



**Driver & Vehicle Testing Agency
Practical Driver and Vehicle Tests**

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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Executive Summary

Introduction

- 1.1 The main purpose of the Driver & Vehicle Testing Agency (DVTA) is to promote road safety and improve the quality of the environment by implementing the Government's policies on driver and vehicle testing and on roadside enforcement of road traffic regulations.
- 1.2 The Agency has conducted an equality impact assessment (EQIA) of practical driver tests and vehicle tests under the Department of the Environment's Equality Scheme which was submitted to the Equality Commission in 2000.
- 1.3 The Equality Impact Assessment assessed all aspects of the driver tests and vehicle tests for differential impacts upon the nine social groupings specified under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (paragraph 1.1 of the consultation document).

Main Findings of Consultation Process

- 1.4 For the purpose of this consultation the Agency focused on three key areas i.e. availability of information relating to the practical driver tests and vehicle tests, booking arrangements for tests, and the customer experience of the tests. There was generally no variance in the overall levels of satisfaction between the whole customer base surveyed and the section 75 groups. The Agency has identified that there may be adverse differential impacts on the following groups -

Religious belief In terms of driving test procedures for women from a Muslim background

Gender: In terms of women who are uneasy about bringing their vehicle for a test and about having a driving test with a male examiner

Race In terms of provision of information, booking arrangements and experience of test (driver and vehicle)

Disability In terms of provision of information, booking arrangements (driver and vehicle) and experience of test (driver only)

- 1.5 The Agency has considered the potential impacts and is proposing or has introduced the following measures:
 - Provision of core information in a range of languages for customers whose first language is not English.
 - Some information such as the complaints procedure are already available in Cantonese.

- Introduction of an interactive translation facility such as “Language Line” for customers whose first language is not English.
- The Agency has upgraded its Centres to meet the standards required by the Disability Discrimination Act which came into force in October 2004.
- On line booking of vehicle and driver tests is due to be introduced in Spring/Summer 2005.
- The facility to be accompanied on a driving test by an instructor, friend or family member will be highlighted more prominently in the Agency’s information literature.
- The Agency will deliver a programme of customer awareness training for all staff, taking into account the need to deliver a high standard of customer service to all customers and to ensure that staff have the skills necessary to deal appropriately with people with disabilities and people from a variety of social, cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds.

Consultation

- 1.6 The Agency issued a consultation paper on 31 March 2004 to seek public opinion on equality of opportunity and its promotion within driver tests and vehicle tests conducted by the Agency. This followed pre-consultation meetings and correspondence with s75 groups. The draft consultation paper was sent to the consultees listed in Annex D. They included representatives of the equality categories listed in Table C of the Department of the Environment’s Equality Scheme as well as those formally consulted by the Department on DVTA issues. Questions were asked throughout the document and these are replicated where appropriate within this EQIA.

Responses

- 1.7 Seven responses were received, two of which offered no comments. The responses have been analysed, referred to and commented upon throughout this document and have been highlighted in ‘**bold**’ for ease of reference. The EQIA has been reviewed or amended as appropriate to address suggestions and comments received.

Publication

- 1.8 This EQIA has been published and copies issued to all consultees to inform them about the process undertaken, its outcomes and the decisions taken by the Agency. Additional copies and copies in alternative formats (such as large print, audio cassette, Braille, or minority languages etc) if desired may be requested from:

Deirdre Walsh
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Or by contacting DVTA Customer Services at

Tel: 0845 601 4094 or
Textphone: 028 9066 5453.

- 1.9 This EQIA is also available to view on the Agency's website at <http://www.dvtani.gov.uk> and at www.nics.gov.uk/pubs/equalityimpact The Agency notes **Disability Action's** concern that disabled people as a group have least access to the Internet and will make it available in other accessible formats if requested.
- 1.10 Where possible the Agency has emailed this document instead of sending a hard copy. If you would prefer a hard copy please contact the Agency as above to request it.
- 1.11 The general public has been informed of the availability of this EQIA through a Press Release and the Agency will seek to publicise the EQIA in minority language publications and magazines published by the voluntary sector.
- 1.12 If recipients are aware of any individual or organisation who has been omitted from the distribution list for this EQIA and who would be interested in receiving a copy, please advise DVTA and a copy will be forwarded.
- 1.13 Copies of responses, or any other information or data used in this EQIA can be provided on request (if not available within the document), by contacting Customer Services, DVTA, Balmoral Road, Belfast,

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF PRACTICAL DRIVER TESTS AND VEHICLE TESTS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires all public authorities in carrying out their functions to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity –
- Between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
 - Between men and women generally;
 - Between persons with a disability and persons without; and
 - Between persons with dependants and persons without.
- 1.2 In addition without prejudice to the above obligation, public authorities are also required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between people of different religious beliefs, political opinion or racial group.

Need for Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.3 The Driver & Vehicle Testing Agency (DVTA) has conducted an equality impact assessment (EQIA) of both practical driver tests and vehicle tests under the Department of the Environment's Equality Scheme which was submitted to the Equality Commission in 2000.
- 1.4 The equality impact assessment process must assess all aspects of the driver tests and vehicle tests for differential impacts upon the nine social groupings specified under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act.

Policy

- 1.5 The Agency aims to promote and improve road safety in Northern Ireland by implementing the Government's policies to test learner drivers to ensure they can drive competently and safely before they get a full licence and for maintaining the roadworthiness of vehicles.
- 1.6 The Agency conducts practical driver tests and vehicle tests to the standards set out in legislation, ensuring that drivers reach the required statutory standard before being licensed to drive a motor vehicle, and that vehicles comply with the required statutory standards for roadworthiness.

2. Background

- 2.1 During 2003/04 the Agency conducted 51,867 driving tests and 516,100 vehicle tests. This work is an important element in the Government's overall road safety

strategy. Through the emissions testing programme the Agency also contributes to improving air quality.

- 2.2 Annex A gives details of the aspects of the Agency's business which come within the scope of this EQIA.
- 2.3 One of the key strategic objectives is to improve progressively the efficiency and effectiveness of testing systems for both vehicle and driving tests. The Agency's mission statement which is to contribute to road safety by providing a fair, independent and efficient testing service in which customers have complete confidence, incorporates this objective and reflects the crucial role played by Agency staff in making it happen. The mission statement also recognises the need to ensure the confidence of customers in the test process. Their views on the services provided are regularly considered and improvements are made where possible.
- 2.4 The main stakeholders effected by the Agency's policy objectives are driver and vehicle test customers, and a number of major customer and interest groups including the Road Safety Council NI, Translink, Retail Motor Industry Federation (RMIF), RTS NI Motorcycling Rider Training Scheme, Freight Transport Association (FTA), various government Departments' road fleet management and a number of driving instructor organisations.
- 2.5 Unlike other government services, the Agency is in direct contact with all its customers at least twice, at booking and at test. It also meets with representative groups either on a regular basis or as necessary as policies are being developed such as the introduction of new test items or in communicating major changes like forthcoming EU directives. The Agency has also introduced a Trade Bulletin to update major vehicle test customers on matters of interest and this is posted on the Agency's web-site. A three times yearly update is issued to driving instructors who are the main conduit to driving test customers on driving test and other related issues.

3. Data Collection and Consultation

- 3.1 The methodology for assessment was a combination of **quantitative** and **qualitative** analysis. The Agency holds only a limited amount of information about driver tests and vehicle tests on its records.
- 3.2 The Agency is committed to ensuring that customer satisfaction is a major consideration in terms of how it conducts its business and it places a heavy emphasis on consultation and feedback. The Agency conducts an annual customer survey and for the purpose of this EQIA, the 2003 survey was used to collect data to assess quantitatively the categories on age, gender, religion, political affiliation, marital status, disability, race, and persons with dependants. The Agency notes **Disability Action's** comment that questions are not asked in the survey in respect of sexual orientation, but all categories were also assessed qualitatively through pre-consultation with key informant groups, which involved holding seminars at various localities or meeting at a place convenient to the consultee(s). (See Annex B)

- 3.3 A formal consultation paper was issued on 31 March 2004 to 231 relevant s75 and statutory and voluntary bodies. The closing date for responses was 30 June 2004 and seven responses were received from the Equality Commission, Disability Action, the Chinese Welfare Association (NI), Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association, the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee (no comments), the Women's Forum Northern Ireland, and OFMDFM (no comment). The Equality Commission's response was a comprehensive and extensive commentary on the extent to which the draft EQIA had been completed in a manner consistent with the Commission's practical guidance on Equality Impact Assessment. The EQIA has been amended accordingly where appropriate.
- 3.4 An overview of the methodology is attached at Annex B. Vehicle test data held by the Agency has not been used as it relates to the vehicle and owner, who is not always the person presenting the vehicle for testing.

