

LATEST TAXI STATISTICS

The latest statistics released by the Department for Transport detail the number of taxis and private hire vehicles at the end of March 2007. In England, there were 67,032 licensed taxis which is a rise of about 5% since the last survey carried out by the Department for Transport. In London, there were 21,596 licensed taxis and 24,593 taxi drivers licensed at the end of March 2007. 2,145 Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) operator licences have now been granted in London. The PCO began licensing of PHV drivers in April 2003 followed by the PHV vehicles in April 2004. By Spring 2007, there were around 44,363 of them registered with the PCO.

In the whole of the UK, the statistics show



there are over 30,000 taxis which are purpose In the South East Region, outside London, there were nearly 9,000 taxis and just over 12,000 PHVs. There were many more driver licences than vehicles, at just under 30,000 total driver licences issued. Drivers often work in shifts and nearly 8,000 drivers were dual licensed to drive a taxi and a PHV in the region. The North West Region had a fleet of over 7,000 taxis and over 18,000 PHVs. There were over 36,000 drivers licensed to drive these in the region. In Wales, nearly 4,000 taxis and a further 3,306 PHVs were licensed. Dual licensing of drivers was carried out by most of the Welsh local authorities, which had licensed nearly 7,000 drivers.

NEW PRESIDENT FOR LONDON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

The London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) have confirmed the appointment of Stephen Greene as its President. A non-executive director of Radio Taxis Group, Stephen's appointment reiterates the strong links that exist between the LCCI and the ground transport provider

Stephen's two-year term as President will be his third position on the LCCI Board, having previously served as Chamber Treasurer in 2000 and as Deputy President from June 2005. As well as his role at Radio Taxis, Stephen is also Executive Chairman of property investment company Rankvale and a non-Executive Director of United House Group.

Commenting on the news he said: "I am delighted to be able to accept this important position. The London Chamber of Commerce and Industry is the voice of business in

the capital representing the interests of over 3,000 members. I greatly look forward to the challenge of building on its history and cementing its position as the UK's leading support organisation for businesses of all kinds."

Geoffrey Riesel, Chairman of Radio Taxis Group, is also a member of the Board at LCCI. He said: "Radio Taxis Group plays an integral part of London life and we are extremely proud of that role. Stephen's appointment demonstrates yet again the importance with which we hold this position and our commitment to helping business in the capital develop."



DOES THIS SOUND FAMILIAR DO YOU RECOGNISE THIS MAN?

Earlier this year, some taxi drivers in London were amongst taxi drivers across the country that lost money when they took out contracts with Cabtivate, run by entrepreneur Mark Greenhalgh. He had tried to persuade the panel in The Dragon's Den that the in taxi TV screen playing ads and information to passengers was a worthy project, but the Dragons had insisted it would not be a success and it seems they were right.

Last week a press release was received by the editors of London's taxi trade press, telling them all about a new product being "pioneered" by private hire drivers in Edinburgh. The release said: "Fifty private hire cars serving Edinburgh Airport are currently being fitted with the pioneering Tapinto system, which provides visitors access to a wide range of information on the city. It works by fitting private hire cars with a special headrest containing an 8-inch touch screen provide news, weather and sports updates, advertising opportunities and public information for residents and visitors to the city." Sound familiar?

Mark Greenhalgh was quoted as saying: "Everyone who has seen the system so far has been extremely impressed – particularly by the directory. It is really quick and easy to use and allows users to search through listings by genre depending on what they are looking for. But the thing that most people have been surprised by is the option to download promotions and special offers onto mobile phones. It is a fantastic way of promoting special offers and events without huge printing or distribution costs."

The thing that is most surprising is the fact the pr agency in Scotland think that London's taxi trade will have forgotten his promises. Mark Greenhalgh also said: "It is an excellent business opportunity for drivers involved in the taxis and

private hire trade as this system is not available anywhere else in the world." He blames the problems at Cabtivate on "a series of banking errors which forced the company into administration." Cabtivate Media has now been bought out of liquidation by an investor who sees it as a successful enterprise.

The good news is that unlike Cabtivate, the Tapinto system is not leased or sold to the drivers involved. The system is instead paid for by Tapinto and represents no financial risk to the driver whatsoever. Among those who lost substantial amount on Cabtivate were two Dial-a-Cab drivers, Mark Lane and Jimmy Parlour. Call Sign, DAC's in house magazine had published Mr Greenhalgh's original press release after his Cabtivate system had been passed by the PCO last year. Editor Alan Fisher said: "As the Penton Street organisation would never take any responsibility just because they had passed something, this magazine paid for our two drivers to have several meetings with a solicitor. The result was a much-reduced amount owed to the poor finance company that innocently lent drivers the finance needed and were then left to clear up Mr Greenhalgh's apparent mismanagement."

DaC's Mark Lane said: "I can't believe that Mr Greenhalgh is pushing an identical system onto the market when his previous system failed so badly leaving me and many others out of pocket by amounts we could not afford to lose. Had he made an attempt to repay us, perhaps it wouldn't have been so bad, but Cabtivate went on selling their system even after they knew the company had failed. Anyone taking his new screen on needs their head testing."

