

**DRIVER AND VEHICLE TESTING AGENCY (DVTA)
CUSTOMER SURVEY 2005**

RES

Research & Evaluation Services

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings from the Driver Vehicle Testing Agency's 2005 Customer Survey. A total of 1600 customers were surveyed comprising of 800 customers who had sat driving tests, and 800 customers who had presented a vehicle for testing. The survey achieved an overall response rate of 30%, with 31% of driver customers responding to the survey compared with 28% of vehicle customers. The survey sought customer opinion on the quality of service provided by the Agency, and addressed issues such as booking arrangements, test procedures, complaints and suggestions for improvement. The survey was conducted independently by Research and Evaluation Services.

Satisfaction With Booking Arrangements

The level of customer satisfaction with booking arrangements was recorded at 84% overall, which represents an increase of three percentage points on the figure of 81% recorded in 2004. Satisfaction with booking arrangements for vehicle tests was 94%, compared with 74% for driver tests.

Satisfaction With Test Procedures

Overall satisfaction with test procedures was recorded at 87%, which is one percentage point higher than the figure of 86% recorded in 2004. Satisfaction with test procedures for vehicles was 91%, with the level of satisfaction for driver test procedures recorded at 84%.

Satisfaction With Counter Service

Overall 92% of vehicle customers were satisfied with the Agency's counter service, with 89% of driver respondents satisfied.

Satisfaction With Reception Areas And Test Centres

Customer gave very positive ratings when asked about the Agency's reception areas and test centres, with 94% of vehicle and driver customers satisfied with this aspect of service.

Test Examiners

More than nine out of ten (91%) vehicle customers said that they were satisfied with the examiners who tested their vehicle, with three out of four (75%) driver customers satisfied with driving examiners.

Driver Theory Test

The survey also sought customer opinion on the driving theory test, and found that 95% of customers were satisfied with driving theory test centres. Satisfaction with driving theory test procedures was recorded at 94%, with 96% of customers satisfied with their overall experience of the driving theory test.

Complaints

In relation to complaints, the survey found that just 1% of vehicle customers and 3% of driver customers had made a complaint to the Agency about an aspect of service. Of the vehicle customers who had made a complaint, all were satisfied with how the Agency handled their complaint. Of the six driver customers who made a complaint, all but one were satisfied with how the Agency handled their complaint.

Information Provision

The vast majority of vehicle (81%) and driver (80%) customers reported to be satisfied with the amount of information that the Agency had provided them with before and after their test.

Service Provided By the Agency Compared With Other Public Services

On a very positive note, 93% of vehicle customers felt that the performance of the Agency was the same (42%) or better (51%) compared with other public services, with 90% of driver customers also sharing this view (49% same and 41% better).

Internet

Finally, the survey revealed that the majority (51%) of driver customers would have considered using the internet to book their test, with just over one in three (34%) vehicle customers saying that that they would have considered internet booking.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Driver and Vehicle Testing Agency was established in 1992 under the Government's Next Steps Initiative in order to undertake all statutory vehicle and driving tests in Northern Ireland. The Agency has 15 main test centres, two satellite driving test centres and six theory test centres throughout Northern Ireland.

The Agency conducts annual surveys aimed at measuring performance against key targets with regard to booking arrangements and the conduct of tests and also at assessing customer requirements in the operation of services. In 2001 and 2004, large-scale surveys were conducted with sample sizes of around 6,000. In 2000, 2002, 2003 and 2005, smaller surveys of around 1,600 were carried out.

This report presents the findings from the 2005 survey, which was conducted by Research and Evaluation Services (RES). The overall objective of the study was defined by the Driver and Vehicle Testing Agency as:

'To ascertain customer satisfaction levels, in particular in the areas of test booking and overall Agency test procedures'.

1.1 METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted among a sample of 1600 DVTA customers, with 800 vehicle and 800 driver customers surveyed. The sample was drawn from customers of the Agency in August 2005.

As was the case in previous years, sampled customers were sent a questionnaire along with a pre-paid return envelope. Equal numbers of driver and vehicle customers, who had presented for testing, were selected for interview. Customers from all of the Agency's test centres were included in the survey.

Approximately 53 customers were selected from each of the 15 centres which deal with vehicle tests, with approximately 57 customers selected from each of the 14 centres which deal with driver tests. All questionnaires were dispatched at the same time, with a follow-up reminder / thank you letter sent two weeks later.

1.2 RESPONSE RATES

Of the 1600 customers surveyed, 472 returned their questionnaires, representing an overall response rate of 30%. In total, 226 vehicle test questionnaires were returned, which equates to a response rate of 28%. Overall 246 driver test questionnaires were returned, which equates to a response rate of 31%. The table below shows the percentage breakdown of returns by test centre.

	Vehicle	Driver
	%	%
Armagh	3.3	3.1
Ballymena	7.3	7.5
Belfast	11.2	13.4
Coleraine	7.8	5.4
Cookstown	7.1	6.5
Craigavon	5.9	7.4
Downpatrick	5.2	4.3
Enniskillen	4.4	6.7
Larne	4.2	9.1
Lisburn	6.4	6.1
Londonderry	4.6	6.0
Mallusk	9.5	-
Newry	7.5	7.4
Newtownards	11.2	8.8
Omagh	4.2	8.3
Base (Weighted)	226	246

1.3 STATISTICAL RELIABILITY

Defining a sample size is always a trade-off between the level of precision of sample estimates and cost. The following table presents an overview of the relationship between sample size and margin of error. For example, if the results of a survey of 400 people show that 60% are satisfied with some aspect of service, the range within which the true figure will lie, if the whole population had been interviewed, would be $\pm 5\%$ or somewhere between 55% and 65%.

Acceptable Sampling Error (+/-)	% of population likely to give a particular answer (95% Confidence Level)					
	5 or 95	10 or 90	20 or 80	30 or 70	40 or 60	50 / 50
1	1900	3600	6400	8400	9600	10000
2	479	900	1600	2100	2400	2500
3	211	400	711	933	1066	1100
4	119	225	400	525	600	625
5	76	144	256	336	370	400
6	a	100	178	233	267	277
7	-	73	131	171	192	204
8	-	-	100	131	150	156
9	-	-	79	104	117	123
10	-	-	-	84	96	100

(a) samples smaller than this would normally be too small to allow meaningful analysis

1.4 QUESTIONNAIRES

The questionnaires used in the survey are attached as an appendix to this report. In consultation with DVTA, there were some amendments to the questionnaires to reflect the changing needs of the Agency. However, the questions included are broadly consistent with those included in previous years, and address operational areas such as booking arrangements, test procedures, general experience of the test, complaints, and suggestions for improvements. As with the 2004 survey, questions on equality grouping were also included to meet the Agency's commitments under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998).

1.5 WEIGHTING PROCEDURE

The data were weighted according to the proportion of tests carried out in each centre. The total number of driving and vehicle tests conducted in the sampling period was calculated. The proportion each centre contributed to the total was then calculated to identify the appropriate weighting for each centre. The applied weights are presented in the following table.

Table 1.3 Weights Applied Based On Number Of Tests Taken At Each Centre In August 2005

	Vehicle	Driver
	%	%
Armagh	0.50	0.44
Ballymena	1.10	1.06
Belfast	1.67	1.88
Coleraine	1.17	0.75
Cookstown	1.07	0.91
Craigavon	0.88	1.04
Downpatrick	0.78	0.60
Enniskillen	0.66	0.94
Larne	0.64	1.27
Lisburn	0.96	0.86
Londonderry	0.69	0.84
Mallusk	1.44	-
Newry	1.13	1.03
Newtownards	1.68	1.23
Omagh	0.62	1.16

1.6 PROFILE OF SAMPLE

Table 1.4 presents an overview of the sample in terms of different equality groupings. In the vehicle sample, almost two out of three (65%) customers were male, with customers predominantly from the older age groups (aged 50+, 50%) and being married (70%). Just 3% of vehicle customers reported a disability, with 36% indicating that they have dependants.

		Vehicle (N=226) %	Driver (N=246) %
Sex	Male	65	45
	Female	35	55
Age	17-19	-	63
	20-24	1	7
	25-29	2	10
	30-39	24	9
	40-49	22	5
	50-59	26	6
	60+	24	-
Marital Status	Single	14	75
	Married	70	16
	Co-habiting	3	4
	Widowed	7	-
	Divorced	4	3
	Separated	3	2
Disability	Yes	3	3
	No	97	97
Dependants	Yes	36	20
	No	64	80
Religion	Protestant	55	48
	Roman Catholic	34	43
	Baha'i	-	-
	Buddhist	1	-
	Chinese	-	-
	Hindu	-	2
	Muslim	-	1
	Jewish	-	-
	Sikh	-	-
	No Religion	7	5
Other religion	2	2	
Political Affiliation	Nationalist	24	25
	Unionist	46	28
	Other	1	2
	Of NO political persuasion	30	46
Ethnicity	White	98	98
	Irish travelling community	1	-
	Indian	-	1
	Black Caribbean	-	-
	Black African	-	-
	Pakistani	-	-
	Chinese	-	-
	Bangladeshi	-	-
	Mixed Origin	1	-
	Asian	1	-
Nepalese	-	1	
English first language?	Yes	100	98
	No	-	2

The majority of vehicle customers described their religion as ‘Protestant’, with 34% ‘Catholic’. Just under half (46%) were Unionist, with 26% describing their political affiliation as Nationalist. Regarding ethnic background, 98% of the vehicle sample were white, with all saying that English was their first language.

With regard to the driver customers, the sample profile shows a more even mix of men (45%) and women (55%), although most (63%) are from the youngest age group of 17-19 year olds. The younger age profile also accounts for the high proportion of driver customers who are single (75%), as well as the low proportion who have dependants (20%).

1.7 PASS / FAIL

On the last occasion that respondents took a practical or theory test, 79% passed with 21% failing the test. For the vehicle sample, 85% had passed their test, while 15% had failed.

1.8 NOTES ON TABLES

Due to rounding, row and column totals within tables may not always sum to 100. Note that base totals may also change in tables. It should be noted that dash marks [-] are used in some tables to indicate that the figure is less than 1%.

2 RESULTS (VEHICLE)

2.1 VEHICLE TEST BOOKING PROCEDURES

In most cases (89%) vehicle respondents reported that their latest test was for a car, with 3% presenting motorcycles, light goods vehicles and heavy vehicles for testing.

	%
Car	89
Motorcycle	3
Light goods vehicle	3
Heavy goods vehicle	3
Trailer	-
Minibus, taxi or large passenger-carrying vehicle	2
Motor home	1

In the overwhelming majority of cases (92%), vehicle respondents had booked the test themselves, with 8% reporting that someone else had booked their test.