4. Assessment of Impacts and Key Findings

Practical Driver Tests

- 4.1 The Agency reviewed data about drivers held on its IT systems for the six month period ended 31 December 2003 in conjunction with results from its 2003 customer survey to compile quantitative data. The qualitative analysis involved structured interviews with representatives of groups and organisations who were willing to take part in informal consultations (Annex B, paragraph 8). The formal consultation elicited substantive comments from the Equality Commission, Disability Action and the Women's Forum Northern Ireland.

Religious Belief

- 4.2 The level of satisfaction for persons of different religious beliefs and the overall satisfaction levels expressed in the 2003 customer survey were all similar with the exception of persons from a Muslim background who were less likely to be satisfied with driving test procedures. 47% of respondents from the customer survey stated their religion as Protestant, 44% Roman Catholic, 1% Chinese, 1% Muslim, 1% other religion, 4% no religion stated and 1% refused to answer. The figures for the overall community breakdown in Northern Ireland as outlined in the 2001 census are that 43.8% of the population is from a Roman Catholic background, 53.1% from a Protestant/other Christian background, 0.4% other religious background and 3% claiming to have no religious background.
- 4.3 When interviewed, representatives of different religious faiths emphasised that care should be taken to ensure that different faiths are taken into account when allocating appointments for tests, e.g. there are implications for Muslim women if examiners are male, as their religion requires that they should not be in the company of a male who is not their husband without being accompanied by a friend or a family member.

- 4.4 During interviews, none of the organisations which were consulted raised any issues relating to religious belief, except as outlined in paragraph 4.3.
- 4.5 In the consultation paper the question was asked... *Do you agree that the Agency has assessed the situation correctly? If not, what would you suggest that the Agency could improve upon?*
- 4.6 In their response to the consultation paper, **Disability Action** agreed that the Agency had assessed the situation correctly but would support a female instructor being provided for Muslim women. **The Women's Forum Northern Ireland** however, felt that since appointments can be changed and since women can be accompanied on their driving test if they wish, that the Agency is doing all it can to address issues raised on behalf of Muslim women.

Mitigation

- 4.7 The Agency randomly allocates practical driving test candidates to driving examiners. In applying this random method of 'matching' candidate to examiner the Agency is seeking to protect both staff and customers from any suggestion of collusion, and to protect the integrity of the test. The Agency does however actively encourage applications from women for female driving examiner posts. Currently 20% or 6 of our full time driving examiners are women.
- 4.8 Customers may indicate days/dates/times that are not suitable when booking appointments and the Agency will try to accommodate these requests, where possible, but not to avoid an examiner. If appointments are unsuitable they can be changed, without charge, provided sufficient notice is given. All practical driving test candidates have the right to be accompanied on their driving test by their instructor, a friend or a family member.

Political Opinion

- 4.9 There was no material variance in the level of satisfaction for persons of different political opinion and the overall satisfaction levels expressed in the 2003 customer survey. The customer satisfaction survey indicated that 43% of driver respondents were 'of no political persuasion', and there was a fairly even spread between Nationalists and Unionists, 27% and 26% respectively.
- 4.10 None of the groups and organisations which were interviewed raised any issues relating to political opinion.
- 4.11 In the consultation paper the question was asked.... *Do you agree that the Agency has assessed the situation correctly? If not, what would you suggest that the Agency could improve upon?* **The Women's Forum Northern Ireland** agreed that there were no impacts on the ground of political opinion.

Race

- 4.12 There was no material variance in the level of satisfaction for persons of different race and the overall satisfaction levels expressed in the 2003 customer

survey. The customer satisfaction survey indicated that 96% of driver respondents were white, and 97% of respondents spoke English as their native language; of the 8 driver respondents who spoke other first languages, 4 spoke Chinese and 4 spoke Punjabi/Urdu.

- 4.13 Many representatives who were consulted considered that people whose first language is not English are at a distinct disadvantage in their practical driving test, due to communication difficulties.
- 4.14 Some groups felt it was the responsibility of the Agency to provide all available information in a range of languages and/or qualified interpreters as necessary. However, there was a contrasting view that drivers should be able to speak at least sufficient English to be able to communicate in the event of an accident, and be able to read English in order to follow the road signs with safety.
- 4.15 A view was expressed that the Agency could improve on the provision of information relatively easily by providing more information in a wider range of languages and to publicise availability of the information. Both provision of information and booking arrangements could be enhanced by the introduction of an interactive translation facility such as the use of a service like “Language Line” which enables users to communicate via a three-way telephone conference.
- 4.16 Some of those interviewed felt that the Agency should ensure that staff are trained to a high standard in customer service including cultural, anti-racism, and disability awareness.
- 4.17 In the consultation paper the following questions were asked

What improvements do you consider the Agency could reasonably implement, in addition to what is already proposed, to enable practical driver test candidates, whose first language is not English, to take the test? and

The Agency provides customer service and equality training to all its staff, updating and repeating as necessary. What additional action would your organisation propose?

Mitigation

- 4.18 The **Chinese Welfare Association** felt that DVTA should have a list of interpreters and that the Agency should meet the cost of interpreters or alternatively introduce ‘Language Line’. The Agency operates as a Trading Fund and is obliged to recover all costs from fee income. Were the Agency to pay for qualified interpreters to assist in the practical driving test, the cost would have to be borne by all practical driving test applicants. The customer survey indicates that over 90% of applicants would not need to avail of the service and would be contributing to the additional cost. Where language is a barrier the candidate, at his/her own expense, can use a qualified interpreter to assist in communication before and during the test.

- 4.19 There are currently no constraints on who can provide interpretation except that it should not be an Approved Driving Instructor. The costs of an interpreter may vary depending on whether someone is using a family friend or relative, or an approved interpreter. The costs of interpretation could be up to £50 per hour including travelling expenses.
- 4.20 The Agency makes every effort to keep fees to a minimum and would not therefore be in a position to bear the cost of interpreters at this time, but will continue to monitor the situation. **The Women’s Forum Northern Ireland** stated in their response to the consultation paper that the Agency should maintain a list of interpreters. Currently there is no method for approving interpreters, but the Agency will maintain relevant contact details for customers requiring the services of an interpreter, so that customers needing these services can be advised where to get them.
- 4.21 The Agency acknowledges that improvements in communication could be achieved in the areas of information and booking by making more information available in a wider range of languages and will explore the possibility of introduction of a “Language Line” facility. Such an enhanced service could be made available at a reasonable cost and have the potential to benefit up to 10% of practical driving test customers.
- 4.22 **The Women’s Forum Northern Ireland** stated in their response to the consultation paper that they feel that some agency staff should be trained to a high level of cultural awareness including the provision of interpreters and provision of information in wider range of languages; the cost to be borne by the test applicant.
- 4.23 Agency staff are trained in customer service and equal opportunities including provision of information, guidance and awareness of discrimination and the dangers of anti-social or intimidating behaviour in the workplace, respect for cultural diversity, disability awareness, etc. The Agency recognises that its training programmes need to be reviewed, updated and repeated in order to ensure that Agency staff provide and continue to provide an impartial, equitable and fair service to all s75 groups. The Agency has a planned training programme in place to cover all aspects of customer service, including anti-racism, disability awareness, etc, which will be delivered to all staff on a rolling programme. The Agency will make the content of the course available to **Disability Action** who have requested details and anyone else who requests it.

Age

- 4.24 There was no material variance in the level of satisfaction for persons of different ages and the overall satisfaction levels expressed in the 2003 customer survey.
- 4.25 No data are held on pass/fail rates by age group. However the age profile of applicants is set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Age Profile of Practical Driver Test Applicants

Age Group	% of total applications received*	% of applications by gender	
		Male	Female
17	19.8	59.2	40.8
18	15.8	46.9	53.1
19-20	15.9	42.3	57.7
21-25	20.8	45.6	54.4
26 - 45	23.9	51.2	48.8
46 - 59	3.2	58.8	41.2
60 +	0.5	48.8	51.2
Unknown age group	0.05	78.6	21.4
<i>Overall</i>		49.7	50.3

*Includes cars, motorbikes, goods vehicles, PSV/minibuses, etc.

- 4.26 The statistics from the Agency databases indicate that 72.3% of practical driving test candidates are in the 17 to 25 age group. There are therefore fewer candidates over 25 years applying for practical driver tests.
- 4.27 All candidates are required to reach the same standard of driving to pass their driving test and the Agency applies the same criteria to all in accordance with the statutory requirements. Agency staff are all highly trained and procedures are monitored to ensure that the standard and integrity of the test is maintained by all examiners and at all test centres. These procedures help to ensure that driving examiners are totally impartial in their dealings with all customers.

