAV25 is planned to exceed all previous years, with a high of over €6m issued in 2024.

As set out in our December update, NTA revised the Grant Scheme for WAV25 in response to industry



feedback and to enhance the grant process for all. This included increasing the time applicants have to complete the grant process and providing two opportunities for applying: January and July. January applicants will be contacted soon to find out if they were successful and can proceed to the next stages of the process. Prospective applicants looking to apply in July should familiarise themselves with the updated Terms and Conditions and Information Guide at nationaltransport.ie/taxi/forms-and-guides/

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Ireland Tops Europe's List of Forgetful Nations for Taxi Lost-and-Found Items

From dentures to spaghetti, Ireland has been crowned the most forgetful country in Europe for leaving items behind in taxis, according to recent findings.

In 2024 alone, Irish passengers misplaced more than 6,000 belongings in FREENOW taxis, accounting for a staggering 24% of all lost items across Europe. Trailing behind Ireland in forgetfulness were Germany in second place, followed by Poland (15%), the UK (14%), and Spain (10%).

Most Commonly Forgotten Items

Unsurprisingly, mobile phones topped the list of items left behind, comprising one-third of all commonly forgotten objects. Bags and wallets followed closely, with keys, headphones, and glasses rounding out the top five. Other frequently misplaced belongings included vapes, passports, IDs, laptops, and coats.

Among the more sentimental items left behind were several engagement rings and wedding bands, highlighting how even the most precious belongings aren't immune to a moment of forgetfulness.

The Strangest Finds

Some of the more unusual items discovered in Irish taxis this year included violins, cowboy hats, electric guitars, golf clubs, and hair straighteners. More unconventional finds included a sandwich maker, dentures, spaghetti,

and even a stethoscope.

Additionally, merchandise from high-profile celebrity tours in Dublin made it onto the lost-and-found list, with passengers leaving behind Taylor Swift Eras Tour memorabilia and Niall Horan t-shirts.

December: A Peak Month for Forgetfulness

December has been identified as the busiest month for lost property claims, likely due to the festive season and increased taxi usage.

Danny O'Gorman, General Manager at FREENOW Ireland, commented:

"The festive period is a busy time for taxis and one of our busiest times for lost property requests. This New Year's Eve, we encourage our passengers to take an extra moment to check the back seat of the taxi and make sure nothing is left behind.

"If any passengers do lose something, it can be easily reported to FREENOW directly through our app, and we will do our best to help reunite passengers with their belongings as quickly as possible."

So, whether it's an everyday essential or an unusual treasure, checking twice before leaving the cab might just save you from a headache later on!

FREENOW 

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At FREENOW, we're committed to supporting taxi drivers and helping you navigate the challenges of the industry. Here's how we've got your back:

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Pushing for better security measures to protect you on the road.



DEFENDING THE INDUSTRY

Standing strong against deregulation campaigns to maintain high standards and protect your earnings.



TACKLING RISING COSTS

Supporting continued access to WAV and eSPSV grants, making the transition to wheelchair-accessible and electric vehicles more affordable.



AMPLIFYING YOUR VOICE

Launching a Driver Advisory Committee in 2025 to ensure your concerns shape our priorities.

FREENOW: MORE THAN AN APP. WE'RE YOUR PARTNER ON THE ROAD

VIABILITY OF THE TAXI INDUSTRY

Taxi representatives issued a joint letter to General Election candidates last year setting out key policy supports required to secure the future viability of the industry.

The measures identified aim to address unprecedented safety threats, rising operational costs, and complex VAT issues that threaten driver supply.

Signatories of the letter include industry representatives and dispatch operators from across Ireland including Taxi Drivers Ireland, FREENOW, Lynk, Hola Taxis and East Coast Cabs. The group is urging candidates to support and champion policies that protect drivers and passengers while ensuring a high-quality, accessible, and safe taxi service across the country.

The letter highlights the urgent need for practical solutions, such as:

- Establishing a dedicated Garda Helpline for drivers.
- Ensuring Ireland's regulatory standards and safety protocols are upheld.
- Enacting a requirement for operators to invoice drivers from within Ireland to avoid VAT liabilities.
- Increasing financial support for electric and wheelchair-accessible vehicles, which would support a more sustainable and accessible fleet.

Driver representatives have also criticised the Taxis for Ireland Coalition, led by Uber and Bolt, for a lack of engagement with drivers and its call to deregulate the industry – including the scrapping of the wheelchair-accessible vehicle requirement. There is growing concern that the position of the coalition does not accurately represent drivers' and passengers' needs or address the real challenges faced by the industry.

Signatories to the letter point out that the lowering of Ireland's regulatory standards, as campaigned for by Uber and Bolt, would reduce the number of wheelchair-accessible taxis in Ireland and damage the passenger experience, with drivers requiring less knowledge of their area before receiving their license.

Founder of representative group Taxi Drivers Ireland, Derek O'Keeffe said: "Ireland's taxi drivers are facing the biggest challenge to their livelihoods for decades, and our voices are not being heard in discussions about the future of the industry. We have more than 27,000 SPSV licence holders across the country and one of the strongest taxi

supplies around Europe. Despite this, there are groups campaigning to lower driver-entry standards and safety while unknown VAT liabilities threaten to block drivers from renewing their licences.