	%
Yes	92
No	8

In nearly half of all cases (49%) vehicle tests had been booked at a DVTA vehicle testing centre, with 42% booking their test by telephone, and 8% by post.

	%
At a centre	49
By telephone	42
By post	8

In 84% of cases, respondents reported that their test appointment letter had arrived within 10 days of making their booking.

	%
Yes	84
No	6
Don't know	10

¹ Due to rounding column total does not sum to 100

2.2 VIEWS ON VEHICLE TEST APPOINTMENTS AND WAITING TIMES

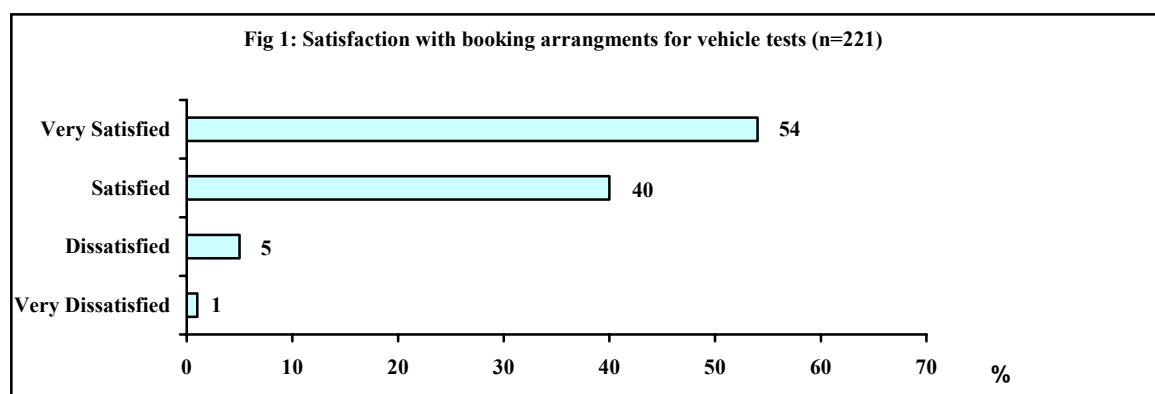
Customers were asked to comment on various aspects of test appointments and waiting times. In 90% of cases, vehicle customers accepted the first appointment they received, with 86% happy with the date. Almost three out of four customers (74%) were satisfied with a waiting time target of 21 days, with more than half (60%) applying early to take account of the maximum waiting times. Finally, just 29% of customers were aware of what the maximum waiting times were before they booked their vehicle test.

Table 2.5 Views on vehicle test appointment and waiting times

	Yes	No	Not Sure	Base
	%	%	%	
Did you accept the first appointment you received?	90	10	-	214
Were you happy with the appointment date that you received?	86	14	-	214
Do you feel that a waiting time target of 21 days is about right?	74	16	-	216
Did you apply early to take account of the maximum waiting times?	60	33	7	215
Know what the maximum waiting times were before you booked?	29	59	11	219

2.3 SATISFACTION WITH BOOKING ARRANGEMENTS

Overall 94% of customers were satisfied with the booking arrangements for their vehicle test, with 6% dissatisfied.



Among the six percent (13 customers) who were dissatisfied with the booking arrangements, 71% (9 customers) said that the date of the appointment was too late, with 42% (five customers) saying that the appointment took no account of their preferred time.

Table 2.6 Why were you dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the booking arrangements? (Base: 13)

	%
Date of appointment too late	71
Appointment took no account of preferred time	42
Date of appointment too early	6

2.4 USE OF INTERNET

Six out of ten vehicle customers said that they had access to or use of the internet, with 34% saying that they would use the internet to book a test.

Table 2.7 Have access to our use of the internet?				
	Yes	No	Don't Know	Base
	%	%	%	
Do you have access to or use of the Internet?	60	39	1	223
Would you use the Internet to book your Test?	34	59	6	219

2.5 TELEPHONE CONTACT WITH THE AGENCY

Just under half (48%) of vehicle customers had contacted the Agency by telephone, with most (52%) using other methods.

Table 2.8 Did you contact the Agency by telephone regarding your vehicle test? (Base: 223)	
	%
Yes	48
No	52

Among those customers who had made telephone contact with the Agency, half (50%) had called the Agency's call centre, with 39% telephoning a local vehicle test centre.

Table 2.9 Where did you phone? (Base: 102)	
	%
Call centre (0845 247 247 10)	50
Test centre (Local Office)	39
DVTA Headquarters (028 90 681 831)	6
DVTA Enquiry Line (0845 601 4094)	5

On the last occasion that customers had telephoned the Agency, 9% said the telephone was answered immediately, with 50% saying that it was answered within 30 seconds.

Table 2.10 On the last occasion that you telephoned, how long did you have to wait before the telephone was answered? Was the telephone answered? (Base: 119)	
	%
Immediately	9
Within 30 seconds	50
After more than 30 seconds but less than 1 minute	14
After more than 1 minute but in less than 2 minutes	12
After more than 2 minutes	5
The telephone was not answered at all	1
Don't know / Can't remember	10

According to the majority (54%) of customers who telephoned the Agency, the person who handled their query identified themselves, with 87% saying that they were put through to the right person first time.

	Yes	No	Base
	%	%	
Did the person who handled your query identify him/herself to you?	54	16	92
Were you put through to the right person first time?	87	3	88

Customers who had spoken to someone by phone were generally very positive, with more than 90% describing Agency staff as polite, helpful, competent and clear.

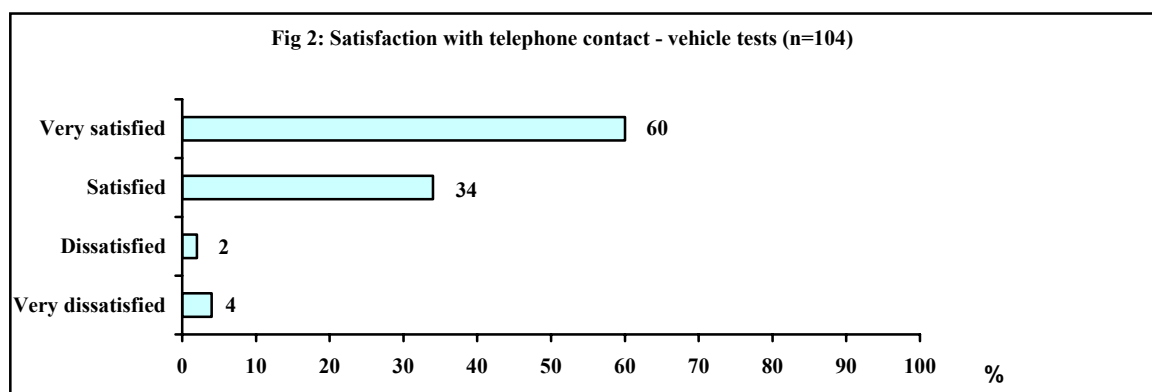
	Yes	No	Cant Remember	Base
	%	%	%	
Polite	91	4	5	91
Helpful	91	7	1	89
Competent	92	6	3	89
Clear	91	6	3	86

In 95% of cases, customers making telephone contact said that their questions were answered satisfactorily, with more than nine out of ten (93%) saying that follow-up action was carried out in cases where it was promised.

	Yes	No	Base
	%	%	
Were the questions you asked answered satisfactorily?	95	5	91
Were you promised any follow up action? (e.g. application form mailed to you)	59	41	91
Was any follow-up action carried out?	93	7	53

2.6 SATISFACTION WITH TELEPHONE CONTACT

Overall 94% of customers who had telephone contact with the Agency were satisfied, with 60% ‘very satisfied’ and 34% ‘satisfied’. The level of dissatisfaction was recorded at 6%, with 2% ‘dissatisfied’ and 4% ‘very dissatisfied’.



The table below lists the reasons why six customers were dissatisfied with their telephone contact.

	%
Staff unhelpful/unfriendly	54 (3)
Unable to get through	53 (3)
Opening hours poor	52 (3)
Information given was inadequate/confusing	47 (3)
Staff unable to offer an appointment	11 (1)

A number of suggestions were made for improving telephone contact with customers, the most common of which were extended opening hours (40%), and the provision of a list of available dates and times for tests (34%).

	%
Extended opening hours	40
Provide list of available dates and times	34
Reduce waiting times to answer calls	16
Better training for staff	10
Other (more mobile phones and auto transfer of calls)	4

2.7 AGENCY'S COUNTER SERVICE

Just over half (52%) of all customers had used the Agency's counter service.

	%
Yes	52
No	48

Among users of the Agency's counter service, the majority (67%) reported that they had been seen either immediately (19%), or within five minutes (48%).

	%
Immediately	19
After more than 1 minute but in less than 5 minutes	48
After more than 5 minutes but in less than 10 minutes	20
After more than 10 minutes but in less than 20 minutes	12
After more than 20 minutes	1
Don't know/can't remember	-

The highest level of daily activity regarding the Agency's counter service was between 9am and 12 noon (59%), with 25% using the service between 2pm and 4pm, and 16% between 12 noon and 2pm.

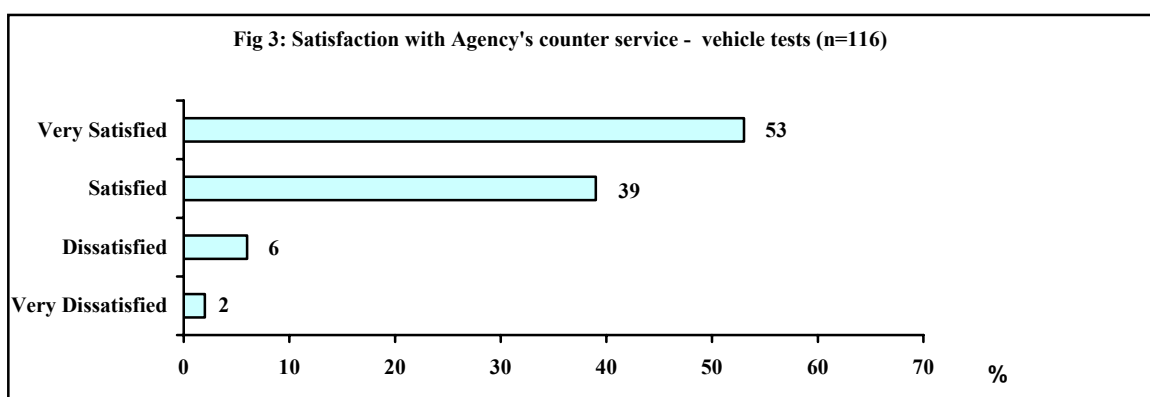
	%
9am-12 noon	59
12 noon-2pm	16
2pm-4pm	25

Booking a vehicle test (86%), and paying a test fee (60%), were found to be the most common reasons why customers used the Agency’s counter service.