Mitigation

- 4.28 When interviewed, consultees indicated that there is a perception that young men are discriminated against by the Agency when taking a practical driving test. This perception is considered to be reinforced by television advertising campaigns that target young men as the cause of deaths and serious injury on our roads. Some consultees felt that this could influence the outcome of the practical driving test.
- 4.29 In the consultation paper the question was asked..... *Do you feel that the Agency has assessed the situation correctly, and if not, has your organisation any comments it wishes to make?* **Disability Action** highlighted the potential for age related and sexual orientation discrimination to occur simultaneously and this has been noted. **The Women’s Forum Northern Ireland** agreed with the Agency’s assessment of the situation in regard to age.

Marital Status

- 4.30 There was no material variance in the level of satisfaction for persons of different marital status and the overall satisfaction levels expressed in the 2003 customer survey. The customer survey of drivers indicated that 75% of the respondents were single. It is also worth noting that 65% of all respondents were in the 17 to 24 age group.

- 4.31 None of the groups and organisations consulted raised any issues relating to marital status.
- 4.32 Practical driver test candidates are more likely to be 25 years of age or younger (72.3% - Table 1) and single (75% - Customer Survey Annex C). However, qualitative research does not indicate that there are any adverse impacts in the application of the Agency's procedures in relation to a person's marital status.
- 4.33 In the consultation paper the question was asked *Do you feel that the Agency has assessed the situation correctly, and if not, has your organisation any comments which it wishes to make?* **The Women's Forum Northern Ireland** agreed with the Agency's assessment in relation to marital status.

Sexual Orientation

- 4.34 There was no data held on the sexual orientation of applicants for the practical driver tests.
- 4.35 Representatives who were consulted did not consider that there would be any adverse impact.
- 4.36 In the consultation paper the question was asked *Are you aware of any circumstances which would adversely impact upon people of different sexual orientation?* **The Women's Forum Northern Ireland** responded that they were not aware of any circumstances that would adversely impact on people of different sexual orientation.
- 4.37 The Agency does not believe that there is any adverse impact in relation to the application of the Agency's procedures in this category.

Gender

- 4.38 In the six month period ended 31 December 2003, an equal number of men (49.6%) and women (50.4%) applied for a driving test (see Table 1). The customer survey sample for driver respondents was also almost equally divided between men (49%) and women (51%) and reflects the Northern Ireland population statistics which show that 51.3% are women. There was no material variance in the level of satisfaction for persons of different gender and the overall satisfaction levels expressed in the 2003 customer survey.

Table 2 – Northern Ireland Transport Statistics 2002-03 – Pass/Fail Rates by Gender

ALL TESTS (Cars, Motorcycles, Goods Vehicles and PCV)

Year	Gender	Total Applications	Pass	Fail	% Pass	% Fail
2000/01	Male	22601	13218	9384	58.5%	41.5%
	Female	19028	9244	9784	48.6%	51.4%
2001/02	Male	25470	13333	12137	52.3%	47.7%
	Female	21200	9853	11347	46.5%	53.5%
2002/03	Male	30016	16266	13750	54.2%	45.8%
	Female	26191	11948	14243	45.6%	54.4%

4.39 The extract from the Northern Ireland Transport Statistics in Table 2, show that the practical driver test pass rate has been consistently higher for males than females in Northern Ireland over the past three years. There is no evidence to suggest why females are inclined to have a lower success rate than males in the practical driver test.

4.40 During interviews, many representatives suggested that practical driving test candidates should have the option of choosing whether a male or female examiner would conduct their test. This would be particularly relevant for females whose religion requires that they should not be in the company of a male who is not their husband without being accompanied by a family member. Some representatives from other groups suggested that women might be more comfortable with a female examiner.

4.41 In the consultation paper the following questions were asked:

Whilst applications are received in equal numbers from men and women, more women fail the test; why do you think that this is so?

The Agency has outlined its policy relating to recruitment of women and its code of practice for randomly allocating driving examiners to candidates. Have you any comments for improvements

Mitigation

4.42 The Agency randomly allocates practical driving test candidates to driving examiners. In applying this random method of ‘matching’ candidate to examiner the Agency is seeking to protect both staff and customers from any suggestion of collusion, and to protect the integrity of the test.

4.43 At present 20% of the Agency’s full time driving examiners are women and in recruitment advertisements the Agency states ‘as women are under-represented in this discipline, applications from women would be particularly welcome’. The Agency is therefore making every effort to ensure that driving examiners are equally represented by gender. The Agency also removed the requirement for examiners to hold Category C and D driving licences, as historically women were less inclined to drive such vehicles (lorries and buses).

4.44 **The Women’s Forum Northern Ireland** in their response to the consultation paper felt that women are less confident than men and their lower self-esteem militates against their ability to carry out practical tests, but that this was not confined to driving. The Agency would not concur with this view, but there is undoubtedly a trend for women to perform less well than men at the practical driving test, which can be seen across throughout the United Kingdom, and we are not aware of any definitive studies that point to why this might be the case.

4.45 The Agency, for reasons of fairness and the integrity of the test, will not offer to provide female examiners to women who for religious reasons do not want to be unaccompanied by a male examiner. However, all candidates have the right to be accompanied on their driving test by their instructor, a friend or a family member and the Agency would encourage these women particularly to do so

and will highlight the existence of this facility in its test information. **The Women's Forum Northern Ireland** in their response to the consultation paper had nothing to add in regard to the policy relating to allocation of driving examiners for candidates.

Disability

- 4.46 The customer satisfaction survey indicated that 2% of driver respondents had a disability. Disability Action states that 1 in 5 of the Northern Ireland population has a disability, amounting to over 300,000 people (adults and children). The level of satisfaction for persons with disabilities and the overall satisfaction levels expressed in the 2003 customer survey were similar in all areas with the exception of booking where there was a lower level of satisfaction.
- 4.47 Understanding at the time of test may be an issue for some people with disabilities e.g. a person with a hearing difficulty may need the help of a British/Irish Sign Language signer to aid communication before a practical driving test commences. Representatives felt that the cost of signers should be borne by the Agency.
- 4.48 During pre-consultation meetings, representatives of people with disabilities suggested that there may be difficulties surrounding access to information and making an application for testing primarily due to the location of our centres e.g. our centres are located on the perimeter of towns and cities; persons with speech impediments may not be able to use the telephone; and whilst information may be on the Internet many people with disabilities will not have access to a computer. It was suggested that consideration should be given to the time of appointments for disabled people, as they may have considerable difficulty with either early morning or late evening appointments.
- 4.49 The assessment of medical fitness to drive is the responsibility of Driver and Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland, on behalf of DOE. DVLNI have completed an EQIA of the procedures employed to assess medical fitness to drive. Evidence gathered by DVLNI indicated that the procedures used to assess medical fitness to drive had no adverse impact on applicants with disabilities.
- 4.50 In the consultation paper the following questions were asked:

What further improvements could be implemented to enable practical driver test candidates, who have a disability, to take the test?

Is there any way to encourage more disabled people to apply for the practical driving test?

Mitigation

- 4.51 The Agency has upgraded its Centres to meet the standards required in the Disability Discrimination Act which came into force in October 2004. This included improvements to parking facilities, principal entrances, signage and internal doors. A new unisex accessible public toilet and adjacent interview room have also been provided provided.

- 4.52 **The Women's Forum Northern Ireland** in their response to the consultation paper said that that disabled people could be encouraged to apply for their practical driving test if there were user-friendly systems in operation at all times. They also feel that the Agency should give consideration to the time of day that appointments are given, e.g. an ME candidate could not necessarily function as well at 9.30am as at midday – due to the nature of the disability.
- 4.53 When applying for a test, applicants are asked to tell the Agency about any disability that would affect their ability to undergo the test. The Agency will liaise with an applicant who has a disability, if necessary, to agree how best to meet their needs. For example, for deaf candidates, the examiner can use cards indicating which direction the candidate should turn during a driving test; where necessary, additional time is allocated, at no extra cost, to allow the driving examiner and the disabled candidate to discuss any special needs.
- 4.54 The Agency has recently introduced a telephone booking service, which means that most customers do not need to travel to the centre to make a booking. Customers wishing to book an appointment for a driver test for a private car or motorcycle, may book by telephone on 0845 247 2472 (calls charged at local rate) or by Textphone on 0845 247 2474.
- 4.55 When making a telephone booking customers do not need an application form but it is advisable for them to have their theory test certificate, provisional driving licence and credit/debit card details handy when making the call. Customers can be offered a choice of test centre. The Agency can accept applications up to 12 weeks ahead.
- 4.56 Customers may indicate days/dates/times that are not suitable when booking appointments and the Agency will try to accommodate these requests. If appointments are unsuitable they can be changed, without charge, provided sufficient notice is given. Practical driver tests can also be conducted on vehicles specially adapted for use by people with disabilities.
- 4.57 Driving test applicants need to take a practical driving test and demonstrate the ability to meet the statutory requirements for safe driving. In their response to the consultation paper, **Disability Action** stated that the cost of signers for people with hearing difficulties should be borne by the Agency, although they commended the Agency on the facilities available for deaf driving test candidates. If language is a barrier the candidate, at his/her own expense, can use a signer to assist in communication before the test but extra time, if required, will be allocated.
- 4.58 Internet booking is also planned for the near future.

