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# EDITOR LETTER

**W**elcome to the June Edition of Tacsai Magazine. This month, we spotlight the growing pressures facing Ireland's taxi drivers—from assaults linked to mandatory card payments to the quiet exodus of new drivers turning part-time or leaving altogether. Tony Roe outlines a system in crisis, with payment fraud and lack of support leaving many vulnerable on the job.

Yet, in the face of hardship, community thrives. The Martina Roe Lay Counselling Society continues its vital work, offering support to drivers coping with grief, loneliness, and mental strain.

In this issue, we also look at 2025's top taxi cars, rank the best and worst stands in Ireland, and weigh the shift to electric vehicles. From apps and automation to staying sane behind the wheel, Tacsai is here to keep you informed, connected, and supported.

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#### TACSAI MAGAZINE

All correspondence should be addressed to:  
Tacsai Magazine, 4 Castleknock Mews, Old Navan Road,  
Castleknock, Dublin 15  
Creative Top Publishing Ltd. publishes Tacsai Magazine.  
Company registration No. 534480

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# Card Payments, Assaults, and the Crisis Pushing Dublin's Taxi Drivers to the Brink

Dublin's taxi industry is in a quiet but escalating crisis.

**B**eneath the hum of city streets and the buzz of late-night drop-offs, many drivers—especially those new to the profession—are leaving the industry in large numbers. Some are switching to bus driving, others turning to part-time work, but the root causes of the exodus run far deeper than long hours or tough economic times.

According to Tony Roe, Chairman of the National Transport Assembly and spokesperson for the taxi sector, the forced adoption of card payment systems is playing a disturbingly central role in a rising tide of violence and financial insecurity among drivers.

***“Since the card payment rule was introduced, assaults have skyrocketed,” Roe explains. “Criminals use fraudulent cards to avoid paying fares. When a payment fails, the encounter often turns violent—especially in the early hours of the morning.”***

Many of these attacks leave drivers physically and emotionally scarred. Some are unable to return to work. Roe says it's a miracle there hasn't yet been a fatality, with incidents occurring weekly. Yet, drivers reporting these crimes to the National Transport Authority are often met with little more than a reference number and told the issue is “civil,” not criminal.

This lack of support, combined with the €200 penalty

for drivers who do not offer card payment options, has created a deeply hostile environment, particularly for new entrants to the industry.

***“About 25% of drivers with less than four years’ experience are now only driving part-time,” Roe says. “They simply can’t sustain the pressure—financial or otherwise.”***

Further straining the profession is the closure of 48 taxi ranks, pushing drivers to circle city streets in search of customers, wasting fuel and increasing pollution. Roe stresses that the environmental and public health costs of this are rarely considered, even as cities promote greener policies.

On top of this, stringent vehicle requirements force drivers to retire perfectly maintained cars due to age limits, despite passing multiple inspections.

And with the rise of taxi apps charging up to 15% in commission, plus transaction fees for every card payment, drivers are being squeezed from every angle. As Roe warns, ***“We are hemorrhaging experienced drivers, and there’s no meaningful recruitment coming in. This industry is at risk of collapse.”***

Until government and regulatory bodies listen and act on these concerns, starting with reviewing mandatory card systems and rank closures, many fear the worst for Dublin's already struggling taxi network.



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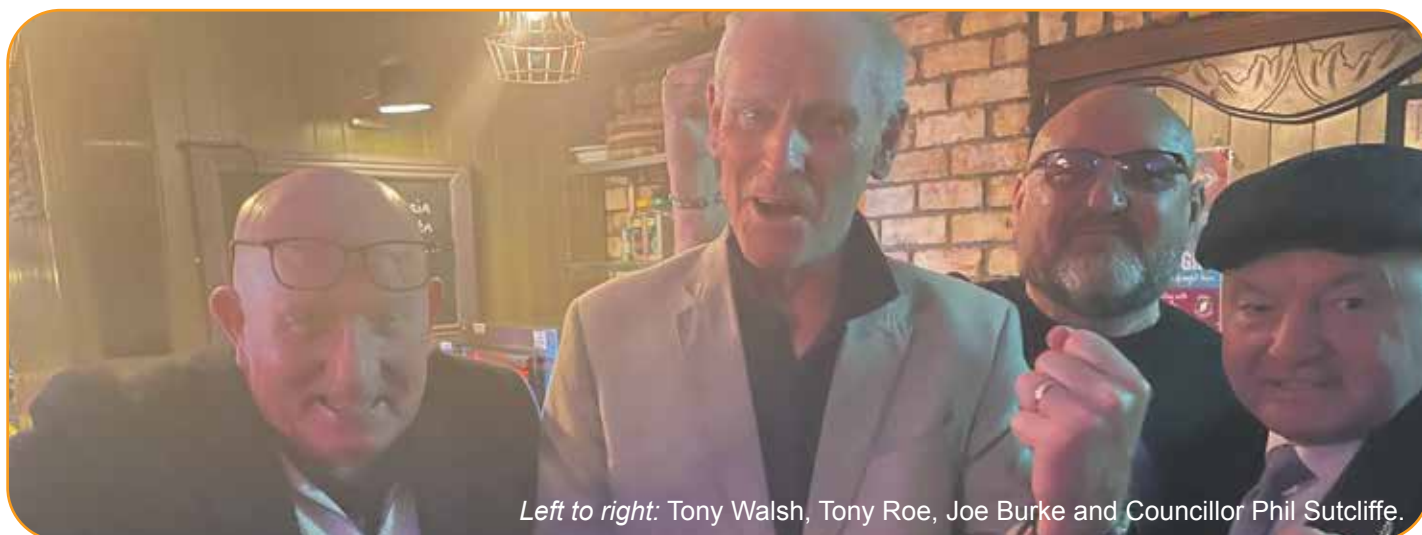
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# The Martina Roe Counseling Society

## A Lifeline for Ireland's Transport Workers

In an industry often overshadowed by long hours, low pay, and mounting stress, a quiet movement is offering solace and solidarity to those who need it most. .