	%
To book a test	86
To pay a test fee	60
To obtain an application form	26
The office is close to home/work	26
For an urgent test appointment	9
To seek advice	8
To sort out a problem face to face	4
Could not get through on the telephone	3
Other	1

2.8 SATISFACTION WITH THE AGENCY’S COUNTER SERVICE

Satisfaction with the Agency’s counter service was recorded at 92%, with 53% ‘very satisfied’ and 39% ‘satisfied’. The level of dissatisfaction was found to be 8%, with 6% ‘dissatisfied’ and 2% ‘very dissatisfied’.



Of the ten customers who listed a reason why they were dissatisfied with the Agency’s counter service, four felt that the service was too slow, with the same number saying that staff were unhelpful or unfriendly, and two of the opinion that staff lacked knowledge on how to deal with their query.

	%
Service too slow	57 (4)
Staff unhelpful/unfriendly	44 (4)
Staff lacked knowledge to deal with query	23 (2)

2.9 AGENCY'S CUSTOMER RECEPTION AREA

Just under half (45%) of vehicle customers had used one of the Agency's customer reception areas.

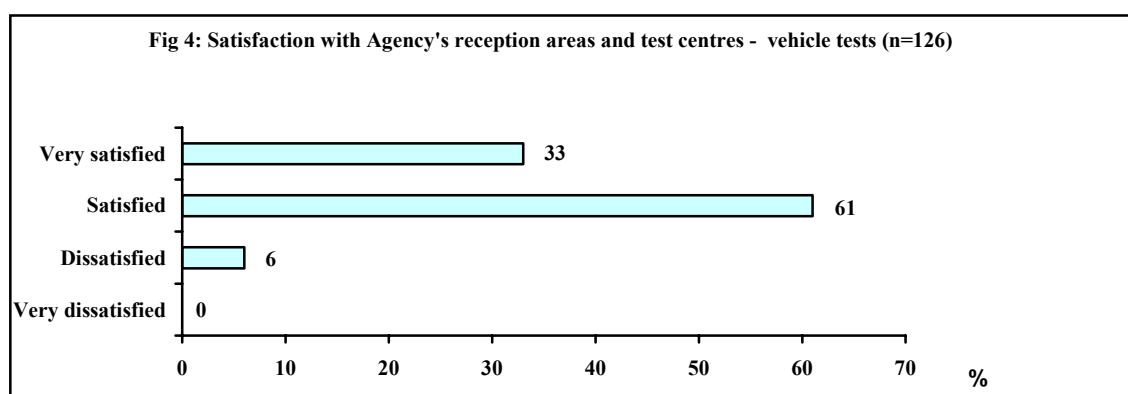
	%
Yes	45
No	55

Commenting on the different aspects of the Agency's reception areas and the test centres, customers gave the highest approval ratings for car parking ('excellent / good', 87%) and cleanliness ('excellent / good', 82%), with the lowest approval ratings for opening hours ('excellent / good', 20%) and lighting ('excellent / good', 24%).

	Excellent / Good	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know	Base
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Car Parking	87	43	44	7	6	-	94
Cleanliness	82	23	59	18	1	-	94
Reception counter	71	13	58	24	5	-	93
Toilets	68	52	16	27	3	2	90
Overall comfort	67	14	53	27	7	-	99
Seating	58	10	48	31	8	2	94
Notice-board / information panel	30	13	17	46	20	4	91
Lighting	24	7	17	63	11	2	96
Opening Hours	20	6	14	47	22	12	97

2.10 SATISFACTION WITH AGENCY'S RECEPTION AREAS AND TEST CENTRES

Satisfaction with the standard of the Agency's reception areas and test centres was recorded at 94%, with 33% 'very satisfied' and 61% 'satisfied'. The level of 'dissatisfaction' was found to be 6%.



Of the six customers who were dissatisfied, four said that the seating was inadequate, with the other two not listing their reason for dissatisfaction.

2.11 AT THE TEST CENTRE

In almost all cases (99%), vehicle customers had found test centres easy to get to.

	%
Yes	99
No	1

On arrival at a vehicle testing centre, the majority (56%) of customers were seen within 5 minutes, with 62% seen within 10 minutes.

	%
Earlier than stated appointment time	14
Immediately	17
After more than 1 minute but in less than 5 minutes	25
After more than 5 minutes but in less than 10 minutes	26
After more than 10 minutes but in less than 20 minutes	11
After more than 20 minutes	3
Don't know/can't remember	4

Having reflected on different aspects of their vehicle test, customers recorded the highest satisfaction ratings for the attitude of the vehicle test examiners (91%), and the explanation they received regarding vehicle test defects (91%). The lowest level of satisfaction related to being kept informed at each stage of the test (81%).

	Combined Satisfaction	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Base
	%	%	%	%	%	
Attitude of vehicle examiners	91	46	45	7	3	218
Explanation of any defects	91	39	52	6	3	192
Explanation of test procedure	87	35	52	11	3	217
Being kept informed at each stage of the test	81	28	53	14	6	202

In approximately three out of ten cases (31%), customers felt that the vehicle examiners' overall approach to the test could have been improved, with the majority (69%) holding the opposite view.

	%
Yes	31
No	69

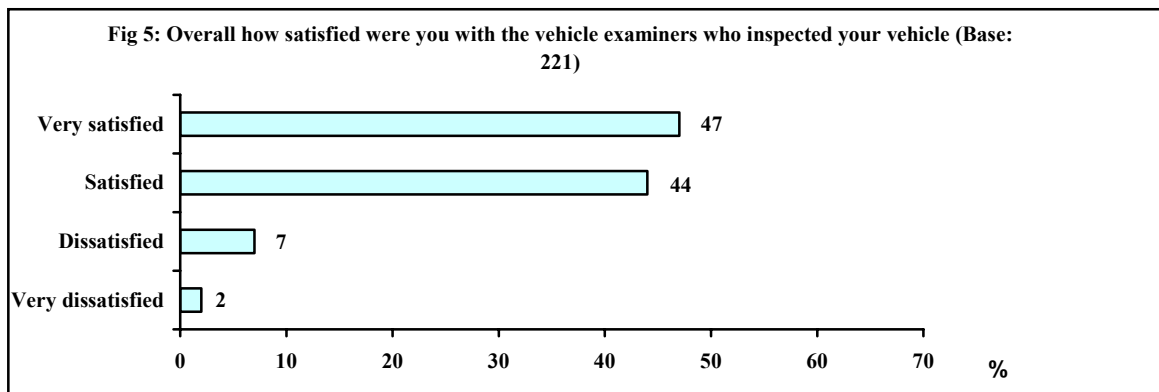
Of those who felt that the attitude of the vehicle examiners could have been improved, 73% felt that they could have been ‘more friendly’, with 65% of the opinion that they could have been ‘more welcoming’.

	Yes	No	Base
	%	%	
Be more friendly	73	27	68
Be more welcoming	65	35	67
Be less formal	59	41	67
Be more encouraging	57	43	67
Give a clearer explanation at the end of the test	56	44	67
Be clearer in his/her instructions	41	59	66
Be more patient	35	65	66
Other	5	95	63

Other areas where customers felt that vehicle examiners could improve included: being more punctual (1); being more professional (1); and, being able to use sign language for the deaf (1).

2.12 SATISFACTION WITH VEHICLE EXAMINERS

Satisfaction with the Agency’s vehicle examiners was recorded at 91%, with 47% ‘very satisfied’ and 44% ‘satisfied’. The level of dissatisfaction was found to be 9%, with 7% ‘dissatisfied’ and 2% ‘very dissatisfied’.



Among the 19 customers who were dissatisfied with the vehicle examiners, just over half (53%) felt that the examiner was rude or unfriendly, with one third (33%) saying that the examiners failed to explain the vehicle defects sufficiently.

	%
Examiner was rude/unfriendly	53
Examiner did not explain faults sufficiently	33
Examiner was impatient	32
Examiner failed me unfairly	27
Other	24

Of the other reasons listed for being dissatisfied with vehicle examiners, one customer felt that they were ‘too formal’, with another saying that they were ‘not professional’, and another of the view that the examiner ‘had hearing problems’.

Of the various suggestions made on how the interaction between the vehicle examiner and the customer can be improved, 37% felt that examiners should give an explanation of each stage of the test, with 36% saying that examiners should be more welcoming and approachable.

	%	Base
Give an explanation of each stage of the test	37	205
Be more welcoming/approachable	36	208
Give clear instructions	26	205
Other	2	196

Of the three customers who made additional suggestions, one noted that ‘women are not inferior’, with two noting that vehicle examiner interaction with customers would improve if they ‘allowed for hearing problems’.

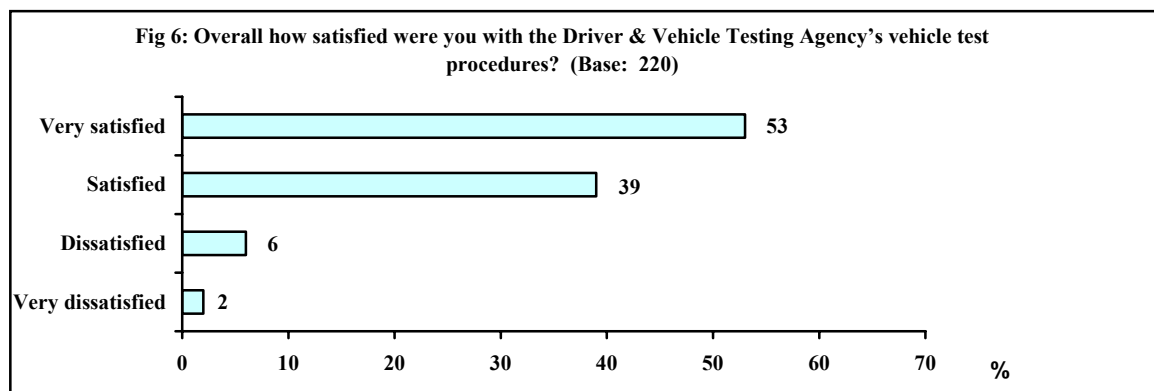
2.13 IMPORTANCE / PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS (VEHICLE CUSTOMERS)

On a scale of 1 to 10, customers were asked to rate how important different aspects of the service provided by DVTA were to them personally (1 = not at all important, 10 = extremely important). The same approach was used in relation to their perception of performance. The table below shows that the explanation of any defects to the vehicle is deemed to be the most important aspect of the service provided, followed by staff being polite, courteous and efficient. However, in terms of performance, customers rated each of these aspects lower. The biggest variations between importance and performance related to the cost of the test (-2.47) and the availability of quick appointment times (-2.03).