"We are calling on election candidates to support our recommendations to protect and strengthen Ireland's taxi trade, so we can continue to offer a best-in-class passenger experience."

Danny O'Gorman, General Manager at FREENOW Ireland, said: "We believe the negative impact of industry deregulation is not something to be taken lightly and it would trigger a detrimental outcome for drivers as well as passengers. We work closely with our driver partners to understand their challenges, and FREENOW surveys have shown significant concerns about the impact a change in regulations would have on their livelihoods. More than half of drivers stated they would consider leaving the sector if it was opened to unlicensed drivers.

"As Ireland's No. 1 taxi app, our priority continues to be supporting our driver partners and ensuring the best service for our passengers. We urge election candidates to support policies that protect Ireland's taxi drivers and aid the industry's transition to a more accessible and sustainable fleet."

Advocacy Manager for the Irish Wheelchair Association, Joan Carthy said: "Ensuring accessible taxis are available for people with disabilities is not just a convenience; it's critical to their inclusion, mobility and independence and is a right enshrined under the UNCRPD (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).

"The wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) requirements for new taxis and the existing WAV Grant Scheme are crucial to ensuring the accessibility of Ireland's taxi fleet.


"We believe calls on the government to scrap measures designed to make taxis more accessible will result in increased isolation of people with disabilities from their communities. Therefore, the Irish Wheelchair Association supports FREENOW in their call on all political candidates to support the maintenance of WAV taxi requirements and extension of the WAV Grant Scheme to ensure Ireland's taxi fleet is truly accessible."

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Skoda Octavia Combi Has Pace, Space and Grace



Across four generations, the brilliant Škoda Octavia, in hatchback and estate (Combi) forms, with its desirable mix of understated charm, huge practicality and strong value, has amassed more than seven million sales.

In fact, the Octavia is the Czech manufacturer's best-selling car, and it is easy to see why. Buyers can choose between Selection, Selection +, Sportline or RS trim grades, all of which come with an impressive array of standard comfort, convenience, safety, and infotainment systems to match the needs and wants of a growing family. The performance-oriented RS model is available exclusively with a 2.0-litre TSI petrol engine that pumps out a hefty 265hp

Highly Acclaimed Mk4 Octavia.

The Mk4 Octavia arrived to much acclaim in 2020, and it brought with it a whole new level of desirability with bolder exterior styling and a more upmarket cabin than ever before. A refreshed version of the Octavia hatchback and Combi is now available, and it brings mildly-revised exterior styling, upgraded infotainment, and a revamped powertrain line-up. Exterior enhancements up front are pretty much confined to a new LED light design and a revamped bumper, while a few more changes are visible inside the car. The car's stylish,

ergonomic and functional cabin now features a number of recycled and sustainable materials and, with masses of space on offer, the Octavia can comfortably accommodate up to 5 occupants. The boot in the Octavia Combi has a capacity of 640-litres behind the rear seats, with a cavernous 1,700-litres available when the rear seats are folded down. Even the Octavia hatchback has a hugely-impressive 600-litres of boot space on offer with the rear seat backs in place.

The upmarket dash is adorned with a new 10.25-inch digital instrument display in front of the driver, along with a new centrally-located 13-inch colour touchscreen. The operating system has been revised and works efficiently, and while there is a new AI-aided voice control system, the majority of the key controls are still accessed via physical buttons.

Powertrain Options.

Powering the new Octavia Combi are a selection of 1.5-litre turbocharged petrol and 2.0-litre turbo-diesel engines, with power delivered to the car's



front wheels via a 6-speed manual or 7-speed DSG (Automatic) transmissions – depending on the engine and trim grade chosen. The petrol engine comes with a choice of 115hp or 150hp power outputs, both of which are available in a choice of manual or DSG transmission, with the latter benefiting from mild-hybrid (mHEV) technology. The diesel powerplant also comes with a choice of 115hp (manual) or 150hp (DSG) power outputs, with the added benefit that drivers can choose to fuel their car with diesel, Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) or a mixture of both. HVO is a second-generation biofuel which is made from pre-existing bio-waste products, primarily used cooking oil and vegetable oil from the food industry waste.

Car on Review.

My review car was a new Octavia Combi 2.0TDI 150hp DSG Selection + in Moon White metallic with standard-fit 18-inch 'Lerna' silver alloy wheels. Other key standard features include a heated leather two-spoke steering wheel, heated windscreen, Comfort design front seats, mechanical rear seat release, fabric-wrapped dashboard, chrome window surrounds, silver roof rails, black/grey fabric/leatherette upholstery, and lots more besides. The Octavia Combi's aerodynamic shape optimises fuel efficiency and reduces wind noise for a quiet and comfortable ride, and its well-judged suspension set-up works well at soaking up road imperfections and ever-common speed ramps with ease. The steering is accurate

and suitably weighted to provide good feedback to the driver, and there is a lightness to the steering wheel that provides excellent manoeuvrability when negotiating car park spaces, or when driving through urban settings. The 2.0-litre turbo-diesel engine produces 150hp and 360Nm of torque, and is perfectly suited to the slick-shifting 7-speed DSG transmission, with plenty of punch available throughout the rev range. The car can sprint from 0-100km/h in 8.6-seconds and it has a top speed of 225km/h. With fuel consumption as low as 4.6l/100km on a WLTP combined driving cycle, the standard 45-litre fuel tank has the ability to provide well over 900kms of driving pleasure from a full tank of diesel or HVO. Annual road tax is just €190 and the Octavia Combi can legally tow a braked trailer with a weight of up to 1600kg.