Left to right: Tony Walsh, Tony Roe, Joe Burke and Councillor Phil Sutcliffe.

**T**he Martina Roe Lay Counselling Society, formerly known as the Taxi Driver's Lay Counselling Association, is quickly becoming a crucial support network for taxi drivers, bus drivers, train staff, and anyone working in the transport industry.

Founded in memory of those lost and driven by the tireless efforts of transport workers themselves, the Society offers emotional support, community, and—perhaps most importantly—a break from isolation.

***"This group was created because too many of us were dealing with grief, loneliness, and burnout alone,"*** says Tony Roe, who is closely involved with the initiative.

The Society organizes regular meetups, counselling opportunities, and even subsidized trips abroad. Their most recent retreat brought 40 transport workers to Lanzarote, following a previous successful visit to Alicante. At just €400 per participant, including four-star accommodation and entertainment, the trip was more than a getaway—it was a lifeline.

***"These aren't just holidays,"*** Roe stresses.

***"They're a way for people to connect, share stories, and begin to heal, especially those grieving lost family or colleagues."***

Weekly meetings are held across various venues and often include live entertainment—much of it provided by drivers themselves. The society's events are designed to foster community and uplift those who may feel forgotten in the hustle of daily life.

One particularly moving event welcomed Councillor Phil Sutcliffe, who listened to stories of struggle, including that of a driver who returned to part-time work after suffering a brutal assault over a failed card transaction. The presence of local officials like Sutcliffe shows a growing recognition of the mental health crisis within the transport sector.

***"This is about more than just drivers," Roe says. "It's about building a safety net for anyone in public transport who feels they've been left behind."***

The Martina Roe Lay Counselling Society continues to grow, not just in numbers, but in purpose. In an era of disconnection, it is a rare and vital reminder of the power of community.

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# New Toyota bZ4X EV is Interestingly Different

By Declan Glynn



The bZ4X is Toyota's first battery-powered EV for Europe, and it is a direct rival for mid-size electric SUVs such as the Nissan Ariya, KIA EV6, Hyundai IONIQ 5, VW ID.4, Skoda Enyaq iV, Tesla Model Y, and its close relative, the Subaru Solterra.

**T**he bZ4X uses the new eTNGA platform that underpins the battery-powered Lexus RZ SUV and it forms part of what will eventually be a family of electric bZ models in the Toyota line-up. The stylish exterior design of the bZ4X boasts lots of chunky black body cladding, a full-width rear light bar, a roof spoiler and a distinctive front end, providing it with the ability to stand out from the regular EV crowd. Presently, the bZ4X is only available in generously-equipped Sport trim, with the front axle-mounted electric motor providing the car with front-wheel drivability.

#### Easy Charging Options.

Drivers can use rapid public charging and achieve a 10-80% charge in around 30 minutes via a 150kW

fast-charging system, with a full charge (0-100%) via a domestic 7.4kW wall-box charger possible in around 12h 45m. Drivers also have the option to recharge the battery pack via a domestic three-pin socket, but this is likely to be the least favoured option due to the time needed to complete the task.

#### Car on Review.

My review car was a Toyota bZ4X Sport in Astral Black paintwork (a no-cost option). Key standard equipment includes: 18-inch alloy wheels with wheel covers, heated front seats and steering wheel, wireless mobile phone charger, a 12.3-inch HD Toyota Smart Connect+ Multimedia System, intelligent adaptive cruise control, and dual-zone climate control, along with Toyota Safety Sense 3 – which





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\*The range indicated was tested according to WLTP regulations. \*\*Toyota's confidence in the quality of the battery is reflected in a guarantee it will retain at least 70% of its capacity up to 10 years, covered by the original EV Manufacturing Warranty until 8 years or 160,000 kilometres, and with the additional Extended Battery Care up to 10 years or 1 million kilometres driven that is activated by an annual Ei Health Check. (Terms and conditions apply).

comprises a host of advanced driver assistance systems for enhanced peace of mind for all occupants. Despite its supple ride, the bZ4X feels surprisingly agile in corners, and it is a pleasure to guide down a country road. The car remains well settled at fast motorway speeds too, and it always feels well controlled and eager to accelerate briskly when required. Thanks to a power output of 204bhp, along with 266Nm of peak torque, acceleration is instant and responsive, while regenerative braking can be augmented by way of a button on the centre console. The permanent magnet synchronous motor in the bZ4X receives its power



from a battery pack with a usable capacity of 64kWh, and this is enough to provide the car with an official range of up to 433km on a WLTP combined driving cycle, and up to 505km in city-only driving. The car can complete a 0-100km/h sprint in just 7.5 seconds and it is capable of consuming as little as 14.7kWh of battery power for every 100kms driven on a WLTP combined driving cycle. Power is delivered to the cars' front wheels in a smooth and fuss-free manner and, with a kerb weight of 1970kg, it feels well planted on the road. The cars' stiff body structure and compliant suspension help it feel composed over rough surfaces and it competently smooths out broken tarmac. The car has a spacious, comfortable and airy interior, and the dashboard features a prominent digital gauge display, along with a 12.3-inch central touchscreen that is intuitive in its operation and is mounted high up on the dashboard, making it easy to read on the move. The wide centre console between the two front seats features