	Mean Score (Importance)	Mean Score (Performance)	Difference
Explanation of any defects on the vehicle	9.01	8.01	-1.00
Polite, courteous and efficient staff	8.85	8.02	-0.83
Being seen on time when you present your vehicle for testing	8.60	8.09	-0.51
Availability of quick appointment slots	8.56	6.53	-2.03
Instructions given by vehicle examiners	8.43	7.78	-0.65
Cost of the test	8.22	5.75	-2.47
A range of telephone services (booking or information)	7.40	7.61	0.21
A range of face to face services (counters)	7.08	7.46	0.38

2.14 OVERALL SATISFACTION VEHICLE TEST PROCEDURES

Overall satisfaction with the Agency's vehicle test procedures was recorded at 91%, with 39% 'very satisfied' and 52% 'satisfied'. The level of dissatisfaction was found to be 9%, with 7% 'dissatisfied' and 2% 'very dissatisfied'.



Among the 17 customers who were dissatisfied, poor explanation of defects (64%), and a poor or inconsistent examination, were cited as the most common reasons for dissatisfaction.

Table 2.31 Why were you dissatisfied with the Agency's test procedures? (Base: 17)

	%
Poor explanation of defects	64
Poor examination given/inconsistent examination	54
No explanation of what the test would entail	51
Waiting time for an appointment was too long	49

2.15 FREQUENCY OF VISITS TO TEST CENTRES

In most cases (65%) customers brought vehicles for testing once a year or less often, with 35% bringing vehicles for testing on a more regular basis.

Table 2.32 How often do you bring vehicles for testing? (Base: 223)

	%
Once a year or less often	65
2-5 times a year	31
More than 5 times a year	4

In almost all (98%) cases, the vehicle presented for testing was owned by the respondent.

Table 2.33 Who owned the vehicle you presented for testing? (Base: 221)

	%
It was my vehicle	98
It was somebody else's vehicle	2

2.16 SPECIAL NEEDS

Two percent of vehicle customers indicated that they have special needs. Of the four customers who had special needs, two indicated that their needs were met by the Agency, with two saying that they found the examiner difficult to hear.

Table 2.34 Do you have any special needs (e.g., disability, dependants, language)? (Base: 223)	
	%
Yes	2
No	98

2.17 COMPLAINTS

In 23% of cases, customers said that they would complain orally to the office manager if they wanted to make a complaint about an aspect of service, with 22% saying that they would put their complaint in writing.

Table 2.35 If you wanted to complain about an aspect of the service you received from the Agency, what would you be most likely to do? (Base: 223)	
	%
Complain orally to the office manager	23
Complain in writing	22
Complain to the person who caused the problem	21
Do nothing because you don't know how to go about it	20
Ask for a leaflet on complaints procedure	9
Complain orally to Agency HQ	4

Almost one in five (18%) vehicle customers felt, in hindsight, that they should have complained about a particular aspect of service.

Table 2.36 Was there anything about the service you received that you thought in hindsight you could have complained about? (Base: 222)	
	%
Yes	18
No	83

Among those who felt that there was something that they should have complained about, just over half (52%) mentioned the cost of the test, with 42% mentioning the attitude of staff.

Table 2.37 What was it about the service that you thought you could have complained about?? (Base: 39)	
	%
Cost Of Test	52
Attitude Of Staff	42
Date Of Test (Long Waiting Time)	33
Delay On Day Of Test	27
Test Instructions Not Clear	23
Reason For Failure Not Fully Explained	17
Length Of Queues In Booking Office	12
Too short notice re: appointment	4

Among those who, in hindsight, felt that they should have complained about an aspect of service, just 4% actually made a complaint. This equates to one percent (1%) of all vehicle customers in the survey. Of the two vehicle customers who made a complaint, both were dissatisfied with the way in which the Agency handled their complaint.

	%
Yes	4
No	96

Among those customers who felt that in hindsight they should have made a complaint, but did not do so, the majority felt that bring the complaint would not have made any difference (83%), with 32% afraid of future repercussions regarding future tests.

	%
Didn't think it would make any difference	83
Afraid of future repercussions regarding future tests	32
Didn't want to make a fuss	30
Unaware of complaints procedure	24
Didn't think of it at the time	5
Not enough time	1

2.18 POSITIVE ASPECTS OF DVTA SERVICE

The majority (70%) of vehicle customers felt that there were aspects of the service which they felt were particularly good.

	%
Yes	70
No	31

Of the various aspects of service which customers felt were particularly good, 71% felt that their test was dealt with efficiently, with 60% saying that staff were pleasant, professional and informative.

	%
Test dealt with efficiently	71
Staff pleasant/professional/informative	60
Punctuality of test	58
Thorough examination	48
Date of test (short waiting time)	44
Clear instructions	38
Systematic approach to the test	36
Reason for failure explained fully	22
Other	1

Among customers who made suggestions on where the quality of service could be improved, 36% cited cheaper fees, with 25% calling for shorter waiting times.

Table 2.42 If you could make <u>one</u> improvement to the quality of the Agency’s services, what would it be? (Base: 212)	
	%
Cheaper fees	36
Shorter waiting times	25
Reminder that test is due	11
More helpful/friendly staff	7
Extended opening hours	7
Choice of test appointments	4
Clear explanation of procedures	3
No improvement	7

2.19 COMPARING THE DVTA WITH OTHER PUBLIC SERVICES

The majority of vehicle customers (51%), when comparing the service provided by the DVTA with other public services, felt that the Agency performs better (much better, 29%; a little better, 22%). Just 8% felt that the DVTA performs worse than other public services.

Table 2.43 In comparison with other Public Services do you think that the Driver & Vehicle Testing Agency performs? (Base: 217)	
	%
Much better	29
A little better	22
About the same	42
A little worse	5
Much worse	3

Compared with Roads Service, 81% of customers felt that the DVTA provides a better service, with 61% favouring the Agency’s service compared with the Water Service, 57% favouring the DVTA’s performance compared with the Rate Collection Agency, and 42% favouring the DVTA’s performance compared with the DVLNI.

Table 2.44 In comparison with other Public Services do you think that the Driver & Vehicle Testing Agency performs better, the same or worse compared with the following public services?				
	Better	Same	Worse	Base
	%	%	%	%
Roads Service	81	14	5	211
Water Service	61	29	11	211
Rates Collection Agency	57	37	7	211
Driver and Vehicle Licensing	42	54	5	211

2.20 INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE AGENCY ON COMPLETION OF TEST

Only a minority (31%) of customers said that they would like to have more written information about their vehicle test when it was completed, with most (69%) customers satisfied with the amount of written information currently provided.

	%
Yes	31
No	69

2.21 IMPROVING CUSTOMER SERVICE

Shorter waiting times for test appointments was deemed to be the most important change for improving customer service, with providing a waiting list for cancelled tests, ranked the second most important change aimed at improving customer service.

	Rank
A shorter wait for test appointments	1
A waiting list for a cancelled test	2
More information prior to test	3
Improve approach from Agency staff	4
Option of Sunday test for a higher fee	5

2.22 AGENCY'S CONTRIBUTION TO ROAD SAFETY AND OTHER ISSUES

Among vehicle customers there was a high level of agreement with the statements that the Agency 'makes a positive contribution to road safety' (96%), and that the Agency 'makes a positive contribution to the environment...' (94%). The majority of customers also agreed with the view that that fees charged by the Agency for MOT are 'good value for money' (61%). However, when asked to comment on the Agency's support for voluntary activity in the community, 61% recorded 'don't know', indicating a significant lack of customer awareness of the Agency's activities in this area.

	Agreement Combined	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Base
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
The Driver & Vehicle Testing Agency makes a positive contribution to road safety	95	52	43	3	2	-	219
The Driver & Vehicle Testing Agency makes a positive contribution to the environment e.g. by testing vehicles for harmful emissions	94	39	55	5	1	1	220
The fees charged by Driver & Vehicle Testing Agency for MOT are good value for money	61	10	51	26	3	10	220
The Driver & Vehicle Testing Agency is actively involved in supporting voluntary activity in the community	27	9	18	10	2	61	215

2.23 RECEIPT OF A REMINDER LETTER FOR VEHICLE TEST

In the majority (54%) of cases customers confirmed that they had received a reminder letter for their vehicle test, with one in three saying they had not (33%), and 13% recording 'don't know'.

	%
Yes	54
No	33
Don't know	13

2.24 VISITS TO THE DVTA WEBSITE

Just 6% of vehicle customers had visited the DVTA's website.

	%
Yes	6
No	94

Of these six percent of customers who visited the DVTA site, 79% (9 customers) were satisfied, with 20% (3 customers) dissatisfied.

	%
Very satisfied	26 (3)
Satisfied	53 (6)
Dissatisfied	16 (2)
Very dissatisfied	4 (1)

Of those who were dissatisfied with the DVTA website, two indicated that 'you cant book or pay for a test', with the other saying that they 'found it difficult to navigate'.

2.25 INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE AGENCY

Most vehicle customers (81%) were satisfied with the amount of information provided before and after their test, with 19% of the opinion that more information could have been provided. Among those who felt that more information could have been provided, 73% called for more detailed information about the test itself, with 30% calling for more information about booking arrangements, fees and the test centre location.

	%
Yes	81
No	19

Those who felt that more information could have been provided either before or after their vehicle test were asked to suggest ways in which this information could be made more accessible. In

response, 77% of this group suggested the use of leaflets, with 37% mentioning forms and 36% citing the Agency’s website.

Table 2.52 How can the Agency make this information more accessible? (Base: 39)	
	%
Forms	37 (14)
Poster	22 (9)
Leaflet	77 (30)
Web Site	36 (14)
Use scoring system (re: vehicle testing)	3 (1)

3 RESULTS (DRIVER)

3.1 DRIVER THEORY TEST BOOKING PROCEDURES

In most cases (64%) those who were sitting the driver theory test had booked the test themselves, with 31% saying that a relative or friend had booked their theory test on their behalf.

	%
I did (Respondent)	64
Friend or relative	31
Qualified driving instructor	4
Other	1

Using the telephone was found to be the most common way of booking a driving theory test (62%), with almost one quarter of tests (24%) being booked via the internet, and 14% booked by post.

	%
By phone	62
By Internet	24
By post	14

All customers who had booked their driving theory test by post, were satisfied with the booking arrangements, with 98% of customers using the internet satisfied and 95% of those booking by phone satisfied.

	Post	Phone	Internet
	%	%	%
Very satisfied and satisfied combined	100	95	98
Very satisfied	41	54	71
Satisfied	59	41	27
Dissatisfied	-	2	2
Very dissatisfied	-	3	-
Base:	20	95	36

Of those who were dissatisfied with the booking arrangements by phone, one said it was difficult to get information about the theory test, with four of the opinion that waiting times for the appointment were too long. The one customer who was dissatisfied with the booking arrangements via the internet, felt that waiting time for the appointment was too long.