Conclusion, Price & Warranty.

The latest Škoda Octavia Combi offers a perfect balance of style, practicality and performance, and the advanced features contained within enhance the overall driving experience. The recent update builds on everything the Octavia already did well, making it a highly desirable prospect for families and business users alike. Pricing for the new Octavia Combi starts at €33,755 with my review car specification priced from €44,550 (excluding dealer related charges). Every new Škoda passenger car comes complete with a comprehensive 3 year warranty for total peace-of-mind motoring. Term's & condition's apply.



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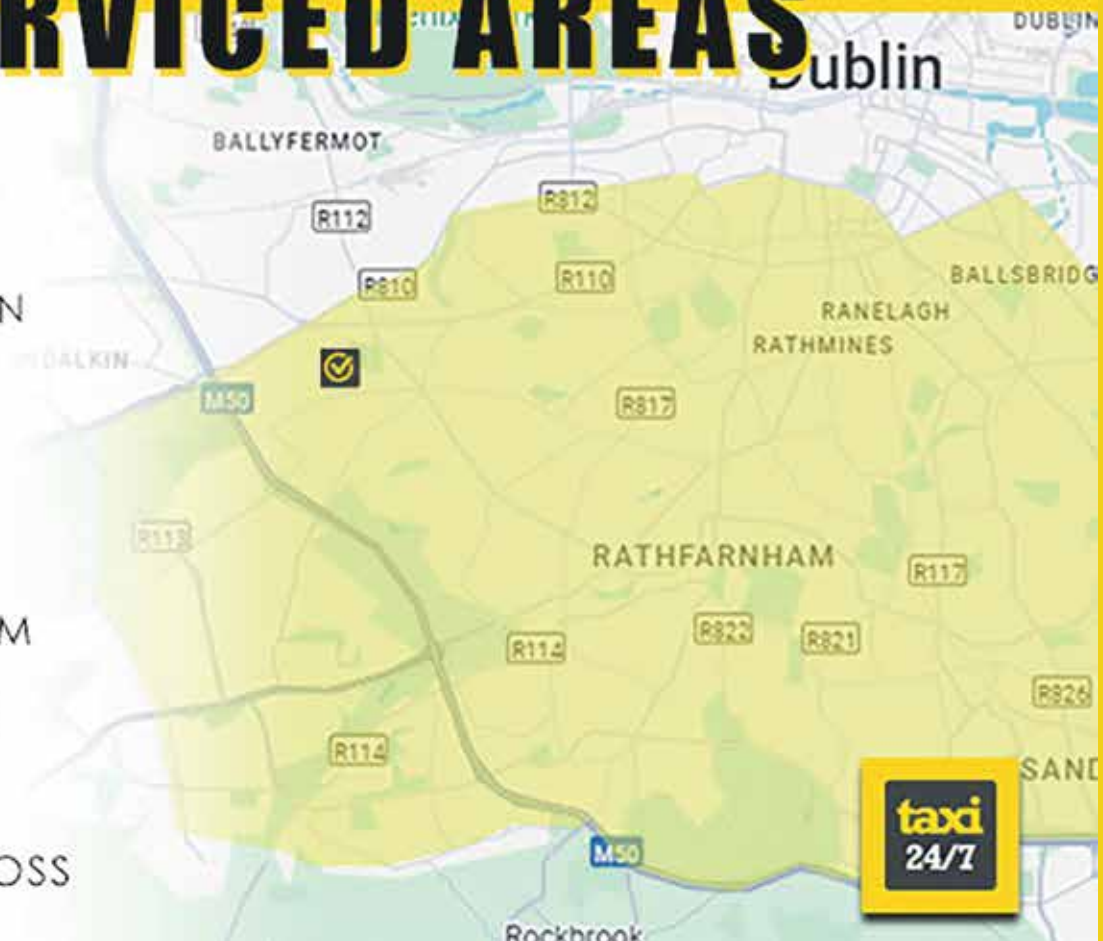
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Lynk Taxis 2024 Report Reveals Passenger Trends, Odd Stories, and Celebrity Sightings



Dublin's original taxi app, Lynk Taxis, has unveiled its 2024 passenger and driver trends, shedding light on everything from travel habits to quirky encounters.

With over three million passengers serviced across Ireland last year, Lynk's annual roundup captures the evolution of the taxi industry, including a notable celebrity sighting and some peculiar passenger moments.

Key Stats and Highlights

Most Common Fare and Distances

The most frequent fare was €19 for trips lasting 16 to 20 minutes. While the shortest trip was a mere 350-meter ride from the Shelbourne Hotel to Grafton Street, the longest journey was a 366-kilometer round trip between Drimnagh and Dungarvan.

Peak Demand and Busy Times

- Longest Wait Time: A Lynk driver waited 246 minutes for a passenger who repeatedly assured them to "hold on" and "not worry about the meter."
- Most Popular Booking Times: 8 a.m. on Thursday mornings and 12:30 a.m. late Saturday nights/early Sunday mornings.
- Busiest Day: St. Patrick's Day (March 17).

Passenger Trends and Oddities

Celebrity Passenger

Paul Mescal, the Gladiator II star, was reportedly spotted using a Lynk taxi in 2024.