Dependants

- 4.59 There was no material variance in the level of satisfaction for persons with dependants and the overall satisfaction levels expressed in the 2003 customer survey. The customer survey indicated that 18% of the driver respondents had dependants. Dependants were most likely to be children. However, the vast

majority of these dependants (87%) did not need to accompany the respondent to the test.

- 4.60 The information from the customer survey suggests that few candidates for practical driving tests bring dependants when attending centres for tests. However, some organisations would consider that the Agency should provide some facilities for children and for nursing mothers.
- 4.61 In the consultation paper the question was asked *What, if any, additional facilities should be Agency consider in relation to dependants of customers?*

Mitigation

- 4.62 The Agency provides waiting areas and washrooms for all customers. No evidence emerged indicating differentials for people with dependants in relation to the application of the Agency's procedures.
- 4.63 The Agency concluded from the information available that very few dependants need to accompany candidates to practical driving tests. However, for the convenience of customers, arrangements can be made for tests to be conducted, for a higher fee, on Saturdays (all year, 8am to 3.50pm) and on weekday evenings (May to September) from 4.30pm. In their response to the consultation paper, **Disability Action** stated that the Agency should provide Saturday and evening tests at no extra costs to the customer. However, **the Women's Forum Northern Ireland** in their response to the consultation paper felt that no further measures could be taken by DVTA in relation to customers with dependants.

Vehicle Tests

- 4.64 Vehicles are presented at the Agency's test centres for roadworthiness testing. While the Agency maintains records relating to the vehicles and their owners it does not maintain data relating to the presenters of the vehicles, who may not be the owners of the vehicles. The Agency has used the results of the 2003 customer survey to assess the quantitative data. The qualitative analysis involved structured interviews with representatives of groups and organisations who were willing to take part in informal consultations (Annex B paragraph 8). During the interviews the representatives raised a number of key issues. The findings from both quantitative and qualitative analysis are as follows.

Religious Belief

- 4.65 There was no material variance in the level of satisfaction for persons of different religious belief and the overall satisfaction levels expressed in the 2003 customer survey. 49% of respondents to the customer survey stated their religion as Protestant, 32% Roman Catholic, 2% Christian, 1% other religion, 5% no religion stated, 10% refused to answer and 1% gave no answer.
- 4.66 The Northern Ireland census 2001 provides an analysis of vehicle owners by community background which shows Protestants own 60.2% of cars compared

to 37.6% owned by Roman Catholics. No information is available on the age of cars, i.e. cars of 4 years old and over must be presented annually for test.

- 4.67 During interviews none of the organisations consulted raised any issues relating to religious belief.
- 4.68 The Agency considers that its services are equally accessible to customers from all religious backgrounds.
- 4.69 In the consultation paper the question was asked*Do you feel that the Agency has assessed the situation correctly, and if not, has your organisation any comments which it wishes to make?* In their response **The Women's Forum Northern Ireland** agreed that the Agency had assessed the situation correctly in respect of religious belief for vehicle tests.

Political Opinion

- 4.70 There was no material variance in the level of satisfaction for persons of different political opinion and the overall satisfaction levels expressed in the 2003 customer survey. The customer satisfaction survey indicated that 36% of vehicle respondents stated that they were 'of no political persuasion', and there was a fairly even spread between Nationalists and Unionists, 22% and 27% respectively.
- 4.71 During interviews none of the organisations consulted raised any issues relating to political opinion.
- 4.72 In the consultation paper the question was asked *Do you feel that the Agency has assessed the situation correctly, and if not, has your organisation any comments which it wishes to make?* **The Women's Forum Northern Ireland** agreed that the Agency had assessed the situation correctly in respect of political opinion for vehicle tests.
- 4.73 The Agency considers that its services are equally accessible to customers of all political opinions.

Race

- 4.74 There was no material variance in the level of satisfaction for persons of different race and the overall satisfaction levels expressed in the 2003 customer survey. The customer satisfaction survey indicated that 91% of vehicle test respondents were white, compared to the 2001 Northern Ireland census figure of 99.2% of the population being white. In relation to language, 95% of respondents spoke English as their native language; of the 4 respondents who spoke other first languages, 2 spoke Irish and 1 Shona (Zimbabwe).
- 4.75 The customer survey indicates that up to 10% of vehicle presenters may be affected in terms of language where English is not the first language. However the Northern Ireland census 2001 would indicate that 0.7% of the population are vehicle owners from an ethnic group other than white.

- 4.76 A view was expressed that the Agency could improve on the provision of information relatively easily by providing more information in a wider range of languages and to publicise availability of the information. Both provision of information and booking arrangements could be enhanced by the introduction of an interactive translation facility such as the use of a service like “Language Line” which enables users to communicate via a three-way telephone conference.
- 4.77 Some consultees felt that the Agency should ensure that staff are trained to a high standard in customer services including cultural, anti-racism, and disability awareness.
- 4.78 In its consultation paper the question was asked..... *What improvements could be implemented to enable people, whose first language is not English, to present vehicles for test?*

Mitigation

- 4.79 The statistics indicate that there may be a differential impact in terms of language where English is not the first language. The Agency already provides limited information about the vehicle test in Cantonese. It is considering expanding the range of information leaflets that are translated, including availability in more languages. The Agency will consult with the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) and other relevant groups to discuss the best way to make these leaflets available to the people who need them.
- 4.80 Agency staff are trained in customer service and equal opportunities including provision of information, guidance and awareness of discrimination and the dangers of anti-social or intimidating behaviour in the workplace.
- 4.81 The Agency acknowledges that improvements in communication could be achieved in the areas of information and booking by making more information available in a wider range of languages and it will explore the introduction of a “Language Line” facility. Such enhanced services could be made available at a reasonable cost and have the potential to benefit a large proportion of customers.
- 4.82 In their response to the consultation paper **The Women’s Forum Northern Ireland** felt that a review of the agency training programme is urgently needed and should be on-going through regular and systematic assessment and evaluation. The Agency recognises that its training programmes need to be reviewed, updated and repeated in order to ensure that Agency staff provide and continue to provide an impartial, equitable and fair service to all Section 75 groups. The Agency has a planned training programme in place to cover all aspects of customer service, including anti-racism, disability awareness, etc, which will be delivered to all staff on a rolling programme in the coming year.

Age

- 4.83 There was no material variance in the level of satisfaction for persons of different age and the overall satisfaction levels expressed in the 2003 customer survey. The customer survey indicates that 94% of vehicle presenters are over 25 years of age. The Agency does not keep details of vehicle presenters on its databases and does not maintain statistics on vehicle presenters.
- 4.84 Some women's groups suggested that older women may be apprehensive when taking their cars for vehicle tests, mainly because they are unfamiliar with the process and what, if anything, may be required of them during the test.
- 4.85 No evidence emerged indicating differentials for people of any age group, in relation to the application of the Agency's procedures.
- 4.86 In its consultation paper the following questions were asked:

Do you have any comments on why most vehicles are presented for test by people over 25 years of age?

Do you consider that the service provided by the Agency takes account of all age groups equally?

- 4.87 In its response to the consultation paper **The Women's Forum Northern Ireland** suggested that people older than 25 years old present more vehicles for test because younger people can obtain new cars at reduced prices and with free insurance for one year. They maintain that this acts as a magnet and means that most 17-25 year olds drive new/newer cars than the rest of the population.
- 4.88 **The Women's Forum Northern Ireland** agreed that the service provided by the Agency takes account of all age groups.

Mitigation

- 4.89 The vehicle test halls have, over the past three years, been refurbished. The Agency also maintains a section on its website dedicated to demystifying the MOT process that gives customers an overview of test procedures and provides clear information about the test (including photographs). The Agency will also consider the publication of similar information in booklet form.