3.2 THEORY TEST CENTRES

The most widely used centres for sitting driving theory tests were found to be Belfast (35%), Ballymena (19%), and Omagh (16%).

	%
Belfast	35
Ballymena	19
Omagh	16
Newry	11
Portadown	11
Londonderry	8

The majority of customers (53%) indicated that they had to travel more than 10 miles to get to the testing centre to sit their driving theory test, with 4% travelling less than one mile.

	%
Less than 1 mile	4
1-2 miles	8
3-4 miles	11
5-6 miles	5
7-8 miles	6
9-10 miles	13
Over ten miles	53

Customer satisfaction with driving theory test centres was high at 95%, with 49% 'very satisfied' and 46% 'satisfied'. Just 5% of customers reported to be 'dissatisfied' with the driving theory test centre.

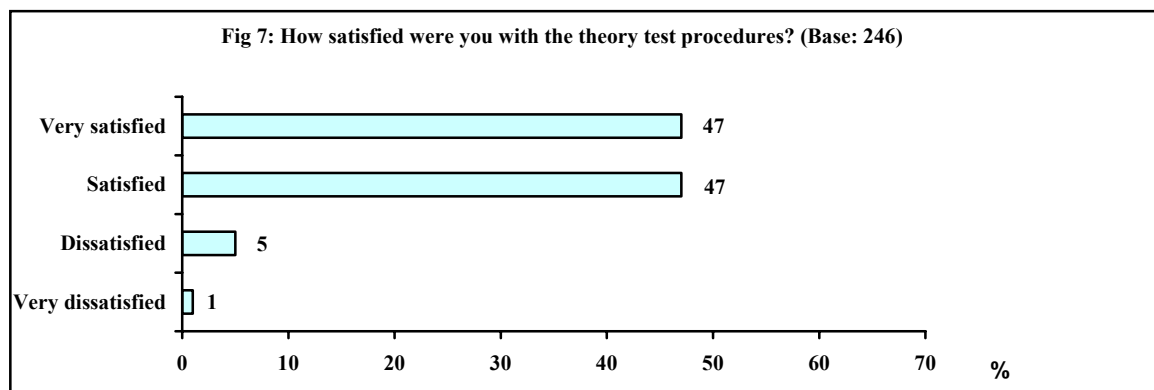
	%
Very satisfied	49
Satisfied	46
Dissatisfied	5
Very dissatisfied	-

Among the 11 respondents who reported to be dissatisfied with driving theory test centres, the most common cause for complaint was a lack of parking near the test centre (78%).

	%
There was no parking near the test centre	78 (8)
The test centre was too far away	66 (7)
The test centre was difficult to find	64 (7)
Staff were unfriendly	42 (5)
Staff did not explain the procedure well	14 (2)
The test centre was inconvenient for public transport	11 (1)
Other	15 (2)

3.3 SATISFACTION WITH THEORY TEST PROCEDURES

Overall, 94% of customers were satisfied with the theory test procedures, with the same number 'very satisfied' and 'satisfied' (47%). Just six percent (6%) were dissatisfied, with 5% 'dissatisfied' and 1% 'very dissatisfied'.



Among the 14 customers who were dissatisfied with the theory test procedures, the most common reason for dissatisfaction was that the examiner's instructions were inadequate or confusing (55%).

	%
The examiner's instructions were inadequate or confusing	55 (8)
The staff were unfriendly	22 (3)
The staff were unhelpful	11 (2)
There were too many distractions	9 (1)
Hazard test confusing	9 (1)
Only repeat failed parts	9 (1)

3.4 AWARENESS OF COST OF THEORY TEST

Approximately seven out of ten (71%) customers said that they were aware of what the fee for the theory test would be when applying for the test, with 29% unaware.

	%
Yes	71
No	29

3.5 USE OF FACILITIES WHEN CONDUCTING THEORY TEST

Only a minority of customers (34%) said that they had used the voiceover facility when conducting their driving theory test, with most not having used this facility (66%).

	%
Yes	34
No	66

Among those who had used the voiceover facility, 96% were satisfied, with 40% ‘very satisfied’ and 56% ‘satisfied’. The level of ‘dissatisfaction’ was recorded at 5%.

	%
Very satisfied	40
Satisfied	56
Dissatisfied	5
Very dissatisfied	-

Of the six customers who provided a reason why they were dissatisfied with the voiceover facility, two had found it difficult to hear, and four said that it was ‘too fast’.

Just 5% of all respondents reported using the British Sign Language video.

	%
Yes	5
No	95

Almost nine out of ten users of the BSL video (87% or thirteen users) were satisfied with it, with 57% very satisfied and 30% satisfied.

	%
Very satisfied	57
Satisfied	30
Dissatisfied	9
Very dissatisfied	4

Of the two customers that were dissatisfied with the British Sign Language video, both had found it difficult to understand.

Satisfaction with the hazard perception element of the theory test was recorded at 71%, with 17% ‘very satisfied’ and 54% ‘satisfied’. The level of dissatisfaction was found to be 29%, with 23% ‘dissatisfied’ and 6% ‘very dissatisfied’.

	%
Very satisfied	17
Satisfied	54
Dissatisfied	23
Very dissatisfied	6

² Due to rounding column total does not sum to 100

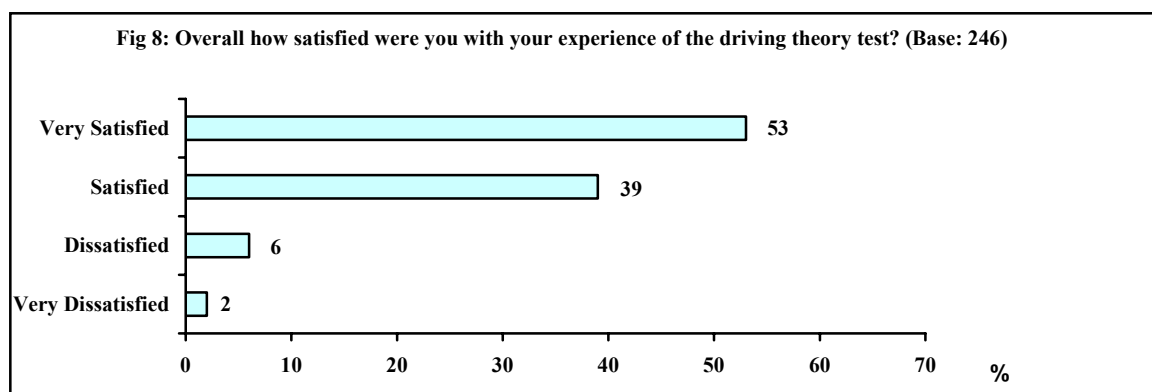
³ Due to rounding column total does not sum to 100

Difficulty in understanding instructions (61%), and being too complicated (51%), were the main reasons why customers were dissatisfied with the hazard perception element of the theory test.

	%
Difficult to understand instructions	61
Too complicated	51
Test was not explained	24
Hazard test gimmicky	4
No practical value	1
Like a video game	1
Not relevant	1

3.6 OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH DRIVING THEORY TEST

Overall satisfaction with the customer experience of the driving theory test was recorded at 96%, with 34% ‘very satisfied’ and 62% ‘satisfied’. Just 4% of customers were ‘dissatisfied’ with the experience of their driving theory test.



3.7 APPLYING FOR PRACTICAL TEST FOLLOWING THEORY TEST

Almost half (44%) of respondents said that they applied for their practical driving test immediately (30%) or within two weeks (14%) of sitting their theory test, with 22% waiting for three months or longer.

	%
Immediately	30
Within 2 weeks	14
Within 1 month	14
After more than 1 month but in less than 3 months	19
After more than 3 months but in less than 6 months	11
After more than 6 months	11
Can't remember	3

3.8 PRACTICAL DRIVING TEST

In the overwhelming majority (91%) of cases, driver respondents had taken their driving test (practical) in a car, with 7% having taken their test in a large goods vehicle, and 2% on a motorcycle.

	%
Car	91
Motorcycle	2
Large goods vehicle	7
Passenger carrying vehicle	-

3.9 BOOKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR DRIVING TEST

In most cases (57%), respondents said that they had booked their driving test themselves, with 43% having had their test booked by someone else.

	%
Yes	57
No	43

Telephone booking was the most common way that respondents had booked their driving test, with equal numbers having booked their test by post, and at a driving test centre (15%).

	%
By telephone	71
At a centre	15
By post	15

In 68% of cases, respondents reported that their test appointment letter had arrived within 10 working days, with 14% saying that it had not, and 18% recording 'don't know'.

	%
Yes	68
No	14
Don't know	18

3.10 VIEWS ON DRIVING TEST APPOINTMENT AND WAITING TIMES

Respondents were asked a series of questions about driving test appointments and waiting times. It should be noted that the Agency has an average waiting time target of 23 days, however maximum waiting times fluctuate from week to week. The table below shows that 90% of customers had accepted the first appointment they received, with 59% satisfied with the appointment date that they had been given. A slight majority of respondents (58%) said that they had applied early to take

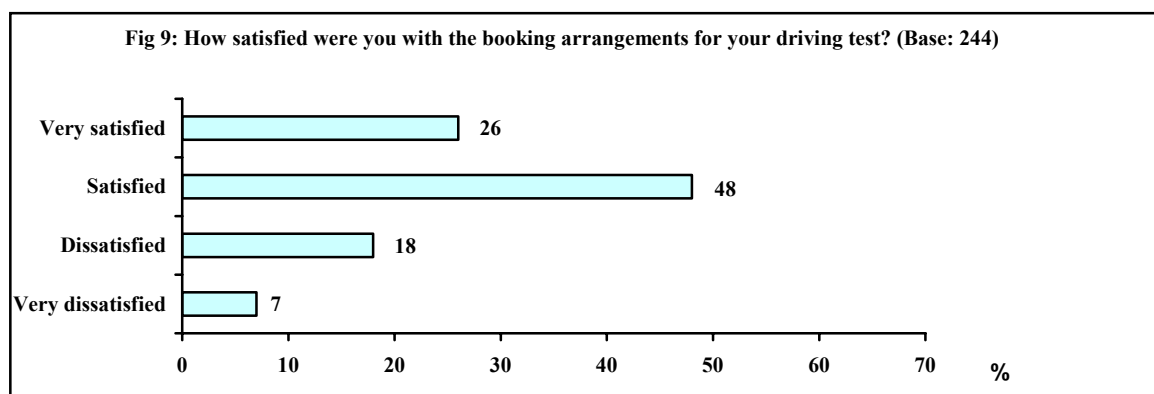
⁴ N.B: Due to rounding column total does not sum to 100

account of the maximum waiting times, with 48% supportive of the 23 day waiting time and 43% unsupportive. Finally, just 25% of customers indicated that they were aware of what the maximum waiting times was before booking their test.

