



**Driver & Vehicle Agency
Driving Theory Test**

**EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT
SECOND MONITORING REPORT**

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This document can be accessed on the internet at

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The main purpose of the Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) is to promote road safety and improve the quality of the environment by implementing the Government's policies on driver and vehicle testing, licensing and on roadside enforcement of road traffic regulations. The Agency aims to promote and improve road safety 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 by maintaining the roadworthiness of vehicles.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 In addition without prejudice to the above obligation, public authorities are required to promote good relations between people of different religious beliefs, political opinion or racial group.
- 1.4 The Agency has conducted an equality impact assessment (EQIA) of driving theory test under the Department of the Environment's Equality Scheme which was submitted to the Equality Commission in 2000. The EQIA was published in January 2005. The EQIA considered differential impacts on the nine social groupings specified under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act. The main findings of the EQIA and the Agency's proposals for mitigation are set out below.
- 1.5 A first Monitoring Report was published in September 2006 covering the period 1st April 2005 to 31st March 2006. This report is the second Monitoring Report and covers the period 1st April 2006 to 31st March 2007. The EQIA and both monitoring reports are available to view on the Agency's website at www.dvani.gov.uk and at www.nics.gov.uk/pubs/equalityimpact and can be made available in alternative formats (such as large print, audio cassette, Braille, or minority languages etc) if desired may be requested by contacting DVA Customer Services at Tel: 0845 601 4094 or Textphone: 028 9066 5453.

2. Main Findings of EQIA

- 2.1 For the purpose of the EQIA the Agency used information gathered from the following sources:

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- data from the then theory test contractor Prometric;
 - interviews with designers of the test and with delivery agents;
 - a postal survey of recent test candidates;
 - a telephone survey of English voiceover users;
 - a focus group of candidates whose first language was Cantonese;
 - interviews and consultation with representative organisations for minority groups.
- 2.2 The Agency identified that there may be adverse differential impacts on the following groups:
- People with Disabilities
 - People Aged 25 and Over
 - People from Ethnic Minorities
 - Women with Dependants
- 2.3 Below is a summary of the measures which the Agency proposed and the actions which have been taken to mitigate against these negative impacts:
- Proposal 1** Enhance awareness of the range of facilities available to assist all candidates taking their test.
- Action** *Information Pamphlet (Fact Sheet)* - An information pamphlet was produced containing information on: background; accommodations available to those with disabilities; how to book; training material; and how to complain. For a period these were distributed to all applicants along with their driving license. The pamphlet was also made available to candidates and instructors at our practical and theory test centres and at various presentations and road shows held by the Agency. In total 13,000 pamphlets were distributed.
- Internet Booking Site* - The Internet booking and information websites have been modified to aid with the identification of the available and most appropriate accommodations.
- Postal Application Form* – The postal application form has been modified to aid with the identification of the available and most appropriate accommodations.
- Proposal 2** Review and improve the telephone booking service. The objective was to present candidates with the test options available without their having to request them and without

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referring to them as 'special' adaptations.

Action *Telephone Booking Service* - The telephone booking service 'Interactive Voice Response' script and Call Centre Operator scripts were extensively redeveloped to encourage candidates to utilise the available facilities and to aid booking staff assist candidates with identifying the most appropriate accommodations. These remain under constant review with Pearson VUE and are amended in response to feedback from candidates. Work to further enhance these scripts is on-going.

Proposal 3 The Agency will accommodate candidates who wish to sit a translator assisted test at all centres through making test facilities available at a time convenient to the candidate but when no other candidates are present in the test centre. Translator costs at all centres are to remain the responsibility of the candidate.

Action *Accommodations Booth* - An accommodations booth is currently being constructed in the Londonderry test centre which will provide full audio and video recording. The booth in Belfast is scheduled to be upgraded to include audio recording. Both these booths will be available to accommodate translated tests.

All other test centres can be closed to accommodate translated tests. Demand for translated tests is monitored monthly and the provision of recording equipment remains under review.