Quirkiest Passenger

A Lynk driver once transported an injured duck to an animal rescue in Rathfarnham.

Front vs. Back Seat Preference

Three out of four solo passengers opt for the back seat, citing its spaciousness and comfort.

Payment Preferences

- 70% of passengers now pay by card, with cash payments

making up the remaining 30%.

- Weirdest tip: A €4 winning scratch card.

Driver Insights

Pet Peeves

- Eating takeaways in the car.
- Adjusting radio stations, air conditioning, or electric windows without asking.
- General disregard for respecting the vehicle.

Conversations

Notable overheard query: A curious tourist asking, "Are there dolphins in Dolphin's Barn?"

Shifting Vehicle Trends

Sustainability on the Rise

- 61% of Lynk's fleet is now hybrid or electric, up from the previous year, reflecting drivers taking advantage of grant schemes to transition from fuel-based vehicles.
- Fleet breakdown: 58% saloon cars, 31% wheelchair-accessible vehicles, and 11% vans.

CEO's Perspective

Noel Ebbs, CEO of Lynk Taxis, commented on the roundup's dual purpose of providing insights while offering a light-hearted look at the industry. He noted:

"While these stats have a comedic angle, they also show how the taxi industry is evolving. From more cashless payments to the rise of electric vehicles, convenience is still key for passengers. However, customer experience remains our top priority."

Interestingly, 38% of Lynk users still prefer to book by phone, emphasizing the value of personable service alongside app convenience.

As Lynk Taxis gears up for 2025, the focus remains on enhancing both technology and customer satisfaction, ensuring they remain at the forefront of Ireland's taxi industry.

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Taxi driver avoids losing licence after resolving card payment issue



A taxi driver who faced losing his Public Service Vehicle (PSV) licence after 42 years of driving due to his refusal to accept card payments has found a solution without needing to open a bank account, a court was told.

Willie Wyse, a resident of Onslow Gardens in County Cork, who has never had a bank account, has agreed to use the SumUp App to accept card payments in his taxi.

Wyse emphasized that his appeal was not about “beating the law.”

Appearing before Cork District Court in September, Wyse sought to overturn the decision to revoke his license. For some time, he had enforced a strict “cash only” policy in his taxi, with signs in his vehicle stating the same. Wyse had closed his bank account after the economic crash of 2010, citing a loss of faith in financial institutions.

During the hearing, Judge Mary Dorgan asked Wyse how he would manage if he won the lottery. Wyse responded that it would make his wife very happy, as the winnings would be deposited into her bank account. Judge Dorgan then adjourned the case to allow Wyse time to reflect on his situation, urging him to consider opening a bank account.

When Wyse returned to court, he explained that, after reviewing the relevant taxi legislation, he understood the need to set up a card payment system. Despite his reluctance toward banks, he found a way to comply with the regulations by using the SumUp card reader system, widely used by taxi drivers to accept card payments.

Wyse admitted to having received a number of fines for his decision to refuse card payments but noted that Judge

Joanne Carroll had previously imposed only a €150 fine, convicting him on just one charge.

He acknowledged that, “the law is the law, and I can’t go against it.” In a light-hearted moment, Judge Dorgan once again referred to Wyse’s comment about his wife’s bank account receiving any potential lottery winnings, prompting a smile from Wyse.

Speaking to reporters outside the court, Wyse humorously noted that if he won the lottery, it would indeed be his wife, Julie Anne, who would receive the funds in her bank account. “But to be honest, after 48 years together, I’d rather have her than any lottery win,” he said.

Wyse thanked Judge Joanne Carroll for her “wisdom, courtesy, and compassion” in dealing with his fines and commended Judge Dorgan for her fairness. He expressed his satisfaction with the solution of using the SumUp card reader, which allows him to comply with the law without having to open a bank account.

Wyse also pointed out that his appeal was focused on the lack of clarity in the Taxi Regulation Act of 2013, which he believes should have addressed the needs of taxi drivers who do not have bank accounts. He reminded the court that 19% of the Irish taxi fleet is made up of pensioners, many of whom are not familiar with technology.

He also took the opportunity to warn other taxi drivers to read the 2013 legislation carefully, as many might be unaware of its full scope and the impact it could have on their operations.

SPSV Insurance Market Trends

2024 was another successful year for TaxiFair and we are delighted that we've been able to help even more drivers and owners secure better cover for their SPSVs, at more competitive prices.

As we now enter 2025, the major trends we are seeing in the market include:

Premiums continue to increase

Inflation is the culprit cited by insurers and this is understandably leaving a lot of customers frustrated; whilst personal injury costs have finally started to reduce, this is being outweighed by increased vehicle damage repair costs.

Some competing insurers have put in rate increases of up to 25% as far back as last summer - whilst our insurer panel are also imposing increases, these are not as draconian as we have seen in the market and we continue to push for the very best price.

Premiums continue to increase

Despite changing insurance regulations in the market to protect consumers in recent years, too many consumers are still telling us that they are receiving high renewal prices from alternative providers, only for those high prices offered to drop suddenly, when presented with an alternative quotation from TaxiFair.

We still don't understand why consumers put up with this practice, year after year. At TaxiFair, we make sure you get the best price, first time - ensure your insurer provider is doing this, too. Otherwise, what is your broker doing for you?

Is your policy cover still fit for purpose?