standard wireless smartphone charging and open storage underneath. The driving position is comfortable, and all of the major controls fall easily to hand. The smart-looking cabin features soft-touch plastic on the tops of the doors and fabric sections on the dashboard, while the overall cabin build quality is excellent. The car does without an under-bonnet storage area (often referred to as a 'frunk'), but the boot has a decent 452-litre capacity, which can be easily expanded by dropping the rear seatbacks when required. In order to enhance practicality, there is some underfloor storage for the charging cables, keeping them out of harm's way in the process.

#### Conclusion & Pricing.

Despite being well ahead of the curve with hybrid technology, it took until last year for Toyota to launch its first modern fully-electric car, but it has been well worth the wait. The bZ4X is great to drive, impressively spacious, practical and well equipped, and it is one of the most distinctive EVs on the market right now. According to Toyota their Battery-Electric vehicles will boast the same reliability as any other Toyota and, as long as annual services within the Toyota network are in place, the bZ4X is covered by an incredible 10-year/ 1 Million km EV Battery Extended Care warranty (t's & c's apply). The bZ4X Sport model is priced at just €42,950 (inclusive of an SEAI grant of €3,500 and VRT relief for private customers – subject to approval, but excludes dealer-related delivery charges).





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# Navigating the New Road: How the National Transport Strategy Affects Taxi Drivers



As Ireland charges ahead toward a greener, more connected future, taxi drivers across the country are feeling the shift.

**T**he National Sustainable Mobility Policy (NSMP) and the Climate Action Plan 2024 have set ambitious targets for reducing transport emissions, electrifying fleets, and overhauling urban mobility. But what does all this mean for the everyday taxi driver?

Let's break it down — simply, clearly, and with you in the front seat.

## 1. The Road to 2030: Zero Emissions and You

The Irish government has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector by 50% by 2030 and reaching net-zero emissions by 2050. This includes:

- Phasing out new fossil-fuel cars by 2030
- Increasing EV uptake, with over 945,000 electric vehicles targeted by the end of the decade
- Expanding public transport, cycling, and walking options

For taxi drivers, the big question is: Should I go electric now?

The answer isn't simple, but incentives are growing. The Electric SPSV Grant Scheme offers up to €10,000 toward a new electric taxi, with additional support for wheelchair-accessible models. Charging infrastructure is still patchy in rural areas but expanding rapidly in cities and along major routes.

## 2. Urban Redesign: Less Space, More Rules

If you drive in Dublin, Cork, or Galway, you've probably noticed more bus corridors, low-emission zones, and pedestrianised streets. These changes, designed to prioritize public and low-emission transport, can be frustrating — but they also represent opportunity.

Taxis, especially electric ones, may gain priority access to new lanes and zones. However, traffic restrictions, enforcement cameras, and changing ranks will require drivers to stay informed and adaptable.

Pro tip: Sign up for your local authority's transport newsletter or updates via the National Transport Authority (NTA) website.

## 3. Digital Disruption and Integration

The government wants "Mobility as a Service" (MaaS) to become a reality — a future where buses, bikes, trams, and taxis are all part of one connected app. While this might seem like it threatens traditional street hails, it could actually increase visibility and bookings for taxi drivers.

Apps like Free Now and new NTA-backed platforms may allow taxi drivers to plug into national transport services, offering more seamless passenger experiences and less downtime between

fares.

## 4. Training, Licensing & the Human Touch

With more focus on accessibility, safety, and sustainability, drivers can expect more frequent compliance checks and possible updates to licensing standards. There's also talk of continuing professional development (CPD) modules for taxi drivers in areas like:

- Passenger assistance
- Eco-driving techniques
- First aid

While some may see this as a burden, others view it as a way to differentiate yourself as a premium driver, especially in a market where professionalism can bring repeat business.

## 5. Don't Get Left Behind

It's easy to feel like policy decisions are being made without drivers at the table. But there are ways to get your voice heard:

- Join your local taxi driver association
- Participate in public consultations (held online or via local councils)
- Stay active on social media groups where updates are shared

The transport landscape is changing — fast. But with the right information, smart investment choices, and a bit of adaptability, Irish taxi drivers can stay ahead of the curve and even benefit from the shift.

Drivers should be aware of several upcoming changes in the transport sector. With the phase-out of petrol and diesel vehicles by 2030, it's important to explore electric vehicle (EV) grants now. Urban redesign efforts will introduce new taxi ranks and restricted zones, so staying informed through the National Transport Authority (NTA) is essential. The rise of Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) and app-based transport networks means drivers should consider joining such platforms to maintain visibility. New regulations may bring increased checks and require additional training, so preparation for future standards is advised. Finally, as climate policy increasingly focuses on emissions, drivers are encouraged to consider hybrid or electric vehicles and adopt eco-driving practices.

## In Summary: Key Takeaways

Final Thoughts:

Change on the road can be frustrating — but it can also be an open door. The key is to steer with knowledge, accelerate with adaptability, and never stop learning.