Proposal 4 The Agency will enhance awareness of available training materials by including information in future fact sheets and on the Internet booking site. DVTA will provide assistance to any group wishing to obtain a copyright licence to the theory test item bank to enable them to produce materials designed specifically to meet the needs of their members.

Action *Training Material* - Candidates now have the option to purchase the official Driving Standards Agency (DSA) training material on-line directly from The Stationary Office's website via a link from DVTA's website. In addition, at the conclusion of the theory test telephone booking process, the candidate is given the option of purchasing the official DSA

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training material by phone from The Stationary Office.

Assistance is also provided by DVA to any group wishing to obtain a copyright licence to produce materials designed specifically to meet the needs of their members.

Proposal 5 The Agency will examine the criteria used for allocating extra time to candidates.

Action To date there has not been sufficient evidence to support reviewing the criteria against which extra time is allowed.

Additional Action In addition, the EQIA report identified that there was qualitative evidence to suggest that people from ethnic minorities were more likely to fail the theory test due to: lack of knowledge of how to access the test service and the facilities available to assist them; and the lack of training materials translated in to minority languages. The Agency has increased the available test voice-overs from 5 to 20 minority languages.

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3. Main Findings of 2nd Monitoring Report

3.1 People With Disabilities

3.1.1 A negative impact still remains for people with disabilities following the implementation of the actions detailed in paragraph 2.3. During the period of this monitoring report the pass rate for candidates who availed of the accommodations (extra time, sign-language on-screen video, sign-language interpreter and reader) was 32.9%. This is a decrease of 5.6% against the period of the previous monitoring report (1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006), but an increase of 6.6% against the original Equality Impact Assessment. (See paragraph 4.2.1)

3.2 People Aged 25 and Over

3.2.1 During the period of this monitoring report the pass rate for candidates in the 26 to 35 age group was 76.1% (a decrease of 1.9% against the period of the previous monitoring report - 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006) and the pass rate for the 35 to 44 age group was 75.7% (an increase of 0.2% against the period of the previous monitoring report - 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006). These represent an increase of 21.6% and 25.7% respectively against the original Equality Impact Assessment. There is now neither quantitative nor qualitative evidence to suggest that a negative impact remains. (See paragraph 4.2.2)

3.3 People from Ethnic Minorities

3.3.1 During the period of this monitoring report quantitative evidence gathered as part of the customer satisfaction survey, completed at the end of the theory test, shows that for candidates who responded that they were: Black or Black British; Asian or Asian British; Chinese; Mixed; or Other the pass rate was 69.4%. This is a decrease of 13.9% against the period of the previous monitoring report (1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006), but is comparable to the average pass rate for the period of the report for all candidates of 70.7%. There is now neither quantitative nor qualitative evidence to suggest that a negative impact remains. (See paragraph 4.2.3)

3.4 Women with Dependents

3.4.1 The candidate's status with regard to dependants is currently not captured as part of either the theory test booking function or the satisfaction survey. However, the Agency's annual customer survey which includes questions on the theory test indicates no difference in satisfaction levels between people with dependents and the sample group as a whole. Also, there have been no complaints from candidates regarding any aspect of the test or service on the basis of the candidate being responsible for dependants. (See paragraph 4.2.4)

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4. Evaluation of Mitigating Actions

4.1 Background

This monitoring report analyses both quantitative and qualitative information gathered by the theory test contractor (Pearson VUE). This includes: actual booking and testing information; responses provided by candidates to an on-screen customer satisfaction survey conducted at the conclusion of the theory test; and candidate complaints. This information has been gathered during the period 1st April 2006 to 31st March 2007 and has been used to perform the analysis of mitigating actions. This information is composed of the following:

| Source | Volume |
|--|---------------|
| Theory Tests Conducted - Pass & Fail | 49,750 |
| Candidate Responses to Satisfaction Survey - % Satisfied | 22,452 |
| Written Complaints | 25 |