Make sure you are aware of what cover you have on your policy and be certain that it meets with your needs. With many newer vehicles coming on the road (EVs, replacement cars for those approaching the 10 year age rule etc), new technology can mean replacing something as simple as a windscreen can run into hundreds, or even thousands of euros. Does your policy cover these costs if something happens? These are vital questions to answer in today's market to ensure you don't end up out of pocket, unexpectedly.





TaxiFair is 10!

In October 2015, TaxiFair started out in business with a team of 2 – Luke Calvert and Gareth Logan. With no insurance providers or clients and a market that was in distress, due to lack of competition and increasing prices, the plan was to bring competition and change to the market.

Whilst change has been slower than we'd like – the perception of Irish Taxi Insurance and COVID were big stumbling blocks – we are proud to where our business sits today and how we've helped the development of the market as a whole. It is attractive to write SPSV insurance in Ireland, once again.

We now sit in a market with true choice for the consumer and lower premiums across the board for drivers compared to where things started back in October 2015. With a team of 11 and growing, we believe TaxiFair is now one of – if not the – largest insurance brokers of SPSV insurance in the country.

Whilst we are proud of that status, what's exciting for us is that we feel like we are only just getting started.

2025 will bring more exciting developments as our business continues to focus on best in class solutions for the 21st century SPSV driver.

So, thank you for your support and keep your eyes peeled for new products, develop-

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Supporting continued access to WAV and eSPSV grants, making the transition to wheelchair-accessible and electric vehicles more affordable.



AMPLIFYING YOUR VOICE

Launching a Driver Advisory Committee in 2025 to ensure your concerns shape our priorities.

FREENOW: MORE THAN AN APP. WE'RE YOUR PARTNER ON THE ROAD

EXCITING NEW CARS COMING IN 2025

With the automotive industry buzzing with innovation, 2025 promises to bring some incredible new car launches.

From electric vehicles (EVs) to iconic nameplates reimaged, here's a look at some of the most exciting models set to hit the roads in Ireland before the summer ends, just in time for the 251 registrations.

Audi Q5 Sportback



The sleek Audi Q5 Sportback continues Audi's tradition of blending practicality with sporty design. Despite Audi's push toward EVs, this mid-sized SUV persists with petrol and diesel options. Built on the Premium Platform Combustion (PPC), the Sportback offers:

- **Engine Options:** 2.0-litre turbocharged petrol (TFSI) or diesel (TDI), and a high-performance SQ5 with a 367hp V6 TFSI.
- **Design:** Its dynamic styling sacrifices little boot space, making it an attractive option for families who want practicality with flair.

Citroën C3/e-C3 Aircross



The lovable Citroën C3 expands its charm

with the C3 Aircross, offering more space and versatility.

- **Powertrains:** Available as a petrol model or the fully electric e-C3 Aircross, which features a 44kWh battery and a range of up to 300km.
- **Configurations:** The petrol version introduces a seven-seat option, though this won't be available in the EV.

Ideal for urban families, the C3 Aircross balances value and practicality with Citroën's trademark character.

Cupra Tavascan



Cupra Tavascan Cupra's second all-electric vehicle, the Tavascan, is poised to make waves in the coupe-SUV segment. Sharing its platform with the VW ID.5 and Skoda Enyaq Coupe, the Tavascan stands out with:

- **Battery & Power:** A 77kWh battery paired with a 286hp motor, offering impressive performance.
- **Variants:** The lineup will include the dual-motor, all-wheel-drive VZ version with 340hp.

With stylish looks and competitive specs, the Tavascan is set to bolster Cupra's reputation as an EV pioneer.

Ford Puma Gen-E



The Ford Puma Gen-E signals a key step in Ford's electric transformation. Based on the popular combustion-powered Puma, this EV boasts:

- Performance: 168hp and up to 376km of range.
- Practicality: A larger boot than its petrol counterpart, with 574 litres thanks to an innovative underfloor storage space.

By maintaining the familiar Puma design, Ford ensures a seamless transition for fans of the original model.

Range Rover Electric



The luxury SUV brand enters the EV market with the Range Rover Electric. While specific details on range and power remain under wraps, early tests in the Arabian Peninsula suggest a strong focus on performance and durability.

- Significance: This is only the second EV from JLR (following the Jaguar I-Pace) and is critical to the company's lineup as Jaguar prepares for a 2026 relaunch.

Expect unparalleled luxury and capability in this highly anticipated electric Range Rover.

Suzuki e-Vitara



Suzuki's first fully electric vehicle, the e-Vitara, modernizes one of its longest-standing nameplates. Key highlights include:

- Battery Options: Two choices – 49kWh or 61kWh – with ranges exceeding 400km, even with the smaller pack.
- Performance: Power outputs range from 144hp to 183hp, with the latter reserved for dual-motor, all-wheel-drive variants.

Combining practicality with advanced EV tech, the e-Vitara aims to be a strong contender in the affordable EV market.

Toyota Land Cruiser



An icon of durability and off-road capability, the latest Toyota Land Cruiser merges classic styling with modern advancements.

- Design: Retro-inspired exterior meets a tech-enhanced, high-quality interior.
- Powertrain: A rugged 2.8-litre turbodiesel engine shared with the Toyota Hilux.
- Capacity: Standard seven-seat configuration ensures versatility for families and adventurers alike.