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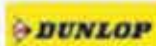
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# Top EV & Hybrid Car Picks for Irish Taxi Drivers in 2025

If you're a taxi driver in Ireland considering a new vehicle in 2025, there are several excellent options that balance efficiency, comfort, and cost-effectiveness. With government incentives and a growing focus on sustainability, both electric and hybrid models are becoming increasingly attractive. Here are some top choices:

## 1. Toyota bZ4X (Electric SUV)

- Range: Up to 505 km
- Grants: Eligible for up to €20,000 in combined eSPSV and scrappage grants
- Highlights: Spacious interior, reliable performance, and Toyota's extended battery warranty up to 10 years or 1 million km with annual health checks.

## 2. Skoda Superb (Diesel/Hybrid Saloon)

- Highlights: Offers ample interior and boot space, making it ideal for airport runs and long-distance fares. Known for its durability and comfort. The Taxi Centre

## 3. Kia Niro Plus (Electric Crossover)

- Highlights: Specifically designed for taxi services with features like an integrated All-in-One Display for navigation and fare management. Enhanced passenger space and comfort.

## 4. Volkswagen ID.7 (Electric Saloon)

- Range: Between 485 km and 690 km
- Highlights: Combines sleek design with practicality, offering a spacious interior and advanced tech features.

## 5. Peugeot e-3008 (Electric SUV)

- Range: Up to 500 km
- Highlights: Affordable electric SUV with a comfortable ride and modern features, suitable for both city and longer routes.

## 6. Toyota Corolla Estate Hybrid

- Highlights: Combines fuel efficiency with ample cargo space, making it a practical choice for urban and suburban taxi services.

### Financial Incentives for Taxi Drivers

The Irish government offers substantial grants to encourage the adoption of electric vehicles among taxi drivers:

- eSPSV Grant: Up to €10,000 for a new fully electric taxi.
- Scrappage Scheme: Additional €5,000 when trading in an old vehicle.
- Home Charger Grant: €600 towards the installation of a home charging unit.

These incentives can significantly reduce the upfront cost of transitioning to an electric vehicle.

### Considerations Before Making the Switch

- Charging Infrastructure: Ensure access to reliable charging stations, especially if you operate in rural areas.
- Range Requirements: Assess your typical daily mileage to choose a vehicle with an adequate range.
- Passenger Needs: Consider the size and comfort features of the vehicle to meet passenger expectations.

Choosing the right vehicle is crucial for the efficiency and success of your taxi business. Evaluate your specific needs, consider the available incentives, and select a vehicle that offers the best balance of cost, comfort, and performance.



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# Behind the Wheel: Stories from the Night Shift



When the sun goes down and the pubs pour out, the real stories begin. For many taxi drivers across Ireland, the night shift isn't just about fares

It's about witnessing life in all its wild, weird, and often heartwarming glory.

We spoke to taxi drivers in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, and Galway, collecting short interviews and anecdotes that capture the soul of the job — one passenger, one ride at a time.

## 1. "The Runaway Groom" – Dublin

**Driver:** Tony, 18 years behind the wheel

**Time:** 2:30 AM, a Friday in September

"He gets in wearing a tux, tie half-off, no jacket. Says, 'Just drive.' I glance in the mirror — he's shaking. I ask, 'You alright, mate?' and he says, 'I just left my wedding.'"

Turns out he got cold feet right after the ceremony. I ended up driving him to his grandmother's in Terenure. He tipped me €100 and said, 'Thanks for not asking too many questions.'"

## 2. "A Farewell to Dad" – Cork

**Driver:** Sheila, 9 years driving part-time nights

**Time:** Midnight on a rainy Tuesday

"Picked up a girl from CUH crying her eyes out. Said her dad had just passed and she needed to get to Cobh to be with her mam.

The car was quiet most of the way, then she started telling me stories about him — fishing trips, his terrible jokes, how he used to embarrass her in front of her friends. I didn't say much, just drove.

When we got there, she hugged me and said, 'Thanks for not treating me like I was broken.' That one stuck with me."

## 3. "The Unexpected Duet" – Galway

**Driver:** Declan, 22 years on the job

**Time:** 1:15 AM, Sunday morning

"Picked up two girls and a lad — all early twenties, fairly tipsy. They asked if I liked Ed Sheeran. Next thing, they start belting out 'Thinking Out Loud'. I mean, proper harmonies and all. The lad had a voice like a feckin' angel.

At the red light on Eyre Square, I turned the radio down and just listened. They hit the final note and cheered. Before getting out, they said, 'You made our night.' But truth be told,

they made mine."

## 4. "The Birthday Shift" – Limerick

**Driver:** Farouk, 6 years driving nights

**Time:** Around 3 AM, St. Patrick's Day

"I was working on my birthday — didn't tell anyone. Picked up a hen party from a nightclub. One of them saw my license and said, 'Hey! It's your birthday?' I nodded, smiling.

They made me pull over near Supermac's, then sang 'Happy Birthday' at the top of their lungs. One gave me a cupcake she'd stashed in her purse. Messy, but delicious. Told me I was their 'King of the Night Shift.'"

## 5. "Lost and Found" – Dublin

**Driver:** Aoife, part-time weekends

**Time:** 4:00 AM, Grafton Street

"A man in his 60s, well-dressed, gets in. Very quiet. As we drive, he admits he's just come from a nursing home — visiting his wife with Alzheimer's. 'She doesn't know me anymore,' he says. 'But I still go.'"

He asked me to take the long way to Clontarf. Not for the fare — just to have someone to talk to. When I dropped him off, he said, 'Thanks for reminding me the world still has kind people.' I won't forget him."