4.2 Evaluation

4.2.1 People with Disabilities

The EQIA report identified that there was a differential negative impact upon candidates with a disability. Of those candidates who responded to the EQIA postal survey in 2000, who felt that they had a disability (only 19 people) there was a 26% pass rate. During the period of this monitoring report, the pass rate for candidates who availed of the available accommodations (extra time, sign-language on-screen video, sign-language interpreter and reader), was 32.9%. This is a decrease of 5.6% against the period of the 1st monitoring report (1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006), but an increase of 6.6% against the original Equality Impact Assessment. (see table below).

| EQIA - Baseline Pass Rate - 63.3% | <i>People that feel they have a disability</i> |
|--|---|
| 1st Monitoring Report Pass Rate - 72.7% | |
| 2nd Monitoring Report Pass Rate - 70.7% | |
| EQIA Survey Sample Size | 19 |
| Pass Rate (EQIA Survey) | 26.3% |
| 1st Monitoring Report Sample Size | 426 |
| Pass Rate (1st Monitoring Report) | 38.5% |
| Deviation from EQIA (+ / -) | 12.2% |
| 2nd Monitoring Report Sample Size | 347 |
| Pass Rate (2nd Monitoring Report) | 32.9% |
| Deviation from EQIA (+ / -) | 6.6% |

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4.2.2 Age

The EQIA report identified that there was a differential negative impact upon candidates aged 25 and over with a pass rates of 54.5% for the 25 to 34 age group and 50% for the 35 to 44 age group. The age groupings used in the EQIA postal survey differ slightly from those in the quantitative data gathered by the theory test Pearson VUE. The grouping equate as follows:

| EQIA Groupings | Pearson VUE Groupings |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| 25 - 34 | 26 - 35 |
| 35 - 44 | 36 - 45 |
| 45 - 59 | 46 - 60 |
| 60+ | 61+ |

During the period of this monitoring report, the pass rate for the 26 to 35 age group was 76.1% (a decrease of 1.9% against the period of the 1st monitoring report but an increase of 21.6% against the EQIA) and the pass rate for the 35 to 44 age group was 75.7% (an increase of 0.2% against the period of the 1st monitoring report and an increase of 25.7% against the EQIA). There is neither quantitative nor qualitative evidence to suggest that there is a negative impact for these age groups.

| EQIA - Baseline Pass Rate - 63.3% 1st Monitoring Report Pass Rate - 72.7% 2nd Monitoring Report Pass Rate - 70.7% | Age | | | |
|---|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| EQIA Age Groupings | 25 - 34 | 35 - 44 | 45 - 59 | 60+ |
| EQIA Survey Sample Size | 55 | 32 | 19 | 2 |
| Pass Rate (EQIA Survey) | 54.5% | 50.0% | 73.7% | 0.0% |
| New Age Groupings | 26 - 35 | 36 - 45 | 46 - 60 | 61+ |
| 1st Monitoring Report Sample Size | 7007 | 2903 | 1281 | 155 |
| 1st Monitoring Report Pass Rate | 78.0% | 75.5% | 72.7% | 61.3% |
| Deviation from EQIA (+ / -) | 23.5% | 25.5% | -1.0% | 61.3% |
| 2nd Monitoring Report Sample Size | 7773 | 3139 | 677 | 97 |
| 2nd Monitoring Report Pass Rate | 76.1% | 75.7% | 68.7% | 63.4% |
| Deviation from EQIA (+ / -) | 21.6% | 25.7% | -5.0% | 63.4% |

4.2.3 Ethnicity

The EQIA report identified that there was qualitative evidence to suggest that people from ethnic minorities were more likely to fail the theory test due to: lack of knowledge of how to access the test service and the facilities available to assist them; and the lack of training materials translated in to minority languages. The Agency has increased the available test voice-overs from 5 to 20 minority languages. The facility for translator assisted tests remains. Quantitative evidence gathered as part of the customer satisfaction survey completed at the end of the theory test during the period of this monitoring report shows that for candidates who responded that they were: Black or Black British; Asian or Asian