With a heritage dating back to 1951, the Land Cruiser continues to be a symbol of reliability and performance.

What to Watch For in 2025

The first half of 2025 promises something for everyone—whether you're looking for cutting-edge EVs, stylish SUVs, or timeless 4x4s. From the sleek Audi Q5 Sportback to the iconic Toyota Land Cruiser, these new models highlight the exciting direction of the automotive industry.

The Martina Roe Lay Counselling Society

A Lifeline for Professional Drivers

For many professional drivers, life on the road can be isolating.

Long hours, stressful conditions, and the loss of close colleagues or loved ones can take a heavy emotional toll. But one group is working to change that. The Martina Roe Lay Counselling Society, formerly known as the Taxi Drivers Lay Counselling Society, is reaching out to drivers who are struggling with bereavement or mental health challenges, offering them a sense of community and support.

The society was renamed to honor Martina Roe, the late wife of Tony Roe, a longtime advocate for drivers' well-being. Tony is deeply grateful to the taxi community for supporting this change, recognizing that it allows him to keep his wife's memory alive while continuing the vital mission of the organization.

The Martina Roe Lay Counselling Society isn't just about formal counseling. In fact, the group makes it clear that they are "lay" counselors—not medical professionals, but individuals who have personally experienced life's hardships and understand what others are going through.

Their message to struggling drivers is simple: You don't have to go through this alone. Every Friday night, the group meets in a casual, welcoming environment where drivers can share their stories, enjoy a drink, have a sing-song, and simply enjoy each other's company.

Professional drivers, including taxi drivers, bus drivers, and transport workers, face uniquely difficult challenges. Unfortunately, suicide rates

in these professions are disproportionately high, a fact that the society is determined to change.

By creating a space where drivers can open up, bond over shared experiences, and find comfort in community, the Martina Roe Lay Counselling Society is working to reduce loneliness and support mental well-being.

The society is about more than just Friday night meetings. Members organize group trips as well, recently returning from a trip to Spain with 24 drivers. They have traveled to Alicante, Madrid, and Benidorm, as well as destinations closer to home like Belfast, Blackpool, Limerick, Cork, and Mullingar. These trips provide members with a much-needed break from their daily grind and reinforce the bonds of friendship.

For any professional driver struggling with grief, isolation, or mental health concerns, help is just a phone call away. Tony Roe and the society's members urge anyone in need to reach out and get involved. Don't sit alone at home—come join us on a Friday night, share a laugh, and be part of a group that understands what you're going through.

If you or someone you know could benefit from this supportive community, reach out to Tony Roe directly. His contact details are available through Taxi Magazine or via the society's network. Remember: "Don't moan about it—let's do something about it!"

Let's stand together and make sure no driver ever feels alone.

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New VW Tiguan Goes Upmarket

The original Volkswagen Tiguan mid-size SUV was launched in 2008 and, over the intervening years, has become a global sales champion for the iconic German automobile manufacturer.



In fact, the Tiguan has been its best-seller every year since 2017. The third-generation Tiguan has arrived, and its heavily upgraded underpinnings have transformed it into a more driver-focused car than ever before. The new Tiguan has grown by 33mm in length when compared to its immediate predecessor but, even more impressively, it is now 112mm longer than the original version from 2008, and it boasts a curvier, more aerodynamic design for enhanced visual impact.

New Exterior Design

The new Tiguan has a similar exterior look as the new Passat estate, with slimmer headlights, a large lower front grille, and a rear lighting strip that stretches the full width of the car. The new Tiguan is available in four trim grades; Edition 75, Elegance, R-Line and range-topping R-Line 75, with the entry-level and top-spec models paying homage to VW's 75th anniversary in Ireland this year. All versions of the new Tiguan are available with a sole 2.0-litre turbo-diesel (TDI) engine, with a 1.5-litre petrol/electric Plug-in Hybrid (eHybrid) engine available in Elegance, R-Line and R-Line 75 trim grades. A 7-speed DSG dual-clutch automatic transmission comes as standard with the TDI engine, while the eHybrid engine comes with a 6-speed DSG dual-clutch set-up as standard. New to the Tiguan is an adaptive suspension set-up that lets the driver choose from different levels of firmness. Many drivers will happily leave the car in Comfort mode, as it enables the car to ride serenely and quietly over rough road surfaces. Opting for Sport mode will stiffen up the suspension so that corners and twisty roads can be tackled with enthusiasm and dynamic ability.

Impressive Space & Comfort

The Tiguan's cabin is dominated by a new, free-standing infotainment touchscreen, which benefits from the latest generation of Volkswagen's infotainment software, as used in the magnificent VW ID.7 executive car. Many of the air conditioning controls are located within the touchscreen, but the main

functions are permanently on display at the bottom for ease of use. Illuminated touch-sensitive temperature adjustment sliders are located at the bottom of the screen, so it is a simple task to change from the coldest setting to the hottest, and vice-versa. There is a rotary controller on the centre console between the front seats with its own mini-screen built into it, and this can be used to adjust radio volume, change driving mode or to make changes to the ambient lighting within the cabin. The new Tiguan affords the driver a commanding view out of all windows, and the upmarket cabin feels very well constructed. The dashboard itself has a far more contemporary style than before, wrapping around the driver in the process. Although headroom in the previous Tiguan was commendable, the new car benefits from even greater headroom front and rear (increased by 8mm and 10mm respectively), while the boot capacity has grown by 33-litres to an impressive 652-litres behind the rear seats. This can be expanded to a cavernous 1,650-litres when the rear seat backs are folded down.