	Yes	No	Not Sure	Base
	%	%	%	
Accept the first appointment you received?	90	8	2	244
Happy with the appointment date that you received?	59	38	3	245
Apply early to take account of the maximum waiting times?	58	33	10	245
Feel that a waiting time target of 23 days is about right?	48	43	10	242
Know what the maximum waiting times were before you booked?	25	67	7	245

3.11 SATISFACTION WITH BOOKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR DRIVER TESTS

Satisfaction with booking arrangements for driving tests was recorded at 74%, with 26% ‘very satisfied’ and 48% ‘satisfied’. One in four respondents reported to be dissatisfied with the booking arrangements for their driving test, with 18% ‘dissatisfied’ and 7% ‘very dissatisfied’.



The most common reason for being dissatisfied with the booking arrangements for driving tests was that the date of the appointment was too late (98%), with 24% saying that the date of the appointment was too early.

	%
Date of appointment too late	98
Date of appointment too early	24
Waiting too long	15
Appointment took no account of preferred time	9
Appointment letter not received within 10 days	7
Appointment card not received	3

3.12 ACCESS TO AND USE OF THE INTERNET

In the vast majority of cases (81%), customers said that they have access to or use of the internet, with just 19% not having access to or use of the internet.

	%
Yes	81
No	19

Although the majority (51%) of those who either had access to or use of the internet said that they would consider using it to book their practical driving test, a significant minority (42%) said that they would not consider using the internet for booking their driving test.

	%
Yes	51
No	42
Don't know	8

3.13 TELEPHONE CONTACT WITH THE DVTA

Almost half (49%) of driver customers had contacted the Agency by telephone regarding their driving test.

	%
Yes	49
No	51

Of those who had made telephone contact with the Agency, 46% had contacted the Agency via the Call Centre, with 44% contacting a local office.

	%
Call centre (0845 247 247 1)	46
Test centre (Local Office)	44
DVTA Headquarters (028 90 681 831)	5
DVTA Enquiry Line (0845 601 4094)	4
Other (Training Agent)	1

⁵ N.B: Due to rounding column total does not sum to 100

On the last occasion that respondents had contacted the Agency by telephone, the majority (51%) had their call answered immediately (13%) or within 30 seconds (38%), with just 2% reporting that their telephone call was not answered.

	%
Immediately	13
Within 30 seconds	38
After more than 30 seconds but less than 1 minute	17
After more than 1 minute but in less than 2 minutes	17
After more than 2 minutes	6
The telephone was not answered at all	2
Don't know / Can't remember	7

According to those who had contacted the Agency by telephone, the person who handled their query had identified themselves in 63% of cases, with 83% saying that they were put through to the right person first time.

	Yes	No	Don't Know / Can't remember	Base
	%	%	%	
Did the person who handled your query identify him/herself to you?	63	15	22	107
Were you put through to the right person first time?	83	11	7	94

Commenting on aspects of their telephone interaction with Agency staff, the majority of customers said that the person they spoke to was clear (82%), polite (81%), helpful (71%) and competent (68%).

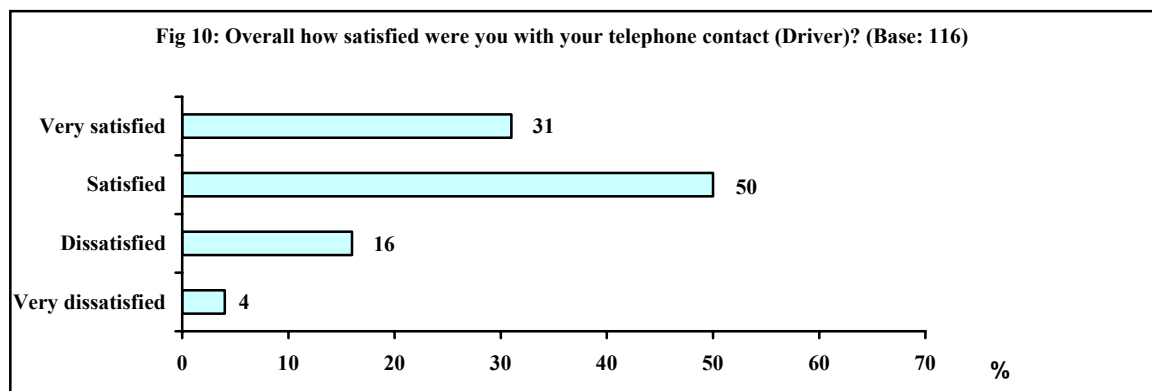
	Yes	No	Cant Remember	Base
	%	%	%	
Clear	82	13	6	105
Polite	81	13	6	108
Helpful	71	25	4	106
Competent	68	17	16	105

on the last occasion that customers called, 76% said that any questions that they had asked were answered satisfactorily. In cases where follow-up action was promised (36%), almost all (96%) customers reported that the follow-up action had been carried out.

	Yes	No	Base
	%	%	
Were the questions you asked answered satisfactorily?	76	24	107
Were you promised any follow up action? (e.g. application form being sent to you)	36	64	136
Was any follow-up action carried out?	96	4	37

3.14 SATISFACTION WITH TELEPHONE CONTACT

Overall satisfaction with telephone contact was recorded at 81%, with 31% ‘very satisfied’ and 50% ‘satisfied’. The level of dissatisfaction was found to be 20%, with 16% ‘dissatisfied’, and 4% ‘very dissatisfied’.



The most common reasons why respondents were dissatisfied with telephone contact were: staff unable to offer an appointment (89%); staff being unhelpful or unfriendly (65%); and, information given being inadequate or confusing (50%).

Table 3.31 Why were you dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with your telephone contact? (Base: 22)	
	%
Staff unable to offer an appointment	89
Staff unhelpful/unfriendly	65
Information given was inadequate/confusing	50
Unable to get through	11
Opening hours poor	8

Among those who made suggestions on how telephone contact with customers could be improved, 60% felt that the Agency should provide a list of available dates and times, with 42% saying that opening hours should be extended.

Table 3.32 Suggestions for improving telephone contact with customers? (Base: 114)	
	%
Provide list of available dates and times	60
Extended opening hours	42
Reduce waiting times to answer calls	21
Better training for staff	19

3.15 COUNTER / RECEPTION SERVICE

Approximately one in seven (14%) customers had recently used the Agency’s counter service, with most (86%) not having used it.

Table 3.33 Have you recently used the Agency’s counter service? (Base: 244)	
	%
Yes	14
No	86

Among users of the Agency’s counter service, 87% said that they were seen either immediately (24%) or within five minutes (63%) of arriving.

	%
Immediately	24
After more than 1 minute but in less than 5 minutes	63
After more than 5 minutes but in less than 10 minutes	4
After more than 10 minutes but in less than 20 minutes	10
After more than 20 minutes	-
Don’t know/can’t remember	-

Similar proportions of customers (46%) said that they had used the Agency’s counter service between 9am and 12 noon (46%) and between 12 noon and 2pm (43%), with 11% using the service between 2pm and 4pm.

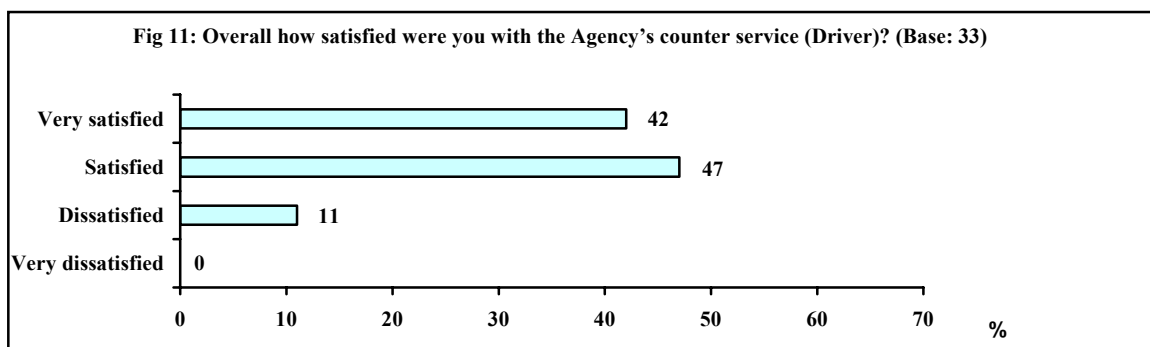
	%
9am-12 noon	46
12 noon–2pm	43
2pm-4pm	11

The most common reasons for using the Agency’s counter service were: to book a test (58%); to pay a test fee (46%); to obtain an application form (33%); and, to seek advice (28%).

	%
To book a test	58
To pay a test fee	46
To obtain an application form	33
To seek advice	28
For an urgent test appointment	25
The office is close to home/work	12
To sort out a problem face to face	11
Other (Return Licence)	5

3.16 SATISFACTION WITH COUNTER SERVICE

Overall satisfaction with the Agency’s counter service was recorded at 89%, with 42% ‘very satisfied’ and 47% ‘satisfied’. The level of ‘dissatisfaction’ was found to be 11%.



Of the six customers who were dissatisfied with the counter service, three felt that staff were unhelpful / unfriendly, with three of the view that staff lacked knowledge to deal with their query.

3.17 CUSTOMER RECEPTION AREAS

Approximately four out of ten (42%) driver customers had used the Agency's customer reception area, with 58% not having used it.

Table 3.37 Have you recently used the Agency's customer reception area? (Base: 222)

	%
Yes	42
No	58

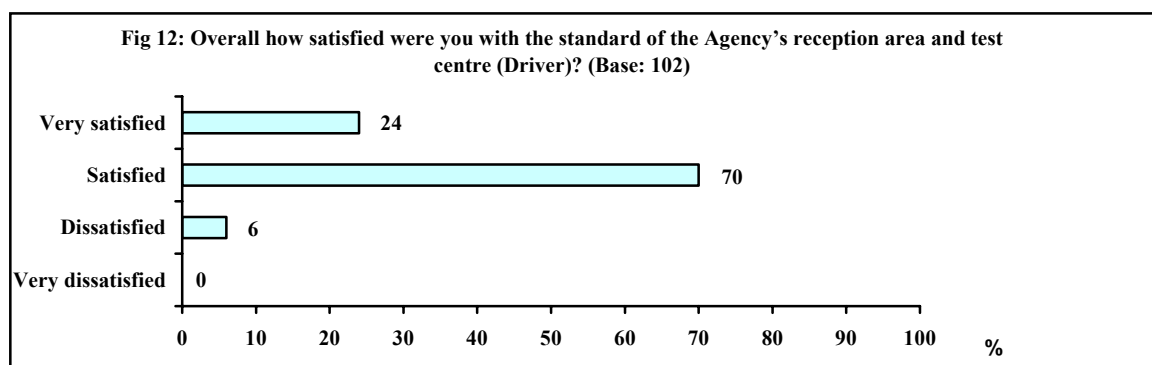
Customers who had used the Agency's customer reception areas were asked to comment on different aspects of the environment. The table below presents the combined 'excellent' and 'good' percentages in the second column, and shows that customers gave the highest ratings to cleanliness (86%), lighting (80%), and reception counters (65%). Conversely, the lowest ratings were given for toilets and seating (50%), although it should be noted that 31% of customers recorded 'don't know' when asked to comment on the toilets within the Agency's test centres.