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British; Chinese; Mixed; or Other, the pass rate was 69.4%. This is a decrease of 13.9% against the period of the previous monitoring report (1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006), but is comparable to the average pass rate for the period of the report for all candidates of 70.7%. There is neither quantitative nor qualitative evidence to suggest that there is a negative impact for these age groups.

| EQIA - Baseline Pass Rate - 63.3% | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1st Monitoring Report Pass Rate - 72.7% | |
| 2nd Monitoring Report Pass Rate - 70.7% | <i>Ethnic Minority</i> |
| EQIA Survey Sample Size | * |
| Pass Rate (EQIA Survey) | * |
| 1st Monitoring Report Sample Size | 216 |
| 1st Monitoring Report Pass Rate | 83.3% |
| 2nd Monitoring Report Sample Size | 749 |
| 2nd Monitoring Report Pass Rate | 69.4% |

* No Quantitative Evidence Available

4.2.4 Dependants

The EQIA report identified that there was a differential negative impact upon candidates who indicated that they were women with dependants with a pass rate of 50% against a pass rate of 72.4% for women without dependants. The candidate's status with regard to dependants is currently not captured as part of either the theory test booking function or the satisfaction survey. However, the Agency's annual customer survey which includes questions on the theory test indicates no difference in satisfaction levels between people with dependants and the sample group as a whole. Also, there have been no complaints from candidates regarding any aspect of the test or service on the basis of the candidate being responsible for dependants.

| EQIA - Baseline Pass Rate - 63.3% | | |
|---|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1st Monitoring Report Pass Rate - 72.7% | | |
| 2nd Monitoring Report Pass Rate - 70.7% | <i>With Dependants</i> | <i>Without Dependants</i> |
| EQIA Survey Sample Size | 69 | 317 |
| Pass Rate (EQIA Survey) | 52.2% | 65.6% |
| 1st & 2nd Monitoring Report Sample Size | * | * |
| 1st & 2nd Monitoring Report Pass Rate | * | * |

* No Quantitative Evidence Available

4.2.5 Gender

The EQIA report identified that there was no significant difference in the pass rates based on gender with a pass rate of 58% for men and 67.4% for women. The candidate's gender is captured as part of theory test booking function. Quantitative evidence gathered during the period of this monitoring report shows a pass rate of 68.4% for males and 73.6% for females. There is neither

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quantitative nor qualitative evidence to suggest that there is a negative impact based on gender.

| EQIA - Baseline Pass Rate - 63.3% | | |
|---|-------------|---------------|
| 1st Monitoring Report Pass Rate - 72.7% | | |
| 2nd Monitoring Report Pass Rate - 70.7% | <i>Male</i> | <i>Female</i> |
| EQIA Survey Sample Size | 218 | 174 |
| Pass Rate (EQIA Survey) | 58.0% | 67.4% |
| 1st Monitoring Report Sample Size | 26473 | 20120 |
| 1st Monitoring Report Pass Rate | 70.5% | 75.5% |
| Deviation from EQIA (+ / -) | 12.5% | 8.1% |
| 2nd Monitoring Report Sample Size | 28457 | 21293 |
| 2nd Monitoring Report Pass Rate | 68.4% | 73.6% |
| Deviation from EQIA (+ / -) | 10.4% | 6.2% |

4.2.6 Religion

The EQIA report identified that there was no significant difference in the pass rates based on religion with a pass rate of 65.1% for candidates who indicated that they were 'Protestant', 65.9% for those who indicated they were 'Catholic' and 55.2% for those who indicated 'No Religion'. The candidate's religion is currently not captured as part of either the theory test booking function or the satisfaction survey. However, the Agency's annual customer satisfaction survey which includes questions on the theory test indicates no difference in satisfaction levels between Protestants and Catholics. Also, there have been no complaints from candidates regarding any aspect of the test or service on the basis of religion.