Car on Review

My review car was a Tiguan R-Line 2.0-litre TDI, which was finished in Cipressino metallic paint, with striking 19" black diamond turned alloy wheels as standard.

A comprehensive list of equipment comes as standard in R-Line trim, with key items such as: LED Plus headlamps, 3D LED rear combination lights, adaptive cruise control, anti-theft alarm, bright roof rails, Climatronic 3-zone air conditioning with rear control panel, heated leather sports steering wheel with shift paddles, a 12.9-inch infotainment system, R-Line inserts on front and outer rear seats, navigation, park distance control, rear view camera, wired and wireless App Connect, and We Connect Plus, along with a host of advanced driver assist safety systems. The punchy turbo-diesel engine in the new Tiguan produces 150hp and 360Nm of torque, enabling the car to sprint from 0-100km/h in 9.4-seconds, while consuming as little as 5.5l/100km on a WLTP

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combined driving cycle. As a result, the 55-litre fuel tank can provide up to 1,000kms of driving pleasure between fuel station visits. The standard 7-speed DSG gearbox is very well suited to the dynamic nature of the new Tiguan, and the gear selector is located to the right side of the steering wheel where the wipers would normally be. The stalk to the left side of the steering wheel now incorporates the indicators, wipers and headlamp flash/high-beam select function. The Tiguan's Dynamic Chassis Control system continually reacts to the road conditions and tweaks steering, brakes and acceleration accordingly. In fact, the Tiguan's driving dynamics are outstanding, with excellent control, security and roadholding on offer at all times. The TDI engine is flexible and refined in equal measure, with plenty of power available for safe overtaking on motorways, and it is impressively frugal too.

The Tiguan's well-weighted steering is good at communicating what the front wheels are up to, and body lean through bends is well controlled. The Tiguan TDI can legally tow a braked trailer with a maximum weight of 2,000kg, or an unbraked trailer up to 750kg. In terms of safety, the new Tiguan recently received the prestigious and reassuring 5-Star Safety Rating in its Euro NCAP safety tests.

Conclusion & Price.

The new Tiguan's sporty silhouette is characterised by powerful proportions and dynamic lines that provide the car with an impressive look from every angle. Its high quality cabin is spacious enough for five fully-grown adults to travel in comfort, and the large boot can easily accommodate multiple suitcases or bulky

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Taxi Fare Increase



The National Transport Authority (NTA) has implemented a 9% increase in taxi fares, alongside a rise in the pre-booking fee from €2 to €3.

Additionally, a special premium rate that typically applies during the Christmas and New Year period will now also be in effect on Friday and Saturday nights throughout the year. This change aims to encourage taxi drivers to operate during peak weekend hours, a time when they often avoid working due to anti-social behaviour.

While the industry has generally supported the fare increases, some taxi drivers are concerned that customers may be hesitant to book a taxi due to the higher costs. The Union of Students (USI) and nightlife group Give Us The Night have advised those feeling the financial strain to consider sharing taxis for safer, more affordable trips home.

Sunil Sharpe from Give Us The Night explained that students, who are often out at night, will be particularly impacted by the price hike. He recommended planning ahead by traveling in groups of at least four, when possible, especially for longer journeys.

The NTA's biennial National Maximum Taxi Fare Review ensures that taxi fares align with rising operating costs and sustain service availability across Ireland. NTA CEO Anne Graham emphasized the importance of this review in maintaining the sustainability of the taxi industry and providing reliable services. "This 9% increase helps address increasing operational costs for drivers while balancing the needs of passengers," she said.

Dublin taxi driver Mick Keating supported the price increase, noting that rising fuel costs justified the adjustment. "While some drivers dislike the increase, it's necessary to keep up with rising prices for fuel and operational expenses," he said. Keating also expressed hope that the premium weekend rates would encourage drivers to extend their hours, particularly during night-time shifts when anti-social behaviour is more prevalent.

However, Keating also pointed out that many drivers prefer daytime work to avoid late-night disturbances,

stressing that taxis play a crucial role in Ireland's transport system, especially during weather disruptions like snowstorms.

FreeNow, a popular taxi app, has backed the fare increase but called for additional measures to support drivers, particularly new drivers who must invest in wheelchair-accessible vehicles. General Manager Danny O'Gorman acknowledged the challenges faced by drivers, particularly safety concerns. "Weekend shifts are risky, and increasing fares alone won't solve the supply issues," he stated. FreeNow has raised concerns about the dangers drivers face on weekend nights, including violent behaviour and abuse.

Uber's General Manager, Kieran Harte, disagreed with the fare hikes, arguing that simply increasing fares doesn't address the root causes of the industry's challenges. "We believe that raising prices won't attract more drivers, as evidenced by the 12% increase in 2022, which didn't bring more drivers to weekend shifts," Harte said. Uber is part of the Taxis for Ireland Coalition, which is pushing for a 30% increase in the number of drivers and vehicles by 2027. Harte also expressed concern that customers are already feeling the strain of higher prices, leading them to opt for public

transport or leave early to catch the last buses or trains.