Marital Status

- 4.90 There was no material variance in the level of satisfaction for persons of different marital status and the overall satisfaction levels expressed in the 2003 customer survey. The customer survey indicates that 69% of vehicle presenters were married.
- 4.91 None of the groups and organisations consulted raised any issues relating to marital status.

- 4.92 Statistically vehicle presenters are more likely to be married. However, qualitative research does not indicate that there are any adverse impacts in the application of the Agency's procedures in relation to a person's marital status.
- 4.93 In the consultation paper the question was asked*Have you any comments on the Agency's procedures as they affect persons of different marital status?* **Disability Action** agreed with the Agency's assessment of impacts on the basis of marital status

Sexual Orientation

- 4.94 There are no data held on the sexual orientation of vehicle test presenters.
- 4.95 Representatives who were consulted both in the pre-consultation phase and in the formal consultation did not consider that there would be any adverse impact upon people of different sexual orientation.
- 4.96 In its consultation paper the question was asked*Are you aware of any circumstances, which would adversely impact upon people of different sexual orientation?* **The Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association** responded that they are unaware of any circumstances that would adversely impact on people of different sexual orientation. **The Women's Forum Northern Ireland** were also aware of no circumstances that would adversely impact on people of different sexual orientation.
- 4.97 The Agency does not believe that that there is any adverse impact in relation to the application of the Agency's procedures in this category.

Gender

- 4.98 There was no material variance in the level of satisfaction for persons of different gender and the overall satisfaction levels expressed in the 2003 customer survey. The customer survey indicates that men are more likely to present vehicles for test than females i.e. 65% of respondents were men, whilst 34% were women.
- 4.99 It emerged during consultations that there may be a perception amongst women generally that vehicle test halls are 'an all male domain' and consequently women may be reluctant to take vehicles for testing. Some women's groups suggested that the Agency should actively recruit female vehicle examiners and that the Agency should project a more balanced image of men and women in its publications (annual reports, Customer Charter, leaflets, etc.) through better use of appropriate photographs and illustrations.
- 4.101 In the consultation paper the following questions were asked:

Do you consider that an illustrated guide to the vehicle testing procedures will help to allay any concerns which presenters may have about the test procedures?

The Agency has outlined its policy of recruitment for women. Have you any comments for improvements?

Mitigation

- 4.102 The vehicle test halls have, over the last three years, been refurbished and the Agency would hope that there now exists an improved setting for all customers. The Agency maintains a section on its website dedicated to demystifying the MOT process that gives customers an overview of test procedures and provides clear information about the test (including photographs). The Agency is also considering the publication of similar information in booklet form. **The Women's Forum Northern Ireland** in their response said that a guide would be useful.
- 4.103 The Agency will monitor the numbers of vehicle tests presented by women in future surveys to assess if improvements help to dispel any 'chill factor' felt by women in the test hall environment.
- 4.104 At present less than 1% of the Agency's vehicle examiners are women. **The Women's Forum Northern Ireland** thought that DVTA should positively discriminate in favour of women at recruitment stage. The Agency is making every effort to address the gender imbalance and ensure that vehicle examiners are equally represented by gender. This includes encouraging women to apply for vehicle examiner posts. Recruitment advertisements state 'as women are under-represented in this discipline, applications from women would be particularly welcome'. In their response to the consultation paper **Disability Action** agreed that DVTA has made every effort to address the imbalance of women examiners compared with males.

Disability

- 4.105 There was no material variance in the level of satisfaction for persons with disabilities and the overall satisfaction levels expressed in the 2003 customer survey. The customer satisfaction survey indicated that 7% of the vehicle test respondents had disabilities. Disability Action states that 1 in 5 of the Northern Ireland population has a disability, amounting to over 300,000 people (adults and children). The Agency calculates that 10% of total tests conducted during 2003/04 were for vehicles presented by people with a disability.
- 4.106 During consultation, representatives of people with disabilities suggested that there may be difficulties surrounding access to information and making an application for testing primarily due to the location of our centres, e.g. our centres are located on the perimeter of towns and cities; persons with speech impediments may not be able to use the telephone; and whilst information may be on the Internet many people with disabilities will not have access to a computer. Consideration should be given to the time of appointments for disabled people, as they may have considerable difficulty with either early morning or late evening appointments.
- 4.107 In the consultation paper the question was asked*Are there other issues for disabled people which you think the Agency should consider in addition to the*

improvements outlined? In response **Disability Action** stated that they had met with the Agency to discuss facilities which should be put in place for people with disabilities.

Mitigation

- 4.108 The Agency has upgraded Centres to meet the standards required in the Disability Discrimination Act which came into force in October 2004. The work included improvements to parking facilities, principal entrances, signage and internal doors. A new unisex accessible public toilet and adjacent interview room have also been provided.
- 4.109 Information about the Agency and the services it provides is published on its Internet site with hard copies normally available at all of its centres. A wide range of information about the Agency (including applications forms) is also available from Driver and Vehicle Licensing NI local offices, which are located throughout Northern Ireland. Customers can also contact the Agency's Customer Services Section, by phone (including minicom), fax or e-mail, and later this year the Agency will introduce internet booking. Customer Services representatives will be happy to provide information in an appropriate format on request.
- 4.110 The Agency has also introduced a new telephone booking service in 2003/04, which means that most customers do not need to travel to the centre to make a booking. Customers wishing to book an appointment for a vehicle test (MOT) for a private car, motorcycle or light goods vehicle (not exceeding 3,500kg), may book by telephone on 0845 247 2471 or by textphone on 0845 247 2474 (calls charged at local rate).
- 4.111 When making a telephone booking customers do not need an application form but it is advisable for them to have their logbook, current test certificate and credit/debit card details handy when making the call. Customers can be offered a choice of test centre.
- 4.112 Internet booking is also planned for the near future.
- 4.113 The Agency has also introduced a reminder service to inform customers in advance that an MOT for their vehicle is due. This will help customers plan their appointment. Although customers are advised to apply at least four weeks in advance, the Agency can, in fact, accept applications up to 12 weeks ahead.
- 4.114 When applying for a test, customers are asked to tell the Agency about any disability that would affect their ability to present their vehicle for a test. The Agency will liaise with the applicant who has a disability, if necessary, to agree how best to meet his or her needs. Customers may also indicate days/dates/times that are not suitable when booking appointments and the Agency will try to accommodate these requests. If appointments are unsuitable they can be changed, without charge, provided sufficient notice is given.
- 4.115 The Agency feels that every measure is in place, or is shortly to be introduced, to facilitate those who can come to the centre and those who

cannot; those who would prefer face to face contact when using services and those who prefer the telephone or other remote systems for booking tests. The new test equipment also means that customers may not need to take the vehicle through the test themselves.

Dependants

- 4.116 There was no material variance in the level of satisfaction for persons with dependants and the overall satisfaction levels expressed in the 2003 customer survey. The information from the customer survey suggests that 39% of vehicle presenters have dependants although the majority of dependants (87%) will not need to accompany the vehicle presenter when attending centres for tests. However, children are welcome to sit in the waiting area with their parent, guardian, or carer, while the test is being carried out.
- 4.117 Whilst few dependants accompany the vehicle presenter to the test centre, there were a few consultees who would consider that the Agency should provide some facilities for children. Facilities for nursing mothers should also be considered.
- 4.118 In the consultation paper the question was asked..... *What, if any, additional facilities at test centres do you suggest the Agency should consider in relation to dependants of customers?*

Mitigation

- 4.119 The Agency provides waiting areas and washrooms in all its test centres. There is no evidence to suggest that differentials emerged for people with dependants, in relation to the application of the Agency's procedures. In their response to the consultation paper *The Women's Forum Northern Ireland* did not suggest any additional facilities for customers with dependents.

General

- 4.120 Many of those interviewed were concerned that the Agency did not remind customers before their MOT was due. They felt that it was too late to get an appointment when they received the vehicle licensing renewal form from Driver and Vehicle Licensing NI.
- 4.121 The Agency has recently introduced a reminder service to inform customers in advance that an MOT for their vehicle is due. This will help customers plan their appointment. Although customers are advised to apply at least four weeks in advance, the Agency can, in fact, accept applications up to 12 weeks ahead.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 For the purpose of this consultation the Agency focused on three key areas, i.e. availability of information relating to the practical driver tests and vehicle tests, booking arrangements for tests, and the customer experience of the tests.