## Why These Stories Matter

For most people, a taxi is a ride. For us drivers, it's often a glimpse into someone's life, even if only for ten minutes. You never know when you'll become part of someone's memory — or when they'll become part of yours.

Night shifts can be rough — the cold, the drunk fare dodgers, the 4 a.m. kebab smell. But they also come with moments that remind us why this job still has heart.

## Got a Story?

Have a ride you'll never forget? A passenger who changed your night — or your life?

Send us your story at [brighton83@gmail.com](mailto:brighton83@gmail.com) and we'll feature more in the next issue of Night Shift Diaries.

Because sometimes, the best stories in Ireland aren't in books — they're behind the wheel.





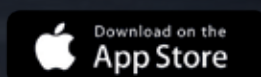
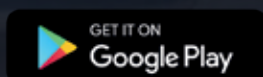
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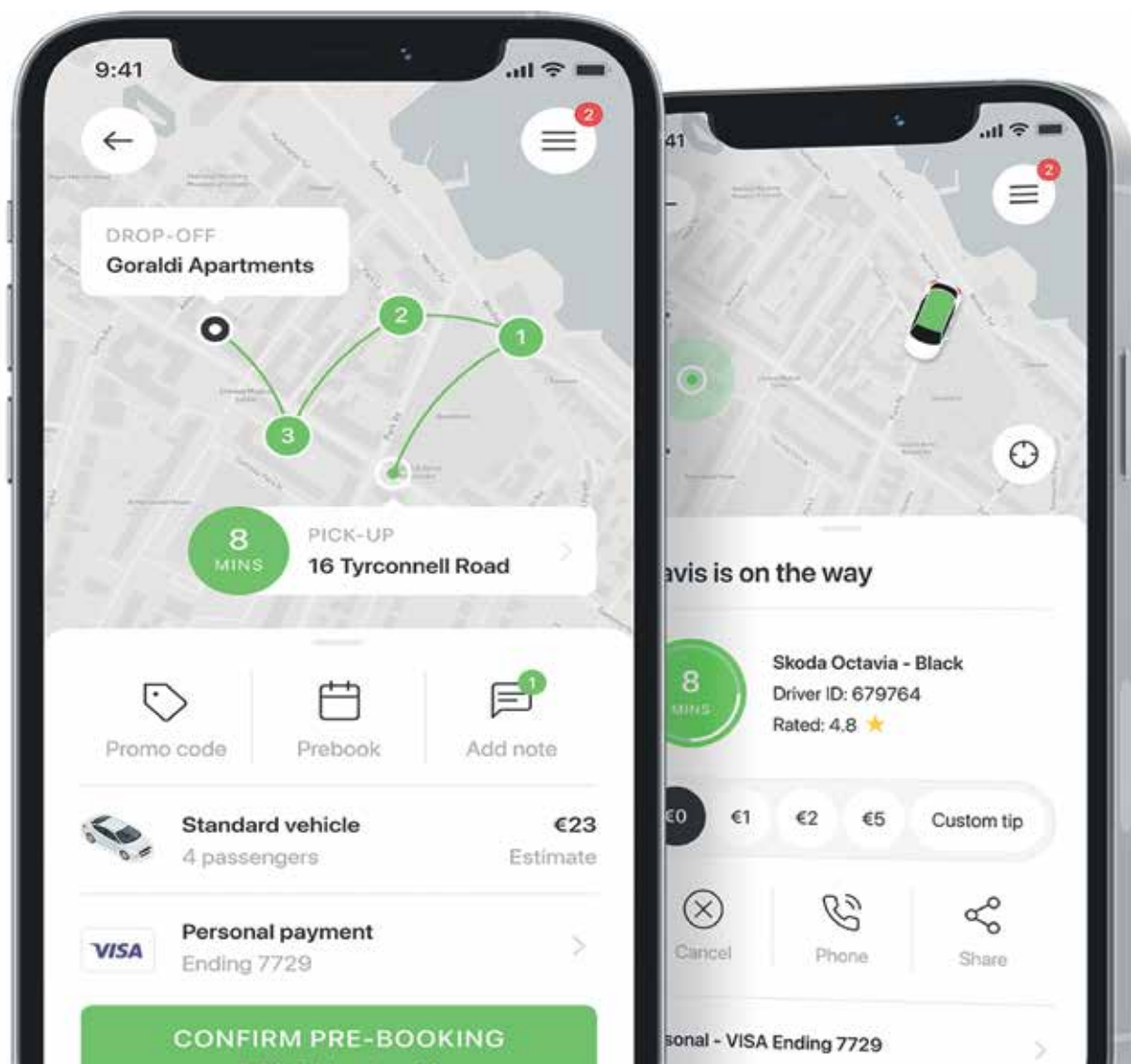


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# Apps, Aggregators & Automation

## Staying Competitive in a Changing Market

The Irish taxi industry has been steering through major changes over the past decade — but what’s coming next could be even more transformative.

**W**ith apps dominating bookings, automation slowly creeping into logistics, and global competition just a swipe away, taxi drivers must be more adaptable than ever.

Whether you’re a long-time plate holder in Dublin or a part-time driver in Limerick, understanding how to stay competitive in this new digital landscape is essential.

### 1. The Rise of the Apps: Friend or Foe?

Apps like Free Now have become nearly essential tools for Irish taxi drivers. They promise more fares, easier payments, and reduced downtime — but often come with high commission fees and limited control over pricing.

