



Customer Satisfaction Survey 05 The Diversity Perspective Report

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of a survey of DVLA customers carried out by DVLA's Market Research Team and builds upon the findings of the 2004 survey. The aim of the report is to discover how different groups of customers understand, use and rate the services provided by the Agency. It also seeks to measure their response against previous years, to identify improvements, and recommend changes to the way in which services are provided to make them accessible to all.

The DVLA is committed to raising standards and annually conducts Customer Satisfaction Surveys to ensure that the high standards are maintained or improved upon as set out in the Secretary of State targets. In 2005 the Secretary of State target for customer satisfaction was to maintain or improve customer satisfaction at the 2004 level of 88%.

This survey measured satisfaction levels of services, delivery methods (including the new online facilities) and facilities available to customers at DVLA Swansea, the Local Office Network and the Post Office and third parties as agents of the DVLA.

DVLA AND DIVERSITY

The information gathered from conducting surveys such as this is also valuable in providing evidence for the compliance with the Equality Legislation that the DVLA is bound by as a Public Sector Organisation. This includes the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and its 2004 and 2006 amendments.

To evidence compliance the information from this survey has been filtered on what are known as the Diversity Strands. These are the ethnicity of a customer, a customer's age, a customer's gender and whether or not a customer is disabled. This filtered information has enabled us to establish how DVLA services are perceived and accessed by different sections of the public and to make recommendations to overcome any barriers.

RESPONSE RATE AND CUSTOMER PROFILE

This survey was sent by post to 7999 customers in October 2005 who had recently been in contact with the DVLA. Of these, 1617 (20%) customers responded. This is an increase of 1.35% over the response rate of 18.65% in the 2004 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

The small size of the survey and low response rate mean that the results are an indication only in respect of specific issues and, depending on the method of contact customers made, not all questions were applicable to all customers.

- The gender split of respondents was 951 (60%) male and 647 (40%) female.

- More than a third of customers responding were in the 61+ age bracket.
- Of the customers who replied, 87 (5.4%) declared themselves as being from a Black Minority Ethnic background (BME) compared with 6.5% in 2004.
- 816 (50.5%) declared themselves as being from a white background.
- 78 customers (4.8%) considered themselves to be disabled compared with 8% in 2004.

(From this it is evident that the Diversity Monitoring section of the questionnaire was not filled in by all customers).

KEY FINDINGS

- 88% of customers were either satisfied or very satisfied with the overall service that they had received from DVLA in their most recent contact. There were high satisfaction levels across all customer groups.
- As found in 2004, the majority of customer contact with DVLA was written contact via the Postal service, a personal visit, either at DVLA Swansea or a DVLA Local Office or a third party such as the Post Office or auto dealer
- A larger proportion of disabled customers compared to other groups preferred to contact DVLA via the telephone – around a 10% increase on the previous year's findings and they were the group which expressed the highest rate of satisfaction with this service. However, there was still considerable dissatisfaction with the length of time taken to access the system and the automated responses.
- Whilst disabled customers expressed a high level of satisfaction with opening hours of the DVLA Local office, 40% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the convenience of the office in relation to their home.
- 20% of disabled customers stated that they were dissatisfied with Local Office facilities and 27% with disabled access to DVLA premises compared with 13% in respect of the latter in 2004.
- Customers in the age group 61+ (representing more than a third of respondents) were the most satisfied (90+%) in respect of time taken to obtain a response, helpfulness and courtesy of staff, the way in which their query/application was handled, the availability of leaflets and ease of understanding and completing forms.
- Customers in the age group 61+ were the least satisfied with the time spent queuing at DVLA premises.
- 19% of respondents from BME backgrounds said that they had to make repeat enquiries – a slight improvement on last year's response of 23%.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Involve customers in the local communities, including local BME and disability groups, to improve services and determine any specific accessibility problems.
- Expand the Directgov website to increase the facility for customers to transact online with DVLA and ensure that it is accessible to all by making it speech enabled.
- Include an information page on the DVLA and Directgov website providing information specifically for customers with a disability and/or special needs.
- Ensure that GPs and relevant medical practitioners are made aware of any revisions to medical standards and post on the website periodically.
- Include GP's when advising customers of 'Disabled access'.
- Build upon the improvements made in respect of facilities, wheelchair access to premises and front of house signage.
- Ensure Estates Management Group and the Diversity Unit complete access audits and agree the re-auditing intervals.
- Provide additional guidance for staff on handling customer issues particularly when assisting disabled customers.
- Provide targeted translation of information based on identified demand/need.
- Continue to improve the LON queue management system and telephone services. Ensure Charter Mark recommendations and LO Customer Service Development Plans are implemented.
- Include actions to address access and diversity issues for customers in the DVLA Diversity Action Plan.
- Address the significant areas of dissatisfaction with the services provided by DVLA (e.g. time taken to get through on the phone, facilities available to customers at DVLA premises and time spent queuing at DVLA premises) in the Local Office Customer Service Development Plan and report back to customers via the website.