5.2 The Agency has identified that there may be adverse differential impacts, on the following groups:

Religious belief In terms of driving test procedures for women from a Muslim background

Gender: In terms of women who are uneasy about bringing their vehicle for a test and about having a driving test with a male examiner

Race In terms of provision of information, booking arrangements and experience of test (driver and vehicle)

Disability In terms of provision of information, booking arrangements (driver and vehicle) and experience of test (driver only)

5.3 The Agency has considered the potential impacts and is proposing or has introduced the following measures :

- Provision of core information in a range of languages for customers whose first language is not English.
- Some information such as the complaints procedure are already available in Cantonese
- Introduction of an interactive translation facility such as “Language Line” for customers whose first language is not English.
- The Agency has up-graded its Centres to meet the standards required by the Disability Discrimination Act which came into force in October 2004.
- On line booking of vehicle and driver tests is due to be introduced in Spring/Summer 2005.
- The facility to be accompanied on a driving test by an instructor, friend or family member will be highlighted more prominently in the Agency’s information literature
- The Agency will deliver a programme of customer awareness training for all staff, taking into account the need to deliver a high standard of customer service to all customers and to ensure that staff have the skills necessary to deal appropriately with people with disabilities and people from a variety of social, cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds.

6. Monitoring for Adverse Impact

- 6.1 Although this EQIA has been carried out to comply with a commitment in the Department of the Environment's Equality Scheme, the practical driver tests and vehicle tests will continue to be monitored for adverse impacts on Section 75 groups, particularly when policy and legislative changes occur relating to the tests. Monitoring will primarily be conducted through the Agency's annual surveys, and by developing and refining its approach to monitoring quantitatively on pass/fail rates, but will take place formally within two years of publication of this EQIA. and will be presented to the Department in the form of a written report.

7. Publication of EQIA results

- 7.1 This EQIA has been published and copies issued to all consultees to inform them about the process undertaken, its outcomes and the decisions taken by the Agency. Additional copies and copies in alternative formats (such as large print, audio cassette, Braille, or minority languages etc) if desired may be requested from

Deirdre Walsh
Driver & Vehicle Testing Agency
Balmoral Road
Belfast
BT12 6QL
Tel No 028 9054 7959
Email: Deirdre.walsh@doeni.gov.uk

Or by contacting DVTA Customer Services at

Tel: 0845 601 4094 or
Textphone: 028 9066 5453.

- 7.2 The general public has been informed of the availability of this EQIA through a Press Release. The results are also published on the Agency's website at <http://www.dvtani.gov.uk> and at www.nics.gov.uk/pubs/equalityimpact .

Scope of the Equality Impact Assessment

- 1 The Driver & Vehicle Testing Agency (DVTA) has conducted an equality impact assessment (EQIA) of practical driver tests and vehicle tests under the Department of the Environment's Equality Scheme which was submitted to the Equality Commission in 2000.
- 2 The EQIA assessed all aspects of the driver tests and vehicle tests for differential impacts on the nine social groupings specified under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The services listed below come within the scope of the EQIA.

Practical driver tests:

- Practical 'L' tests – to ensure that learner drivers have the knowledge and understanding they need for safe driving;
- Goods vehicle tests – to ensure competence to drive goods vehicles;
- Passenger carrying vehicle tests – to ensure drivers have the skills needed to carry passengers in safety and comfort; and
- Extended driving tests – required as a result of a court order.

Practical vehicle tests:

- Private cars and motorcycles from four years old;
- Light goods vehicles from three years old;
- Trailers, large passenger carrying vehicles and heavy goods vehicles (over 3,500 kgs gross weight) from one year old;
- Buses and taxis from first use; and
- Single vehicle approval - pre-registration inspection of vehicles less than 10 years old that have not been 'type-approved' to UK or European Union standards.

- 3 The following services provided by the Agency were outside the scope of this EQIA:

- Theory tests for learner drivers;
- Approved Driving Instructor scheme;
- Enforcement in respect of the examination of lorries, buses, coaches and taxis for road traffic offences including vehicle overloading; prohibiting defective vehicles from being used; recommending prosecution where appropriate; and examining tachographs;
- Checks on heavy goods vehicles and trailers used internationally under the Transports Internationaux Routiers (TIR) convention;
- Approval and monitoring of tachograph installation and calibration centres;
- Accident reports for PSNI on damaged vehicles;
- Checking repair work on vehicles after defect or prohibition notices have been issued at roadside check points;
- 'Certificate of Initial Fitness' (COIF) for buses manufactured in Northern Ireland for use in Great Britain;
- Vehicle Identity Checks.

Overview of Methodology

- 1 The methodology for the equality impact assessment (EQIA) directly reflects the seven-stage approach advocated by the Equality Commission and entailed quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Pre-consideration of the driver tests and vehicle tests and potential differential impacts

- 2 The Equality Commission's guidance on EQIA exercises provides for a public authority, the DVTA in this case, to use its knowledge of the policy and supporting processes to perform a 'sift' of the equality groupings to eliminate those upon which it considers the scheme would have no differential impact.
- 3 The Agency considered that none of the nine groupings should be 'screened out' because practical driver tests and vehicle tests will affect the majority of the population in Northern Ireland. This consultation document therefore assesses the impact of the policy on all equality groupings, i.e. religious belief, political opinion, race, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability and dependants.
- 4 The methodology for assessment was a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis, followed by a formal consultation. The Agency holds some information about practical driver tests and vehicle tests on its records. The Agency also conducts a customer survey each year and in 2003 included questions on the equality groupings.
- 5 The survey was carried out by MORI MRC on 1600 customers, equally divided between those who had participated in a driving test and in a vehicle test. The response rate for vehicle tests was 50%, and 42% for driver tests, although this was reduced to 47% and 41% respectively as some responses could not be used due to low levels of completion or because of late arrival. Annex C contains relevant extracts from the survey. The full survey can be viewed on the Agency's website at www.doeni.gov.uk/dvta/information/dvtap publications or a hard copy obtained from Customer Service. The 2004 survey has also recently been completed and can be found on the above site.

Quantitative Analysis

- 6 The customer survey provided quantitative data on the following equality categories:
 - religious belief
 - political opinion
 - race
 - age
 - marital status
 - gender
 - disability

- persons with dependants.
7. Additional statistical information was obtained from the DVTA databases - Driving Test Booking System (DTBS) and Booking Services Project (BSP). These yielded information on the number of candidates who took the practical driving test, by age group, and also pass and fail numbers by gender and age. The breakdown of the political opinion in Northern Ireland was provided by the 2001 Local Council Elections (Electoral Office). Statistics were also obtained from the Northern Ireland Census 2001.

Qualitative Analysis

8. The Agency contacted 385 organisations, groups and individuals to ascertain if they wished to be involved at the early stage of the EQIA in informal consultation. Of the replies received, meetings with the following were arranged:
- Mencap
 - Disability Action
 - Chinese Welfare Association
 - Ms Patricia Lewsley, MLA (SDLP)
 - Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)
 - Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Ballymena Depot
 - Down District Council
 - Moyle District Council
 - Sperrin Lakeland Senior Citizens' Forum
 - Western Education and Library Board
 - Training for Women Network
 - Age Concern
 - Newry and Mourne ADI Association
 - Women's Forum
 - Southern Education and Library Board
 - Traveller Movement NI
 - Disabled Drivers Association
 - Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM)
 - Diabetes UK
 - Indian Community Centre
 - Belfast Islamic Centre
 - Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID)
 - The Blind Centre
 - Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO)
9. Attempts were made to meet with a number of other relevant groups without success.
10. A standardised and structured approach was taken to each interview, which involved:

- A brief introduction of the DVTA Equality Impact Assessment process, and why this group in particular had been approached;
- A brief description by the representative of his/her organisation/community group;
- Discussion around the three topics of (a) availability of information relating to the practical driver tests and vehicle tests, (b) booking arrangements for applying for the tests, and (c) the experience of the tests themselves;
- The representative expressed his/her opinion and perception of any issues associated with the practical driver tests and vehicle tests and the community/people they represent.

11. A seminar was also held with the following groups attending:

- Lisburn Auto Salvage
- Road Safety Council NI
- Fleet Solutions (Ireland) Ltd
- Translink
- Retail Motor Industry Federation Ltd
- RTS NI Motorcycling Rider Training Scheme
- Freight Transport Association
- DRD Roads Fleet Management

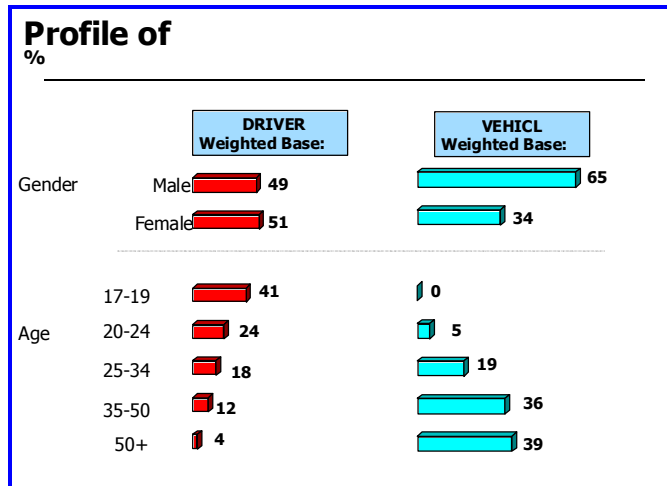
12. Telephone discussions took place with Coalition on Sexual Orientation (CoSO), Transport Training Services, and Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA).