Some drivers are sceptical, and rightly so. “You’re giving them your business, and they’re taking a big cut,” says Liam, a Galway-based driver with 15 years on the road. “But if you’re not





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on the app, you miss out.”

Pro Tip:

Use apps as a supplement, not a sole source. Combine app-based work with traditional street pickups, phone bookings, and return fares to avoid over-reliance.

## 2. Aggregators: Your Fares, Their Platform

Beyond apps, aggregators — companies that pool together various transport services — are entering the scene. Some aim to become “one-stop mobility shops” where customers can compare taxis, ride shares, buses, and more.

These platforms often prioritize convenience for the rider, not necessarily fairness for the driver. That’s why it’s important to understand their terms, know your value, and avoid racing to the bottom on pricing.

Watch Out:

Some aggregators may try to undercut meter fares, especially in pre-booked markets. Always compare rates and retain control over when and where you drive.

## 3. Cashless & Contactless: The New Normal

COVID-19 accelerated the shift to cashless payments, and now contactless is expected. Drivers who don’t accept card or app payments may lose out on younger, tech-savvy passengers — or even business clients.

Must-Have Tools:

- A reliable card reader (e.g. SumUp, Square)
- A stable mobile internet connection
- Clear signage that you accept card & tap

Bonus: Card payments can also reduce your risk of theft and eliminate awkward cash-change situations.

## 4. Automation & AI: Are Robots Taking Over?

Self-driving cars aren’t taking over Irish roads just yet — but automation is already here in the form of:

- AI-powered dispatch systems
- Predictive demand routing
- Dynamic surge pricing

These tools are mostly in the hands of app companies now. But as these technologies develop, taxi drivers can expect tighter competition, especially during peak hours.

That said, human connection, local knowledge, and safety remain key differentiators that no algorithm can replace.

## 5. Staying Ahead: Tips for Today’s Driver

To stay competitive in this changing market, consider the following strategies:

Upskill Regularly

- Learn basic tech tools (app usage, navigation, messaging)
  - Take optional customer service or accessibility training
  - Stay up to date with NTA or app policy changes
- Build a Personal Brand
- Offer repeat customers a business card
  - Be active on social media or WhatsApp groups
  - Provide consistently clean, friendly, and reliable service

Track Your Earnings

- Know which app gives the best ROI
- Measure app work vs. private bookings
- Review peak times and adjust your schedule

Join a Cooperative or Network

Some drivers are forming their own local booking co-ops or joining small regional platforms that charge lower fees and offer more driver control.

## What the Future Holds

As tech companies shape more of the transport experience, taxi drivers who embrace digital tools while maintaining personal service will lead the way. The key isn’t to resist change — it’s to use it on your terms.

You don’t need to be a coder or data scientist. But you do need to be smart, flexible, and informed. In this new market, the best drivers are no longer just good behind the wheel — they’re savvy businesspeople, too.

## In Short: Stay in the Game by...

1. Using apps, but don’t rely solely on them, because it diversifies your income source
2. Accept cashless payments, to meet modern customer expectations
3. Track performance across platforms, to make better business decisions
4. Stay informed on industry tech so you can adapt before you’re forced to
5. Be your own brand and build loyalty beyond the app

## Final Word

The road ahead may be digital, but the driver still matters. Keep learning, stay alert, and don’t forget — even in a world of apps and automation, good service still drives repeat business.



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# Staying Sane on the Road. Mental Health Tips for Taxi Drivers

Driving a taxi isn't just a job, it's a lifestyle. Long hours, irregular sleep, unpredictable passengers, and endless waiting can take a toll not just on your body, but on your mind.

**W**hile the radio might keep you company and the fares keep you going, the stress can build up over time. We spoke to health professionals and experienced taxi drivers across Ireland to put together real, practical strategies to help you stay well — behind the wheel and beyond.

## Why Mental Health Matters for Drivers

According to the HSE and international studies, professional drivers are at higher risk for anxiety, depression, and burnout than most other occupations. Long periods of isolation, shift work, and dealing with the public — sometimes in difficult conditions — all contribute.

Dr. Sinead McCarthy, a clinical psychologist in Dublin, says:

"Taxi drivers often don't realise how much emotional labour they do. From listening to a stranger's heartbreak to navigating city traffic at rush hour — that load adds up."

## 7 Practical Tips for a Healthier Mind on the Move

### 1. Create a Routine. Even if the Hours Vary

While taxi work can be unpredictable, having a loose routine can reduce stress.

- Start your shift with a short walk or a coffee ritual.
- Plan regular breaks (even 10 mins to stretch or breathe can help).
- Try to wind down the same way each night — avoid scrolling on your phone in bed.

### 2. Take Breaks Like They're Non-Negotiable

Think of breaks like fuel: essential.

- Park safely, get out, and stretch every few hours.
- Use the bathroom even if you don't "need it yet."
- Eat proper meals, not just snacks from the forecourt.

Driver Tip (Cork): "I set a timer to remind me every 2 hours to get out of the car. Keeps my back and my head in better shape."

### 3. Talk to Someone. Not Just Your Passengers

Social isolation is a silent issue for many drivers.

- Regularly chat with family or friends (call someone between fares).
- Join local taxi WhatsApp or Facebook groups — even just for a laugh or rant.

- Don't be afraid to talk about stress. It's more common than you think.

Driver Insight (Galway): "Most of us are stressed, but no one wants to admit it. I felt better the day I just said it out loud."

