

Taxi Knowledge Test Consultation Response From:

Aberdeen Taxis

ComCab Aberdeen

Rainbow City Taxis

Firstly, thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee this morning.

As a consultation exercise, we feel that it has been conclusive, in some of its findings.

We in the trade understand our numbers have decreased substantially during Covid. We also realise that we need to deal with the shortage. We should also remember that we are not the only industry struggling to recruit, bus companies, haulage companies, airport operators, hospitality, the list goes on. However, what we do not want is a reduction in the standards that we, this Committee & Trade, have worked hard over the past 40 years to achieve. Aberdeen has one of the most knowledgeable taxi trades in the country, we do not want that to be eroded.

Do you agree that there should be an amended test for PH drivers ?

This one was very close, but it is important to recognise that the conclusion is that there should be no amended test for PH drivers. This is a view that 99% of the trade share. It is our view that all drivers trusted to convey members of the public should be trained to the same level.

We accept that it is a different licence, but in Aberdeen they do exactly the same job. Currently all three of Aberdeen's largest Taxi Companies, Aberdeen Taxis, ComCab Aberdeen & Rainbow City Taxis, operate using both Taxis & PH vehicles which are driven by Taxi Drivers, to do same job, it is in no one's interest especially the public to have a two tier system, when they are doing the same job.

Do you agree with the Abolition of the test for PH Drivers ?

Outcome of this question is quite clear, this, in our view is the correct answer. I would ask that the Committee dismiss this option.

Do you agree that the resit procedures should be amended ?

This gave the most conclusive answer.

This is something we (Aberdeen Taxis, ComCab Aberdeen & Rainbow City Taxis) have been asking for, for over 3 years. For some reason it seems to come to Committee, then be kicked back to T&PHCG numerous times. But it is on record that this is something we have been asking for.

At present as stated each applicant must pass all 4 modules to pass, if they fail, only on one module, they must sit all 4 again at any resit. We feel this format not only dissuades applicants from attempting, but also from resitting the Test.

It is our opinion that even though it was our proposal that you have before you, we think it requires a slight tweak

Proposal

We suggest that each of the 4 modules are treated as individual, if an applicant passes one module at their first visit, they should be allowed to keep " bank " that pass for 6 months. Simply this means once an applicant has passed one module, they then have 6 months to pass all 4 modules, if each test has a cost, then applicant will need to meet this cost. If after 6 months applicant has not passed, then they need to start from scratch. This will not erode the test, each applicant will have to put in the same effort, just without the pressure of too pass all modules, or have to start again.....

We feel that this will encourage more applicants and in time will have a positive impact on the number of drivers in the city. We would estimate that within 6 months, this could result in another 25 + drivers, but with no eradication, to our very high standards. Each successful applicant will still have to pass all modules, just not all at once. This still means that each driver will have passed the same test as every other driver.

We are also of the opinion that the 75% pass rate needs to be reviewed. This is something that we will intend to take back to the T&PHCG.

Do you think a driver training qualification should be introduced ?

We would agree with the consultation findings, something we maybe should look at, but in the future, let the trade get back on its feet first.

As said at the start, we do realise that there are, at times a shortage of Taxis, to service night-time revellers, but no amount of PH vehicles will alleviate this issue, they cannot pick up from ranks or street. We are the only trade that is tackling this issue, there is no other help at peak-times, no busses, access issue to the busiest Night-time Rank (St Nicholas Church) only recently had Taxi Marshals reinstated.

Great news earlier this week that the Marshals hours have been adjusted to coincide with the Ranks at peak times. We have also been assured that the next step of the CCMP, will see Taxis & PH vehicles gain access to Union Street at Market Street & Bridge Street.

Just for your information, all three of our Companies are running Taxi Driver Training Schools, there are currently around 50 students attending, so we are attempting to do our bit.

We would urge the Committee to adopt our resit proposal, also to remember that those of us who are still in the trade, have been through 2 of the worst years ever, or at least that anyone can remember. We would ask that the Committee work with us & support us, to not only maintain our standards, but to help us enhance them.

Thank You.