The USI president, Chris Clifford, encouraged students to travel in groups to save on taxi costs but stressed that safety should remain a top priority. "It's better to share a taxi than risk walking home alone," he said. Clifford also suggested students use public transport for most of their journey and reserve taxis for the final leg.

Sunil Sharpe from Give Us The Night emphasized that rising costs are a broader issue affecting not just taxis but many industries. He advocated for better public transport options at night, particularly in Dublin, and noted that taxis should complement, not replace, public transport.

Looking to the future, FreeNow's Danny O'Gorman highlighted a surge in new taxi drivers, with the number of available drivers on the platform growing by 24% in the first half of 2024. Since the pandemic, there has been a steady increase in drivers, bringing the total number of licensed drivers in Ireland to over 27,000.

As the industry adapts to new realities, the NTA, drivers, and passengers alike continue to navigate the challenges of providing safe, reliable, and affordable taxi services across the country.

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New Ford Explorer is ready for adventure



The new, all-electric Ford Explorer combines German engineering with striking American style, and it forges the way for a complete reinvention of the Ford brand in Europe.

The mid-size crossover can accommodate up to five occupants and is fully equipped to set families on the road to adventure in a silent, emission-free manner.

Assertive Style, Inside & Out.

The Explorer's aerodynamic exterior captures the spirit and assertive style of Ford's iconic American SUV for a new electric era, also defined by a bold "shield" design in lieu of a traditional grille. At the rear, the C-pillar treatment is a nod to the original Explorer line of US-built SUVs which were introduced in 1991 and are now in their sixth generation, while the striking body style captures some of the forthright ruggedness of its US namesake. The futuristic exterior styling is matched by an ultra-modern interior with premium materials, and features such as the sculpted sports seats and dashtop-mounted soundbar not only look terrific, but are hugely practical too. The latest intuitive tech within the new Explorer includes a 14.6-inch adjustable colour touchscreen, that comes with a built-in EV trip planner and satellite navigation to help ease your journey. Additionally, drivers can choose between four drive modes – Normal, Eco, Sport or Individual – to adapt to different road and weather conditions. Underpinning the new Explorer is Volkswagen's MEB platform which was designed specifically for electric cars, resulting in gains

in space, variability, range, comfort, convenience and dynamic performance.

Two Trim Versions.

The new Ford Explorer is available in two generously-equipped trim versions – Select and Premium – and buyers can choose from a selection of 6 dynamic colours (1 non-metallic and 5 metallic). Both trim versions come in Rear Wheel-Drive (RWD) format and are powered by the same 77kWh (usable) Extended Range battery that can provide an electric range of up to 602km and 570km respectively on a WLTP combined driving cycle. The electric motor produces a hefty 286PS (284bhp) and 545Nm of instant torque, providing the car with the ability to sprint to 100km/h from a standstill in just 6.4 seconds. An entry-level 52kWh (usable capacity) Standard Range version is rumoured to join the Explorer line-up in due course. The Select model features 19-inch Aero alloy wheels, 7-speaker sound system with soundbar, powered driver seat with massage and memory function, inductive wireless phone charging, heated front seats, heated steering wheel, Adaptive Cruise Control, front & rear parking sensors with a rear view camera, and LED headlights with auto high/low beam. Additional standard equipment in range-topping Premium trim includes a fixed panoramic roof, 10-speaker B&O sound system, hands-

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free tailgate, 20-inch alloy wheels, 12-way powered driver seat with memory, inductive wireless phone charging, Matrix LED headlamps, front door scuff plates, and Cross Traffic Alert with Active Braking and Exit Warning. In addition to good levels of head, leg and elbow room within the cabin of the new Explorer, the boot can accommodate up to 470 litres of space with the rear seats in place, but this extends to 1,422 litres when the rear seatbacks are folded down. In terms of safety, the Explorer comes with an impressive array of advanced safety and driver assist systems as standard, and it was awarded a full five-star Euro NCAP rating when tested in 2024.

Charging Options.

Drivers can charge the new Explorer at home or use the Ford BlueOval™ Charge Network, with over 1,700 AC and DC public charging points across Ireland. The Explorer can accept a maximum DC charge rate of 135kW, and this enables a 10-80% charge to be completed in around 28 minutes.

Car on Review.

My review car was a new Explorer 77kWh Premium in optional Agate Black metallic paint with standard 20-inch Aero alloy wheels. Thanks to the multi-adjustable

steering wheel and powered driver seat adjustment, it is easy to find a perfect driving position, and all of the important controls are located within easy reach. When moving off from a standstill, the Explorer makes a fuss-free, smooth getaway, and its 48%/52% front/rear weight distribution provides impressive road-holding ability. The car responds well to brake pedal inputs, and the driver can select the sole brake regeneration mode by selecting 'B' on the drive selector in order to enhance the braking effect and to send energy back to the battery. The car's steering has a nice natural weighting to it, and body roll is well contained through corners, while the application of just the right amount of extra acceleration (relative to the road conditions) mid-corner provides the rear-wheel drive Explorer with enhanced driving thrills. Irrespective of whether you are covering large distances on a motorway or negotiating crowded city streets, the Explorer tackles the task at hand in a confident manner, and its neat 9.7 metre turning circle is of great help when parking or turning around on a narrow road.

Price.

The Explorer Extended Range Select and Premium models are priced from €43,590 and €48,005 respectively (inclusive of current Irish Government EV incentives).

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