Table 3.38 How would you rate the following aspects of the reception area and the test centre? (Base: 10)

	Excellent or Good	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know	Base
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Cleanliness	86	29	57	11	3	-	102
Lighting	80	18	62	14	3	3	101
Reception counter	65	11	54	27	2	7	102
Opening Hours	59	10	49	21	5	16	101
Overall comfort	57	11	46	37	6	-	102
Notice-board and information panel	53	13	40	20	6	22	102
Seating	50	8	42	36	14	-	102
Toilets	50	19	31	10	9	31	102

3.18 SATISFACTION WITH CUSTOMER RECEPTION AREAS

Overall satisfaction with the standard of the Agency's reception areas was recorded at 94%, with 24% 'very satisfied' and 70% 'satisfied'. The level of 'dissatisfaction' was found to be 6%.



Of the six customers who were dissatisfied, all said that the seating was inadequate.

3.19 AT THE TEST DRIVING TEST CENTRES

In most cases (94%), customers said that they had found the driver testing centre easy to get to, with 6% saying that they had found it difficult.

	%
Yes	94
No	6

On arriving at the driver testing centre, 34% of customers said that they were either seen earlier than their stated appointment time (5%), or immediately (29%), with 43% saying that they had been seen after more than one minute but less than five minutes. Overall, 77% of driver customers indicated that they were seen to within five minutes of their stated appointment time.

	%
Earlier than stated appointment time	5
Immediately	29
After more than 1 minute but in less than 5 minutes	43
After more than 5 minutes but in less than 10 minutes	20
After more than 10 minutes but in less than 20 minutes	2
After more than 20 minutes	1
Don't know/can't remember	1

In more than nine out of ten cases (96%), customers said that the driving examiner had offered to explain what would happen during the test.

	%
Yes	95
No	5

Customers who had been offered an explanation of what would happen during their driving test, in most cases (93%) accepted the offer, with just 7% declining.

	%
Yes	93
No	7

Of those who accepted the offer of an explanation of what would happen during their driving test, 97% said that they had found the explanation helpful, with just 4% saying that they had found the explanation unhelpful.

	%
Very Helpful	51
Helpful	46
Unhelpful	3
Very Unhelpful	1

Overall 92% of customers said that they were satisfied with the instructions given by the examiner, with 83% satisfied with the timing of the directional instructions given during the test, and 77% satisfied with the explanations given at the end of the test.

	Yes	No	Base
	%	%	
The instructions given by the examiner	92	8	246
The timing of the directional instructions given during the test	83	17	244
The explanations given at the end of the test	77	23	244

Almost half (46%) of driver customers felt that the driver examiner’s overall approach to the test could be improved, with the majority not sharing this view.

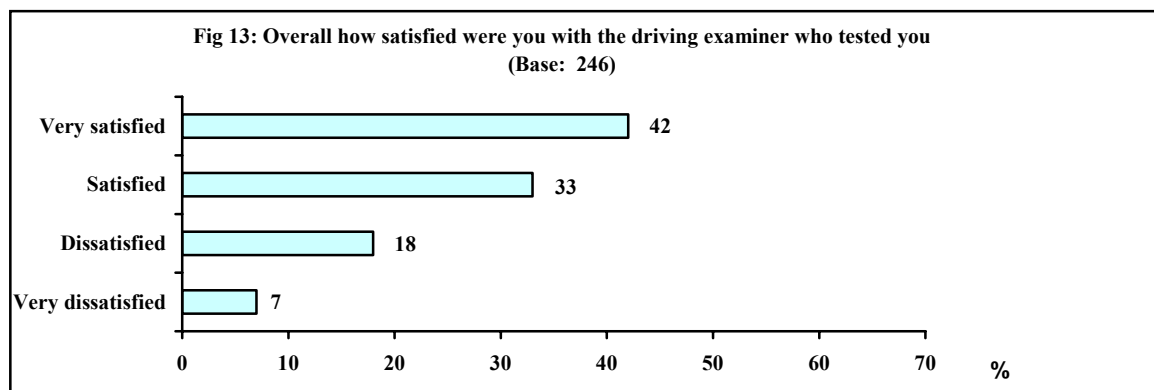
	%
Yes	46
No	54

Among those who felt that the driver examiner’s overall approach to the test could improve, 82% felt that the examiner could be more encouraging, with 74% saying they could be more friendly, and 73% saying that they could be less formal.

	Yes	No	Base
	%	%	
Be more encouraging	82	18	111
Be more friendly	74	26	111
Be less formal	73	27	110
Be more welcoming	69	31	111
Give a clearer explanation at the end of the test	49	51	111
Be clearer in his/her instructions	46	54	111
Be more patient	43	57	111
Be less strict	1	99	110
Show more interest	1	99	110

3.20 SATISFACTION WITH DRIVING EXAMINERS

Overall satisfaction with the Agency's driving examiners was recorded at 75%, with 42% 'very satisfied' and 33% 'satisfied'. The level of dissatisfaction was found to be 25%, with 18% 'dissatisfied' and 4% 'very dissatisfied'.



The most common cause of dissatisfaction with driver examiners was a feeling that the examiner had failed the respondent unfairly (67%), with almost half (49%) of those who were dissatisfied saying that the examiner was rude or unfriendly.

Table 3.47 Why were you dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the driving examiner? (Base: 60)

	%
Examiner failed me unfairly	67
Examiner was rude/unfriendly	49
Examiner did not explain faults sufficiently	45
Examiner was impatient	29
Other	5

Of the other reasons listed for being dissatisfied with driver examiners, one customer felt that 'the instructions were unclear', with another saying that 'the examiner had a difficult accent'.

Among those who made suggestions for improving the driver examiner's interaction with customers, 43% felt that the examiner should be more welcoming and approachable, with 27% suggesting that examiners give clear instructions.

Table 3.48 Do you have any suggestions for improving the driving examiner's interaction with customers? (Base: 236)

	%
Be more welcoming / approachable	43
Give clear instructions	27
Other	7

Other suggestions for improvement included: 'improve staff quality' (1); 'be less formal' (4); 'record all actions' (1); 'more encouragement' (2); 'explain faults' (1); and, 'speak louder' (1).

⁶ Due to rounding column total does not sum to 100

3.21 AWARENESS OF ASPECTS OF DRIVING TEST

Approximately two out of three driver customers (64%) reported to be aware that a friend or driving instructor is permitted to sit in the back of the vehicle during a test, with 39% saying that their examiner had asked them if they wanted anyone to sit in the debrief following the test. On awareness that the examiner's supervisor could accompany customers during their test, the response was mixed, with 51% aware and 49% unaware.

Table 3.49 Knowledge about aspects of driving test

	Yes	No	Base
	%	%	
Know that friend / driving instructor is allowed to sit in back of vehicle during test?	64	36	246
Examiner ask if you wanted anyone to sit in the debrief after the test?	39	61	244
Know that the examiner's supervisor could accompany you on the test?	51	49	245

3.22 IMPORTANCE / PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS (DRIVER CUSTOMERS)

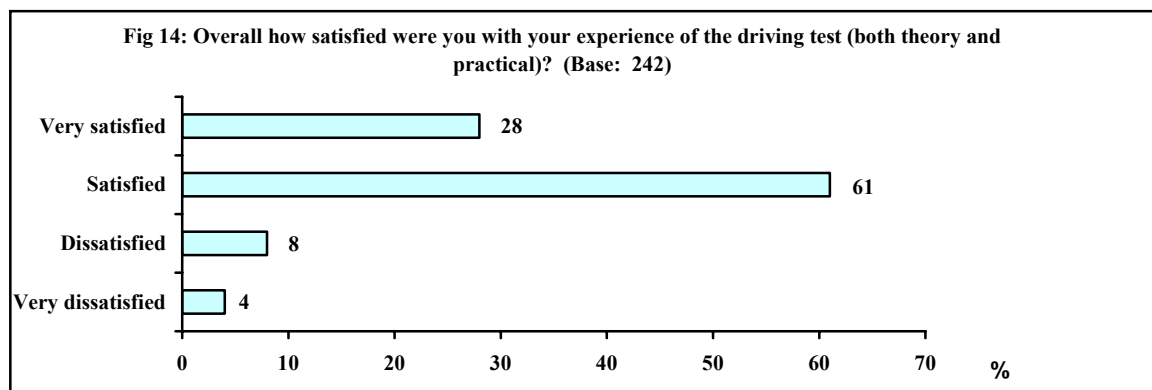
On a scale of 1 to 10, customers were asked to rate how **important** different aspects of the service provided by DVTA were to them personally (1 = not at all important, 10 = extremely important). The same approach was used in relation to their perception of performance. The table below shows that the availability of quick appointment slots (9.07) is deemed to be the most important aspect of the service provided, followed by the instructions given by the examiner (9.04). In terms of performance, customers rated each of these aspects lower. The biggest variations between importance and performance related to the availability of quick appointment slots (-4.64), and the cost of the test (-3.25).

Table 3.50 Mean importance and performance scores for aspects of driving test (score range: 1 – 10)

	Mean Score (Importance)	Mean Score (Performance)	Difference
Availability of quick appointment slots	9.07	4.43	-4.64
Instructions given by driving examiners	9.04	8.13	-0.91
Explanation of any problems with the test	8.79	8.09	-0.7
Polite, courteous and efficient staff	8.57	7.47	-1.1
Cost of the test	8.38	5.13	-3.25
Being seen on time of arrival at test centre	8.15	8.26	0.11
A range of telephone services (booking or information)	7.21	7.17	-0.04
A range of face to face services (counters)	6.07	6.39	0.32

3.23 SATISFACTION WITH DRIVING TEST (THEORY AND PRACTICAL)

Overall satisfaction with customer experience of the driving test (both theory and practical) was recorded at 89%, with 28% 'very satisfied' and 61% 'satisfied'⁷. The level of dissatisfaction was found to be 12%, with 8% 'dissatisfied' and 4% 'very dissatisfied'.



3.24 INFORMATION PROVIDED TO CUSTOMERS

According to 80% of driver customers, the information provided before and after their theory and practical tests, fully met their requirements, with 20% saying that the information had failed to meet their requirements.

