

Deputation for Regulatory Committee on the 02/11/2020

Regarding Coronavirus (COVID-19) Contingency Measures : Update Report.

We would like to highlight how disappointed we are regarding the lack of communication we have had from our licensing committee and officers over the last few months, we have had not one reply, this is highly unprofessional and unacceptable. as our members have serious concerns that need answered and as our licensing authority this shows apathy in your licensed taxi trade.

Shortfall

We understand there would be a period in between March to June 2020 where licensing wasn't receiving licensing fees due to the TEC being closed, but the fees were only deferred not stopped and now the TEC has reopened all fees are being paid.

We believe there will be a shortfall in fees and this be coming from the amount of drivers not renewing their taxi badges due to the considerable drop in work and we ask you for a breakdown of these losses.

With your Age and Emissions policy that is forcing drivers to buy extortionate priced vehicles and with finance companies being cautious in lending in these time's especially to taxi operators, this could affect our numbers.

Taxi operators are fully aware that their original test date will stand, so can committee explain what will work will be carried out at the TEC between March and June 2021?

TEC

In the reserve sits £1.1 million, that has been cited on several occasions that it would be used for a new TEC, we are happy to see that you are reassessing this antiquated way of working.

We at Edinburgh Cab Branch want a new modern, simpler, cheaper method of testing that is align with the 21st Century, as clearly having £1.1 million sitting in reserve proves that Edinburgh licensing is overcharging for the service it provides.

A Mot at a DVSA certified garage and then a compliance station with a comprehensive and detailed compliance list should be adequate to carry out the testing of taxis.

Edinburgh Cab Branch feel to increase first time passes, a compliance checklist be made available to all garages and taxi operators, as at present no compliance checklist is available and each examiner works to their own standard, so a pass or fail can be determined by that examiners mood, there is a lack of confidence in how the TEC has and is operating on that basis.

Training

It is going to take the trade years to recover from this pandemic and we are going to see our numbers reduced dramatically, we ask that all existing drivers who have already carried out Council modules be exempt from the city and guilds training for 3 years to relieve the financial pressure on us.

As there has been no communication from licensing regarding an email we sent on 23/10/2020 regarding the rise in Airport fees, we would like it noted to committee that we explained to you on the 09/03/2020 at a Regulatory meeting regarding the taxi tariff that this would happen and why the trade wanted the wording on the tariff sheet to reflect that all charges incurred be recoverable, which is embarrassing for all taxi drivers to be asking our passengers to pay these extortionate and over inflated fees, but this was rejected and

here we are again, out of pocket. When will this vicious circle end and you listen to us? Frankly it's disappointing and tiring.

We would like committee to explain to us what the several temporary mitigating measures that they introduced to support us are? As we had to ask you to defer payments and only after pressure in the press, did this happen!

Thank you for reading our deputation today and we hope you get the feeling of despondency we are experiencing at this present time, our members mental well being is of a great concern for us, the worry due to lack of work, no financial assistance and mounting debts, is weighing heavily on all minds, we are the forgotten industry.

Jacqueline Dunn
Edinburgh Cab Branch Secretary