Formal Consultation

13. A consultation letter was issued on 31 March 2004 enclosing a draft EQIA. Seven responses were received and were taken into consideration in producing the final report.

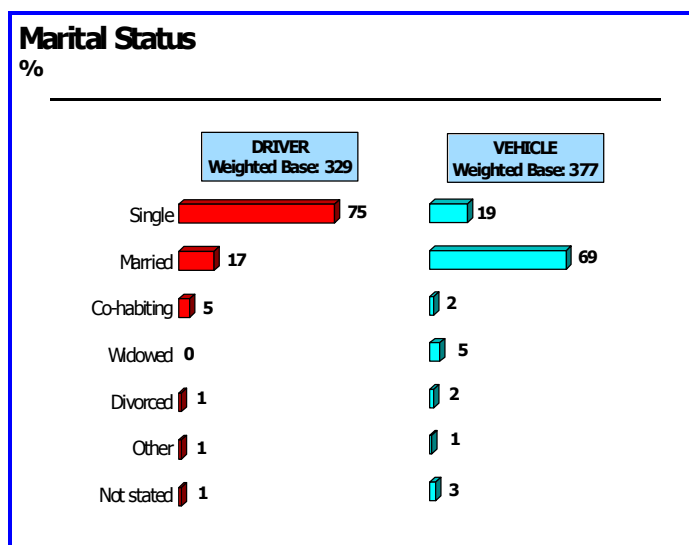
DVTA Customer Survey 2003 - Analysis of Sample

The following charts show the profile of the respondents to the 2003 Customer Survey.

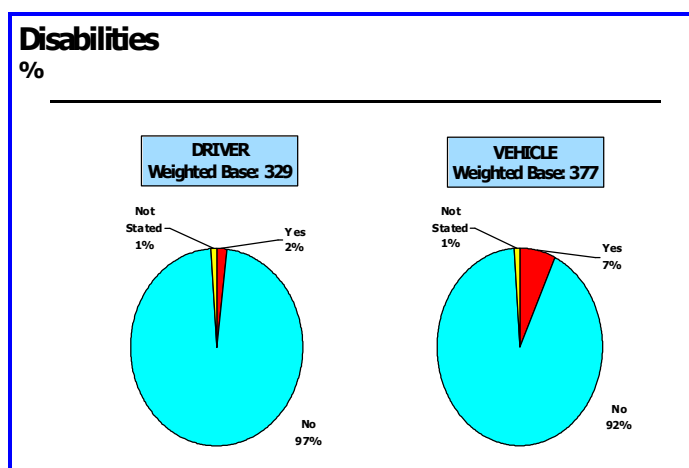


Driver: there was a spread of male and female respondents and a higher percentage of the younger age groups.

Vehicle: Two thirds (65%) of the vehicle test respondents were males compared to 34% females. More vehicle tests were conducted in the older age groups.

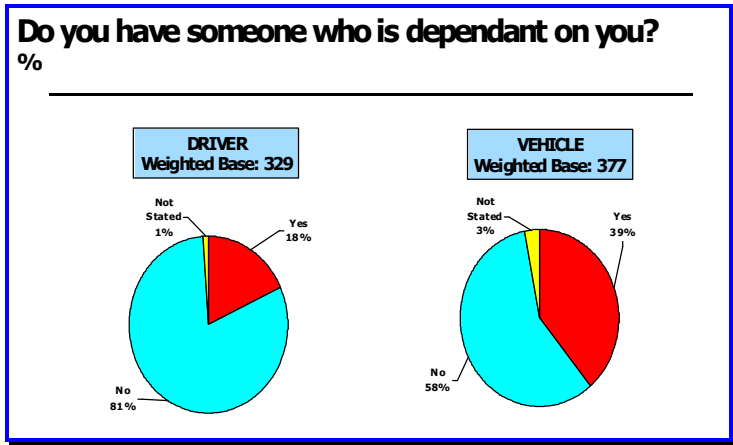


While 75% of the drivers were single, 69% of the vehicle test respondents were married. This reflects the age profiles.



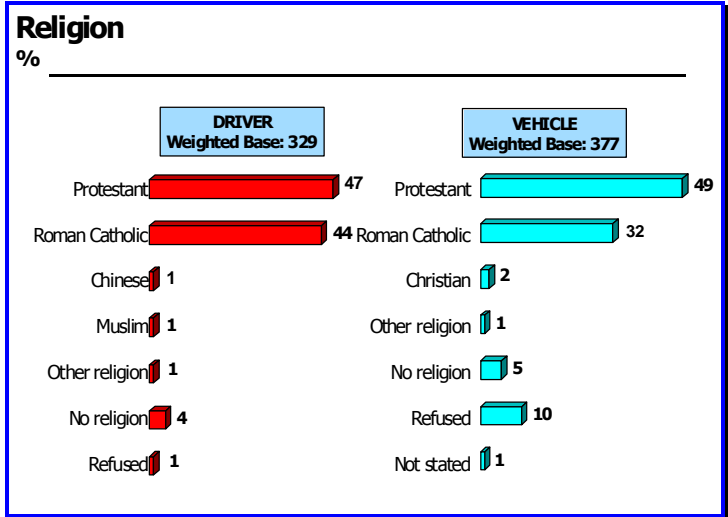
Driver: 2% had a disability. Of these 8 respondents, 3 had hearing difficulties and 2 had sight problems

Vehicle: 7% had disabilities. Of these 26 respondents, 9 had limb impairments, 6 had mobility difficulties or were in wheelchairs, and 4 had hearing difficulties, sight and personal care support problems



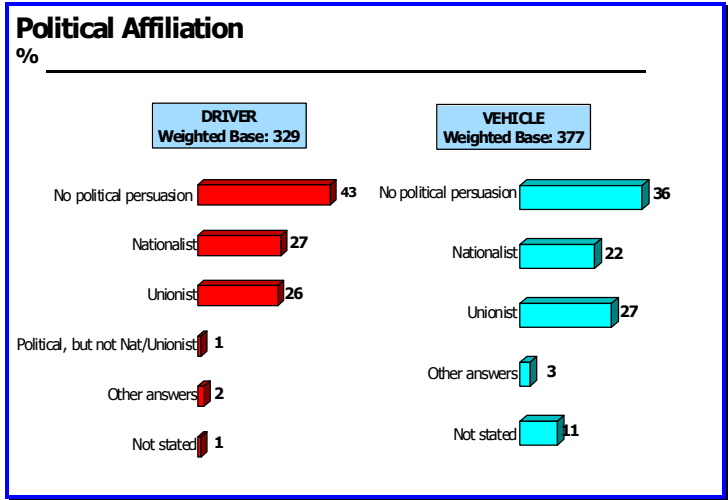
While 18% of the Driver respondents had dependants, 39% - more than twice this proportion of vehicle test respondents had dependants (again reflecting the age profiles).

For both sets of respondents, dependants were most likely to be children. The vast majority of the dependants (87% for each set of respondents) did not need to accompany the respondent to the test.



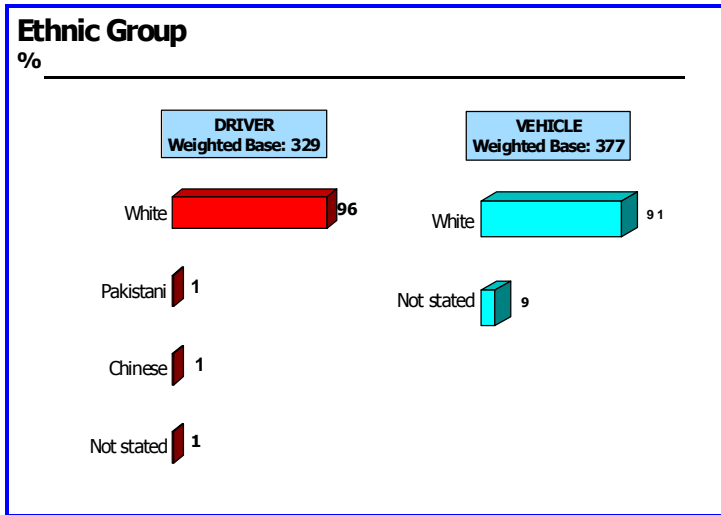
There was an even spread of Protestant and Roman Catholic religions in the Driver sample. The vehicle sample had more Protestant respondents (49%) than Roman Catholic (32%).