| EQIA - Baseline Pass Rate - 63.3% | | | |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1st Monitoring Report Pass Rate - 72.7% | | | |
| 2nd Monitoring Report Pass Rate - 70.7% | <i>Protestant</i> | <i>Catholic</i> | <i>No Religion</i> |
| EQIA Survey Sample Size | 216 | 164 | 67 |
| Pass Rate (EQIA Survey) | 65.1% | 65.9% | 55.2% |
| 1st & 2nd Monitoring Report Sample Size | * | * | * |
| 1st & 2nd Monitoring Report Pass Rate | * | * | * |

* No Quantitative Evidence Available

4.2.7 Politics

The EQIA report identified that there was no significant difference in the pass rates based upon political persuasion with a pass rate of 70.6% for candidates who indicated that they were 'Nationalist', 63.3% for those who indicated they were 'Unionist' and 64.2% for those who indicated 'Neither'. The candidate's political persuasion is not currently captured as part of either the theory test booking function or the satisfaction survey. However, the Agency's annual customer survey which includes questions on the theory test indicates no

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difference in satisfaction levels between those respondents who indicated that they were Nationalist and those who indicated they were Unionist. Also, there have been no complaints from candidates regarding any aspect of the test or service on the basis of politics.

| EQIA - Baseline Pass Rate - 63.3% | | | |
|---|--------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1st Monitoring Report Pass Rate - 72.7% | | | |
| 2nd Monitoring Report Pass Rate - 70.7% | <i>Nationalist</i> | <i>Unionist</i> | <i>Neither</i> |
| EQIA Survey Sample Size | 34 | 30 | 279 |
| Pass Rate (EQIA Survey) | 70.6% | 63.3% | 64.2% |
| 1st & 2nd Monitoring Report Sample Size | * | * | * |
| 1st & 2nd Monitoring Report Pass Rate | * | * | * |

* No Quantitative Evidence Available

4.2.8 Marital Status

The EQIA report identified that there was no significant difference in the pass rates based upon marital status with a pass rate of 64.3% for candidates who indicated that they were 'Single' and 57.1% for those who indicated they were 'Married'. The candidate's marital status is not currently captured as part of either the theory test booking function or the satisfaction survey. However, the Agency's annual customer survey which includes questions on the theory test indicates no difference in satisfaction levels between respondents on the basis of marital status. Also, there have been no complaints from candidates regarding any aspect of the test or service on the basis of marital status.

| EQIA - Baseline Pass Rate - 63.3% | | |
|---|---------------|----------------|
| 1st Monitoring Report Pass Rate - 72.7% | | |
| 2nd Monitoring Report Pass Rate - 70.7% | <i>Single</i> | <i>Married</i> |
| EQIA Survey Sample Size | 325 | 49 |
| Pass Rate (EQIA Survey) | 64.3% | 57.1% |
| 1st & 2nd Monitoring Report Sample Size | * | * |
| 1st & 2nd Monitoring Report Pass Rate | * | * |

* No Quantitative Evidence Available

4.2.9 Sexual Orientation

The EQIA report stated that there was no evidence to suggest any differential impacts relative to sexual orientation. The candidate's sexual orientation is not currently captured as part of either the theory test booking function, the theory test satisfaction survey or the agency's annual customer satisfaction survey. However, there has been no complaints from candidates regarding any aspect of the test or service on the basis of sexual orientation.

5. Conclusions

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- 5.1 The Agency has considered the potential impacts identified in the EQIA report and has introduced a number of measures to mitigate against the identified negative impacts.
- 5.2 For those Section 75 groups where a negative impact was identified in the EQIA report, the mitigating actions taken by the Agency have seen a positive impact upon theory test pass rates.
- 5.3 Where quantitative data is not currently captured as part of the theory test booking process or the customer satisfaction survey, the Agency will consider with the Driving Standards Agency and with Pearson VUE, under the terms of the joint-authorities contract, options for future collection of this information.