### 4. Watch the Triggers: Traffic, Abuse, and Late Nights

Not all stress is avoidable, but you can manage how you react.

- If a fare is aggressive, stay calm, and don't escalate — it's okay to decline service if you feel unsafe.
- Use music, audiobooks, or breathing apps to decompress after a difficult passenger or traffic jam.
- Avoid overloading yourself on back-to-back late nights.

### 5. Eat Smart, Sleep Smarter

- Avoid skipping meals or relying solely on caffeine and sugar.
- Keep water in the car — dehydration worsens fatigue and mood.
- Try to maintain a consistent sleep window, even if you work late. Use blackout curtains or white noise apps if sleeping during the day.

### 6. Move Your Body — Even a Little

- Light exercise like walking or stretching between shifts helps regulate mood.
- Shoulder rolls and neck stretches in your seat reduce tension.
- Try a 10-minute YouTube yoga video on break — sounds odd, works wonders.

### 7. Know When to Get Help

If you're feeling constantly low, angry, exhausted, or detached — it's okay to seek support.

- Talk to your GP.
  - Use the Samaritans (116 123) for confidential support 24/7.
  - Check out free HSE mental health services at [www.yourmentalhealth.ie](http://www.yourmentalhealth.ie)
- Dr. McCarthy: "You don't have to be 'broken' to need help. Talking early is better than burning out."

### Remember: You're Not Alone

Thousands of taxi drivers across Ireland face the same pressures every day. While the job can be isolating, you're part of a community. Check in with your fellow drivers. Be kind to yourself. And don't be afraid to pull over — physically or emotionally — when you need to.

### Resources at a Glance

Samaritans : 116 123 (Free, 24/7)  
Pieta House (for suicidal thoughts) : 1800 247 247  
HSE Mental Health Support : [yourmentalhealth.ie](http://yourmentalhealth.ie)  
GP (General Practitioner) : For tailored advice  
Taxi Driver Forums & Groups  
Martina Roe Lay Counselling Society

### Your Voice Matters

Got your own stress-busting strategy or mental health tip? Share it with us for a future issue. Email [brighton83@gmail.com](mailto:brighton83@gmail.com).

Because looking after yourself isn't a luxury — it's your most important fare of the day.





## Alan Kelly Calls for Overhaul of Rural Hackney Licence System

Tipperary TD Alan Kelly is calling for a major revamp of the Rural Hackney Taxi Licence scheme, urging a more streamlined and practical approach to better serve rural Ireland.

**S**peaking in the Dáil last night, Deputy Kelly highlighted that the current system fails to reflect the realities of modern rural life, where homes are often scattered across wide areas.

Kelly is proposing a new model in which a single approved vehicle could be shared by multiple drivers, operating within a 10-kilometre radius under fixed fares. He also recommends shifting the management of the scheme to local authorities and replacing the current dual-licensing system—with separate licences required for the driver and the vehicle—with a single, more efficient licence.

A long-time advocate for rural transport reform, Deputy Kelly has been pushing for change since 2012. He criticised past initiatives as overly complex and financially

unfeasible, arguing that they've done little to improve access to transport in rural communities.

The Labour TD welcomed the National Transport Authority's ongoing exploration of digital platforms to create tailored transport solutions for rural areas. He believes that local businesses and community groups might be more inclined to get involved if state support were increased.

Despite a pilot scheme launched in January 2023 across 21 locations, offering a €6,000 grant, uptake has been minimal, with only two operators participating.

As of April 25, there are just 22 licensed rural hackney vehicles and 19 licensed drivers nationwide. Deputy Kelly's proposal will now be referred to Minister Jerry Buttimer, who holds responsibility for rural transport.

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# The Best and Worst Ranks in Ireland: A Driver's Guide

Being a taxi driver isn't just about getting passengers from point A to point B—it's also about managing people, often under challenging circumstances.

**O**thers feel more like no-man's-land, where time slows to a crawl and the only thing moving is the wind.

We asked drivers from across Dublin, Cork, Galway, and Limerick to weigh in on the best and worst taxi ranks in their cities. Their verdicts were brutally honest, occasionally funny, and always insightful.

Here's your no-nonsense guide to the good, the bad, and the downright bizarre of Ireland's taxi ranks.

## DUBLIN

Best: St. Stephen's Green North (outside the Shelbourne)

- Why it works: Close to high-end hotels, event venues, and Grafton Street foot traffic.

- Driver comments:

"Steady flow during events. Good tips from tourists."

"Suits night and day work. Feels safe, too."

Worst: Parnell Square East

- Why it flops: Low footfall, poor lighting, and ongoing roadworks.

- Driver comments:

"You'll age 5 years waiting there."

"Only reason to go is if every other rank is packed."

## CORK

Best: Patrick Street (Outside Debenhams/M&S)

- Why it works: City centre location, close to nightlife and shopping areas.

- Driver comments:

"Money moves here on Friday and Saturday nights."

"Well policed. Usually a decent queue of passengers."

Worst: Kent Station (at certain hours)

- Why it flops: Feast or famine. Big rush after trains, then silence.

- Driver comments:

"If you miss the train crowd, you're stuck."

"Great between 5-7pm, terrible after that."

## GALWAY

Best: Eyre Square (North Side Rank)

- Why it works: Heart of the city, close to shops, hotels, and nightlife.

- Driver comments:

"Top earner, especially during races or weekends."

"Tourists and locals alike flock to this one."