More of the respondents in the vehicle sample refused to state their religion.

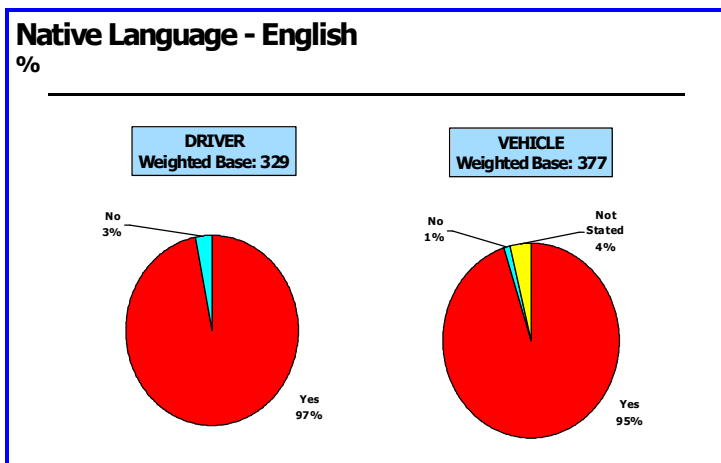


In both groups, the highest percentage of people stated that they were of 'No political persuasion' and there was a fairly even spread between Nationalists and Unionists.

More of the vehicle test respondents did not state their political opinion.



Reflective of the NI Census figures, most respondents (96% Driver, 91% Vehicle) were of white origin.



The majority of the respondents spoke English as their native language.

Driver: of the 8 respondents who spoke other first languages, 4 spoke Chinese and 4 spoke Punjabi/Urdu

Vehicle: of the 4 respondents who spoke other first languages, 2 spoke Irish, 1 Shona (Zimbabwe)

List of Consultees

Age Concern
 Alliance Party
 Amalgamated Transport & General Workers Union
 AMICUS-AEEU
 Antrim Borough Council
 Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland
 Ards Borough Council
 Association of British Insurers
 Automobile Association
 Baha'i Office for NI
 Ballymena Borough Council
 Ballymoney Borough Council
 Banbridge Borough Council
 Belfast Butterfly Club
 Belfast City Council
 Belfast Education and Library Board
 Belfast Hebrew Congregation
 Belfast Islamic Centre
 Belfast Public Hire Taxi Association
 Belfast Solicitors' Association
 Belfast Traveller Education and Development Group
 Bishop of Down and Connor
 Blacks Road Service Station
 British Deaf Association NI
 Bryson House
 Campaign Against Drink Driving
 Carafriend
 Carers National Association NI
 Carrickfergus Borough Council
 Child Poverty Action Group

 Children's Law Centre
 Chinese Welfare Association
 Clerk of Petty Sessions
 Coalition on Sexual Orientation
 Coiste na n-iarchimi
 Coleraine Borough Council
 Commissioner for Children and Young People
 Committee on the Administration of Justice
 Community Development and Health Network
 Community Relations Council
 Community Relations Training and Learning Consortium
 Community Transport Association
 Confederation of British Industry NI
 Democratic Left
 Democratic Unionist Party
 Derry City Council
 Derry Well Woman

Diabetes UK
Disability Action
Disability Committee of the NI Committee, ICTU
Disabled Drivers Association NI
Down District Council
DRD Roads Service
Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council
DVLA (GB)
Employers' Forum on Disability
Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
Equality Forum, SEELB
Falls Community Council
Falls Women Centre
Family Planning Association
Federation of Small Businesses
Fermanagh Women's Network
First Division Association
Fleet Solutions (Ireland) Ltd
Foyle Friend
Foyle Women's Information Network
Freight Transport Association
Gay & Lesbian Youth NI
General Consumer Council for NI
Gingerbread NI
GMBATU
Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
Health & Safety Executive NI
Help the Aged NI
HM Council of County Court Judges
House of Commons Library
House of Lords Library
Hurst Auto Complex
IMS Rider and Driver Training
Indian Community Centre
Inland Revenue, Head of Regulatory Impact Unit
Institute of Advanced Motorists
Institute of Directors
Institute of Professional Legal Studies, The Queen's University of Belfast
Labour Party
Larne Borough Council
Law Reform Advisory Committee
Law Society of NI
Lesbian Line
Lisburn Auto Salvage
Magherafelt Women's Group
McElmeel Mobility Service
Members of the European Parliament
Members of the House of Commons (with the exception of those who do not wish to be consulted)
Members of the House of Lords
Members of the Legislative Assembly (with the exception of those who do not wish to be consulted)
Men's Project, Parents Advice Centre

MENCAP
Ministry of Defence, Parliamentary Clerk
MIRAD
Moyle District Council
MORI MRC
Motorcycle Training
Mr D Crowe
Multi Cultural Resource Centre
National Federation of Self-Employed and Small Businesses
Newry and Mourne ADI Association
Newry and Mourne District Council
Newry and Mourne Senior Citizens Consortium
Newry and Mourne Women
Newtownabbey Borough Council
Newtownabbey Senior Citizens Forum
NI African Cultural Centre
NI Anti-Poverty Network
NI Approved Driving Instructors Association
NI Association for Mental Health
NI Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO)
NI Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux
NI Chamber of Commerce and Industry
NI Chamber of Trade
NI Committee, Irish Congress of Trade Unions
NI Council for Ethnic Minorities
NI Council for Voluntary Action
NI Gay Rights Association
NI Housing Executive (DLO)
NI Human Rights Commission
NI Local Government Association
NI Motorcycle Rider Training Scheme
NI Motorcyclist Federation
NI Owner Drivers Association
NI Pensioners' Convention
NI Private Coach Operators Association
NI Public Service Alliance (NIPSA)
NI Statistics and Research Agency
NI Taxi Proprietors Association
NI Trade Association Ltd
NI Unionist Party
NI Voluntary Trust
NI Women's Aid Federation
NI Women's Coalition
NI Women's European Platform
North Belfast Mutual Association
North Down Borough Council
North East Education and Library Board
North West Community Network
Northern Ireland Affairs Committee
Northern Ireland Assembly Library
Northern Ireland Office, Devolution and Legislation Division

Northern Ireland Ombudsman
Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance
NSPCC
NW Driving Instructors Association
NW Forum of People with Disabilities, Enniskillen and Londonderry
NW Taxi Proprietors Ltd
Occupational Health Services
Office of Law Reform
Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
Omagh Women's Area Network
Playboard
POBAL
Police Authority NI
Police Federation
Police Service of NI
Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Progressive Unionist Party
Putting Children First
Queer Space
Rainbow Project
Relate
Retail Motor Industry Federation Ltd
Road Haulage Association Ltd
Road Safety Council NI
Road Transport Association (NI)
ROSPA
Royal Automobile Association
Royal Mail Vehicle Services Workshop
Royal National Institute for the Blind (NI)
Royal National Institute for the Deaf (NI)
RTS NI Motorcycle Rider Training Scheme
Rural Community Network
S.E.R.E. Motors
School of Environmental Planning, The Queen's University of Belfast
School of Law, The Queen's University of Belfast
School of Law, University of Ulster
Sense NI
Sikh Cultural Centre
Sinn Féin
SIPTU
Social Democratic and Labour Party
Society of Local Authority Chief Executives
South East Education and Library Board
Southern Education and Library Board
Sperrin Lakeland Senior Citizen's Consortium
Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards
Strabane District Council
Swift Transport Training
The Blind Centre
The Cedar Foundation
The Executive Council of the Inn of court of Northern Ireland

The Green Party
The Institute of Advanced Motorists
The Student Support Centre NI
The Women's Centre
Training for Women Network
Translink
Transport Management Group, Water Service
Transport Training Services Ltd
Traveller Movement NI
UCAT
UK Unionist Party
Ulster Automobile Club
Ulster Democratic Party
Ulster Unionist Party
Ulsterbus
Ulster-Scots Heritage Council
ULTACH
UNISON
Volunteer Development Agency
West Belfast Economic Forum
West Belfast Taxi Association
Western Education and Library Board
Westminster Spokespersons on Northern Ireland
White Mountain Quarries
Women Together for Peace
Women's Forum NI
Women's Information Group
Women's Resource and Development Agency
Women's Support Network
Workers Party
Youth Council NI