Table 3.51 Did the information provided before and after your theory and practical tests fully meet your requirements? (Base: 244)

	%
Yes	80
No	20

Among those who felt that the information provided did not meet their requirements, 82% called for more detailed information on where they went wrong [failed the test], with 51% suggesting that more information should be provided about booking, fees and the location of testing centres.

Table 3.52 What other information would you have liked to have received? (Base: 50)

	%
More detailed information on where you went wrong	82
More information about booking/fees/location of centre	51
More information on how to apply for a licence	36
Other (Theory test ambiguous)	2

⁷ Due to rounding column total does not sum to 100

3.25 COMPLAINTS

If customers were to make a complaint to the Agency about an aspect of service received, 43% said that they would make the complaint in writing, with 28% saying they would do nothing due to lack of knowledge on how to go about making a complaint.

	%
Complain in writing	43
Do nothing because you don't know how to go about it	28
Complain to the person who caused the problem	15
Ask for a leaflet on complaints procedure	14
Complain orally to the office manager	14
Complain orally to Agency HQ	8
Other	2

In hindsight, 44% of customers felt that there was some aspect of service that they should have complained about, with the majority (56%) saying that there was nothing that they would have complained about.

	%
Yes	44
No	56

Among those who felt that in hindsight they should have complained about an aspect of service, 67% pointed to the waiting time for their practical test, with almost half (48%) citing the attitude of the examiner as a reason for making a complaint.

	%
Waiting time for practical test	67
Attitude of examiner	48
Cost of test	41
Reason for failure not fully explained	29
Test instructions not clear	17
Waiting time for theory test	10

Other issues that customers felt that they could have complained about included: 'hazard test ambiguous' (1); 'no one showed up' (1); 'theory test staff' (4); 'no internet booking' (1); 're-do only failed parts' (1); 'too much pressure' (1); and, 'poor quality toilets' (1).

Just 7% of driver customers, who in hindsight felt that they should have made a complaint to the Agency, said that they had actually made a complaint. This equates to 3% of all driver customers in the survey.

Table 3.56 Did you actually make a complaint? (Base: 38)	
	%
Yes	7
No	93

Of the six customers who reported making a complaint, five were satisfied with the way in which the Agency handled their complaint, with one dissatisfied.

Among those who felt that, in hindsight, they should have made a complaint but didn't, 82% felt that making a complaint would not have made any difference, with 43% saying that they were afraid of future repercussions regarding future tests.

Table 3.57 What was it about the service that you thought you could have complained about? (Base:97)	
	%
Didn't think it would make any difference	82
Afraid of future repercussions regarding future tests	43
Didn't want to make a fuss	36
Unaware of complaints procedure	33
Didn't think of it at the time	13

3.26 POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE SERVICE PROVIDED BY THE AGENCY

The majority of driver customers said that there were aspects of the service they received which they felt were particularly good.

Table 3.58 Was there anything about the service you received that you thought was particularly good? (Base: 242)	
	%
Yes	56
No	44

Of those who felt that there were aspects of the service which were particularly good, 65% commented on being given clear instructions, with 60% saying that staff were pleasant, professional and informative.

Table 3.59 What was it about the service that you thought was particularly good? (Base: 137)	
	%
Clear instructions	65
Staff pleasant/professional/informative	60
Test dealt with efficiently	52
Punctuality of test	52
Thorough examination	44
Good system	35
Reason for failure explained fully	22
Examiner takes control of vehicle for part of the test	4
Other (Good practical examiner)	4

3.27 SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS IN SERVICE

If customers were to make one improvement to the Agency's services, shorter waiting times (45%), and cheaper fees (33%), were most likely to be suggested.

	%
Shorter waiting times	45
Cheaper fees	33
Choice of test appointments	9
No improvement	5
More helpful/friendly staff	3
Clear explanation of procedures	3
Extended opening hours	1
More facilities for payment	1
Other (Choice of examiner)	1

3.28 DVTA PERFORMANCE COMPARED WITH OTHER PUBLIC SERVICES

Overall, 41% of driver customers felt that the Agency performs better than other public services, with 19% saying performance is 'much better' and 22% saying that it is 'a little better'. Just under half (49%) of customers felt that the Agency's performance was 'about the same' as other public services, with 10% of the view that performance is worse ('a little worse', 9%; 'much worse', 1%).

	%
Much better	19
A little better	22
About the same	49
A little worse	9
Much worse	1

In comparison with Roads Service, more than half (55%) felt that the Agency performs better than Roads Service, with 42% saying that performance is better than the Rates Collection Agency, and 41% saying that performance is better than the Water Service. Just over one third (35%) of customers felt that the service provided by the Agency was better than that provided by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Service. At a broader level it is worth noting that only a minority (13% or less) of the Agency's driver customers felt that the service provided by the Agency, compared with those just mentioned, was worse.

	Better	Same	Worse	Base
	%	%	%	%
Roads Service	55	35	11	229
Rates Collection Agency	42	47	11	229
Water Service	41	47	13	229
Driver and Vehicle Licensing	35	59	7	229

3.29 SPECIAL NEEDS

Three percent of driver customers reported that they have special needs such as those associated with disability, dependants or language. In all cases, customers indicated that their special needs were met by the Agency.

Table 3.63 Do you have any special needs (e.g. disability, dependants, language)? (Base: 214)	
	%
Yes	3
No	97

3.30 PREPARATION FOR DRIVING TEST

All of the respondents in the driver survey indicated that they had taken driving lessons in preparation for their driving test, with 98% having used an instructor.

Table 3.64 Did you take driving lessons in preparation for your driving test? (Base: 246) ⁸	
	%
Yes, instructor only	64
Yes, with friends and family only	3
Yes, with both instructor and friends / family	34
No	-

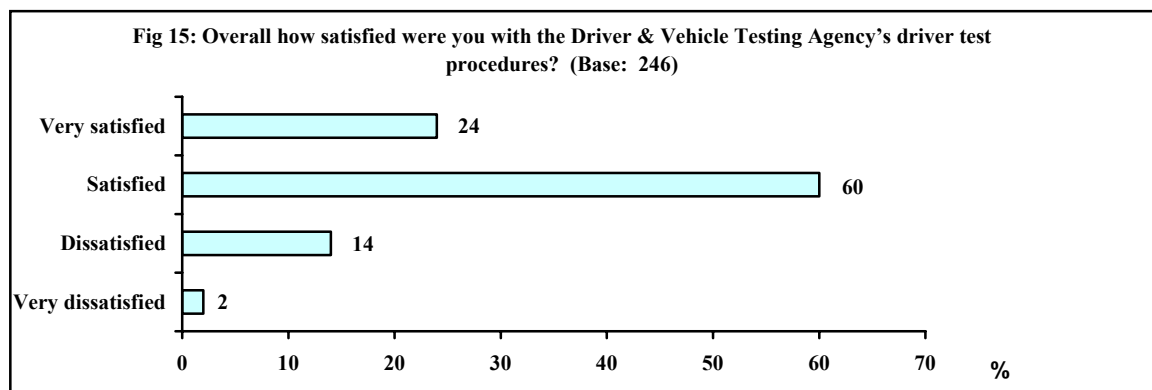
On average driver customers reported spending 37 hours preparing for their driving test, with an average of 27 hours spent with an instructor and 10 hours spent with either family or friends. The average distance driven before customers took their test was 600 miles.

Table 3.65 Average hours spent preparing for driving test.... (Base: 246)	
	Mean Hrs
Instructor only	27
With friends and family	10
Mean total hours spent preparing for driving test	37

⁸ Due to rounding column total does not sum to 100

3.31 OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH AGENCY'S TEST PROCEDURES

Overall satisfaction with the Agency's driver test procedures was recorded at 84%, with 23% 'very satisfied' and 60% 'satisfied'. The level of dissatisfaction was found to be 16%, with 14% 'dissatisfied' and 2% 'very dissatisfied'.



The main reason why customers were dissatisfied with the Agency's test procedures was that waiting times for an appointment were too long (81%), with the quality or consistency of the driver examination, also cited by 40% of those who were dissatisfied.

Table 3.66 Reasons for dissatisfaction with Agency's test procedures? (Base: 41)

	%
Waiting time for an appointment too long	81
Poor examination given/inconsistent examination	40
Poor explanation	27
Other	10

Other reasons for dissatisfaction included: 'examiner's attitude' (2); and, that it was 'not all relevant' (1).

3.32 VISITS TO THE DVTA WEBSITE

More than one quarter (26%) of all driver customers said that they had visited the DVTA website.

Table 3.67 Visited the DVTA website? (Base: 244)

	%
Yes	26
No	74

Among those customers who had visited the DVTA website, 91% were satisfied with 24% 'very satisfied' and 67% 'satisfied'. Just 9% of visitors to the Agency's website were 'dissatisfied'.

Table 3.68 How satisfied were you with the DVTA website? (Base: 63)

	%
Very satisfied	24
Satisfied	67
Dissatisfied	9
Very dissatisfied	-

The reasons for dissatisfaction with the DVTA website were: ‘difficulties in navigating the site’ (4); ‘no facility to book practical test’ (1); and, ‘not enough information’ (1).

3.33 SUPPORT FOR PRE-TESTING (DRIVER) IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The survey found a high degree of support (66%) for the introduction of a pre-test in Northern Ireland, which would offer learner drivers the chance to have a trial test with the examiner a few weeks before the actual test. This is not a pass/fail test but rather it allows the learner to experience the test and find out from the examiner about their strengths and weaknesses. A driving instructor would also be present, and a fee would be charged for this service.

	%
Yes	66
No	35

3.34 VIEWS ON MOST IMPORTANT CHANGE TO IMPROVE SERVICE

Finally, driver customers ranked shorter waiting times for test appointments as being the most important change to improve the Agency’s customer service, with the provision of more information prior to the test, ranked second in importance.

	Rank
A shorter wait for test appointments	1
More information prior to test	2
Improve approach from Agency staff	3
Option of Sunday test for a higher fee	4

3.35 AGENCY'S CONTRIBUTION TO ROAD SAFETY AND OTHER ISSUES

Among driver customers there was widespread agreement that the Agency makes a positive contribution to road safety (92%), with 73% of the view that the Agency makes a positive contribution to the environment. On the issue of whether or not the Agency is actively involved in supporting voluntary activity in the community, 61% recorded 'don't know' indicating a lack of awareness of the Agency's role in this area.

Table 3.71 Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Base
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
The Driver & Vehicle Testing Agency makes a positive contribution to road safety?	92	32	60	5	-	3	242
The Driver & Vehicle Testing Agency makes a positive contribution to the environment e.g. by testing vehicles for harmful emissions?	73	22	51	10	1	16	237
The Driver & Vehicle Testing Agency is actively involved in supporting voluntary activity in the community?	22	6	16	13	4	61	237