Worst: Spanish Arch Area

- Why it flops: Too narrow, not much foot traffic, confusing access.

- Driver comments:

"Looks good on a map, but you'll sit there twiddling your thumbs."

"Tourists walk past, but rarely flag."

## LIMERICK

Best: William Street Rank

- Why it works: Close to shops, late-night eateries, and pub scene.

- Driver comments:

"Solid, reliable — especially at night."

"No messing around, people hop in and go."

Worst: Colbert Station (late evenings)

- Why it flops: Only busy during train arrivals, dead the rest of the time.

- Driver comments:

"It's clockwork — great at 6pm, ghost town by 7."

"You're banking on the timetable — not much else."

## Driver Tips: Picking the Right Rank

We asked seasoned drivers what they look for when choosing a rank. Here's what they said:

Tip

## Why It Matters

Watch the flow, not just the location

Some fancy ranks don't deliver

Time it right

A quiet rank at 11am could be booming at 1am

Know the events calendar

Concerts, rugby matches, and race days change everything

Keep a backup plan

If your go-to is packed or dead, pivot fast

Listen to other drivers

Word of mouth is often the best intel

## Have Your Say

Do you agree with this list? Got a hidden gem rank in your city or a spot you swear you'll never return to?

Send your reviews, rants, or photos to [brightnonan83@gmail.com](mailto:brightnonan83@gmail.com), and you might feature in our next issue.

## Final Word

In this business, location is everything — but timing, instinct, and experience matter just as much. The best rank for one driver might be a dud for another, depending on the hour, the season, or even the weather.

So, trust your gut, keep your ear to the ground, and remember: the best fare could be just around the corner — or at the next rank.





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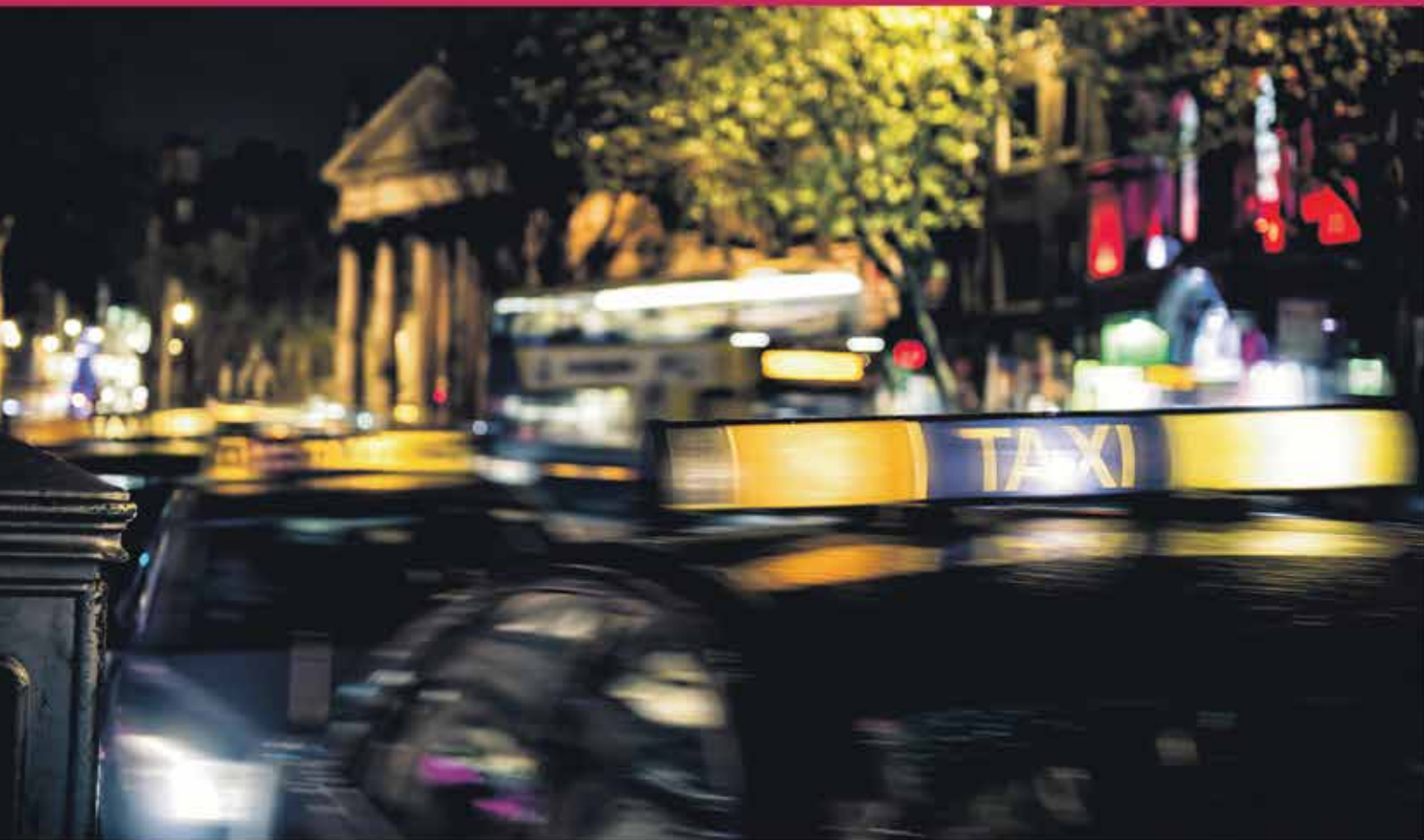
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