

Minister Ryan - LEAP Card

Dear Minister Ryan

The CSNA (Convenience Stores and Newsagents Association) represents retailers that sell, among a range of other products, LEAP cards.

Prior to the introduction of LEAP cards, our members were Dublin Bus ticket Agents, and we facilitated a seamless transition with Dublin Bus for the appointment of all Agents into the Payzone network, including the repatriation of deposits and crediting unsold physical cards.

We had engaged at length with both the NTA and Payzone to ensure that LEAP cards were made available to commuting customers in a wide variety of convenient locations throughout the City and County of Dublin, and further afield in places that were not Agents of Dublin Bus but were willing to offer LEAP products within their community.

We facilitated marketing exercises at our members stores in ports and airports to promote inbound-tourist sales. When LEAP moved to other urban locations we encouraged Cork, Limerick and Galway CSNA members to offer the product.

In short, members of CSNA assisted in developing the LEAP brand throughout its embryonic and formulative stages and in subsequent years; it is useful to remind you that our members were open throughout the entire lockdown periods of Covid-19.

We are troubled to learn that the contract to sell the physical LEAP cards is moving from Payzone to Postpoint/An Post as there are no assurances given by the new operators that they will continue to provide a supply to those outlets that have, as outlined, played a significant part in helping commuters and transport users throughout the country for many decades.

Minister Ryan has been quoted in a Press Release issued by An Post Communications entitled "LEAP cards to be made available in 2,500 Outlets thanks to NTA/An Post link-up". The Minister is quoted as having said "in the Programme for Government we outlined our belief that An Post has untapped potential to do more and make a further significant contribution across many areas of public, business and community life in Ireland"

"This contract is a great example of how An Post can emerge as a central hub for a wide variety of valuable public services. I believe that this initiative will not only make it easier for people to avail of sustainable transport options in all parts of the country but will further cement the position of the post office at the heart of communities across Ireland".

The press release has suggested that the card will be available in 920 Post Offices and 1,600 Post Point convenience stores nationwide, there is NO mention of existing retailers being retained.

Aside from the questionable wisdom of expending very significant additional money in both hardware and software in placing LEAP in 2,500 outlets, it is not unreasonable to remind your Department that the NTA **frequently** rejected requests from Payzone to allow the placing of a LEAP machine and its associated readers in retail outlets around the city and country, citing as an explanation that the area was sufficiently serviced and no further expenditure could be justified.

Our primary concern is trying to ensure that ALL existing LEAP retail agents will be able to continue to sell the products to their established customer base. It is not, in itself particularly profitable, it

never was, but it is acknowledged to be a “footfall generator”. Our members are concerned that they will not be allowed to sell LEAP cards through the new distributors, PostPoint (a 100% An Post entity) unless they agree to sell other services and products currently available on the PostPoint network. They are further concerned that the PostPoint offer will incur additional trading, administrative, logistical and banking costs.

CSNA urges the Minister to seek clarity from both the NTA and An Post on their intentions towards existing retailers that sell LEAP cards, many of whom have given sterling service to the brand and deserve to be treated respectfully.

Kind regards
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