

DEL TRAVEL POLICY: TAXI REVIEW 2005/06 & 2006/07

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In June 2006 Personnel (Services) Branch issued revised guidelines to staff regarding the Department's policy on the use of taxis for official travel. As travel by taxi is expensive and contrary to the Departmental Green Policy, divisions and staff have been asked to consider, where possible, alternative options including the use of public transport. Under the revised guidelines, the Head of Branch is required to approve the taxi request form and ensure compliance with the Department's Taxi and Green Policies. The system appears to be working well with the number of taxis booked remaining relatively low (425 in 2005/06 and 288 in 2006/07).

2. EXPENDITURE

2.1 Personnel (Services) Branch has monitored bookings to ensure compliance with Departmental policy, maximum value for money and best utilisation of service. The table below shows a comparison, by division, of usage and costs for the period 2005/2006 and 2006/2007. There has been a 68% reduction in the total number of taxi bookings since the introduction of the revised policy.

Table 1 – Total number of taxis booked, by division, for 2005/2006 and 2006/2007

Division	2005/2006			2006/2007		
	Number of taxis booked	Total spend on taxis	Average Cost per taxi	Number of taxis booked	Total spend on taxis	Average Cost per taxi
Office of Permanent Sec	9	£94.20	£10.47	8	£47.90	£5.99
Finance & European Division	11	£165.70	£15.06	0	£0	£0
Preparation for Work	59	£406.70	£6.89	18	£116.50	£6.47
Corporate Services	242	£1909.20	£7.89	171	£1554.42	£9.09
Further Education	14	£163.10	£11.65	17	£325.40	£19.01
Skills and Industry	36	£386.40	£10.73	21	£192.80	£9.18
Higher Education	54	£860.40	£15.93	30	£678.80	£22.63
Strategy and Employment Rights	-	-	-	23	£410.70	£17.86
Total	425	£3985.70	Average taxi fare £9.38	288	£3326.52	Average taxi fare £11.55

3. DESTINATIONS

3.1 The following tables illustrate that there has been a frequent number of taxis (69% 2005/06 and 59% 2006/07) booked for travel within the City Centre/Greater Belfast area. These areas can be easily accessed by public transport.

3.2 In Corporate Services Division, it should be noted that the majority of taxis (55% in 2005/06 and 70% in 2006/07) were booked for the Support Grade Staff, who were required to work unsociable hours to open and close buildings when no alternative public transport was available.

Table 2 – Summary of taxis by destination 2005/2006

Division	To/From City Airport	To/From International Airport	Within Belfast City Centre*	Greater Belfast area	Other
Office of Permanent Sec	2	0	1	4	2
Finance & European Division	2	0	0	3	6
Preparation for Work	0	0	9	46	4
Corporate Services	16	4	55	144	23
Further Education	4	1	3	2	4
Skills and Industry	10	2	13	9	2
Higher Education	30	12	0	6	6
Total	64	19	81	214	47

*Approximately a 3 mile radius from Belfast City Hall

Table 3- Summary of taxis by destination 2006/2007

Division	To/From City Airport	To/From International Airport	Within Belfast City Centre*	Greater Belfast area	Other
Office of Permanent Sec	1	0	0	7	0
Finance & European Division	0	0	0	0	0
Preparation for Work	0	0	0	18	0
Corporate Services	16	1	12	108	34
Further Education	3	1	3	2	8
Skills and Industry	5	2	2	10	2
Higher Education	6	24	0	0	0
Strategy and Employment Rights	3	5	0	7	8
Total	34	33	17	152	52

*Approximately a 3 mile radius from Belfast City Hall

4. PURPOSE OF JOURNEY

- 4.1 When considering approval of taxi requests Heads of Branches are asked to ensure that taxis are only booked in exceptional circumstances. In 2006/07, 40% (30% in 2005/06) of the taxis booked for staff were required for travel during unsociable hours when public transport is not available.

5. ESSENTIAL CAR USERS

- 5.1 Essential car users who have access to car parking facilities should only require taxis in exceptional circumstances. During both periods reviewed it has been noted that several essential car users have made use of taxi facilities. Heads of Divisions and Heads of Branches are asked to ensure that all requests for taxis are in accordance with Departmental Policy and can be justified as appropriate use of public funds.

6. SUMMARY

- 6.1 Personnel (Services) Branch will continue to monitor and review the use of Departmental taxis, in particular the reasons for ordering the taxi and those being used by staff who have access to car parking facilities. Personnel (Services) Branch will advise Heads of Divisions if there is a significant/unexplained change in the usage of taxis within their area of business. Taxis should only be requested by using the appropriate taxi request form which can be accessed [here](#) and is also available on the DEL intranet.

Taxis fares may be reimbursed **only** in the following circumstances:

- For journeys where there is no other suitable method of transport, including public transport, and during unsociable hours
- When heavy luggage or equipment has to be transported to or from the place of departure or arrival;
- where the saving of official time is important

- 6.2 It is, however, satisfying to note that there has been a reduction in the number of taxis booked. Heads of Divisions and Heads of Branches are requested to continue to ensure that branches comply with departmental policy. All bookings should be made through Personnel (Services) Branch.

7. 2007/08 REVIEW

- 7.1 In order to provide an overall view of staff travel within DEL, please note that next year's taxi review will be incorporated into the 2007/08 Staff Travel Review.

8. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/QUERIES

- 8.1 Any queries regarding this review should be addressed to Leanne Thompson 90 2(57863) or Alison Adams 90 2(57819), Personnel (Services) Branch.