IMPROVEMENTS FROM 2004

Many of the issues raised in the 2004 customer survey have been highlighted again in 2005. However, improvements have been put in place to address some of these and make services more accessible.

- The new on-line facilities have enabled more customers to use this method. Although a few customers said had difficulty making transactions on the website many appreciated this method of renewing car tax and would like to see its applications extended.
- The queuing system in Local Offices has been improved to reduce waiting times.
- Some Local Offices have had improvements made in respect of access to their premises and facilities.

- More information is provided on the DVLA website as to the location of the nearest facilities, e.g. parking, toilets etc. where these are limited or not available at Local Offices
- Staff are more aware of the need to provide assistance to customers including helping them to make complaints through the contact centre.

OVERALL FINDINGS

The following is a breakdown of the findings of each question of the survey. Each breakdown has an overall appraisal of the answers given and any substantial contrasts of answers from each of the diversity groups.

Points of contact

81% of customers who responded had contacted the DVLA in relation to vehicle enquiries. The other 19% of customer contacted the DVLA with driver enquiries.

As found in 2004, the majority of customer contact with DVLA was written contact via the Postal service, a personal visit, either at DVLA Swansea or a DVLA Local Office or a third party such as the Post Office or auto dealer.

Only 1.8% of customers used electronic methods such as Electronic Vehicle Licensing (EVL) or email to contact DVLA.

21.1% of Disabled customers compared to other groups preferred to contact DVLA via the telephone in comparison to between 6% and 12% in all other groups. There was an increase of Disabled customers contacting us by telephone of around 10% compared to the previous year's survey.

In addition to the previous year's services available to customers Electronic Vehicle Licensing (EVL) was introduced. There was a very low take up on this which may be due to the survey being conducted before the national launch and during the pilot phase of EVL. Overall only 1% of customers had used EVL in their most recent contact.

Service Provision

Time taken to obtain a response

There was a high level of satisfaction across all groups regarding the time taken to obtain a response with 76.5% of customers either satisfied or very satisfied. The most satisfied group were customers aged 61+ where 90.6% of them said they were satisfied or very satisfied.

The helpfulness of staff

Overall the helpfulness of staff was rated very high across all groups. The most satisfied group were aged 61 and above where 95.7% of customers said they were satisfied or very satisfied.

Courtesy of staff

The majority of customers were either satisfied or very satisfied with the courtesy of staff at DVLA with overall satisfaction of 74.3%. This is represented across all groups with the age group of 61+ having a satisfaction level of 97.1%.

Quality of advice

The quality of advice given was received well by customers all Diversity groups recorded satisfaction levels of above 80%. This question was not applicable to 26.5% of all respondents.

Speed at which the query was resolved

There was a high level of satisfaction across all groups with regard to the speed at which their queries were resolved. Overall 80.5% of all customers said they were satisfied or very satisfied. A small proportion disabled customers felt that the speed in which their application or query was dealt with could be improved with 9.5% of disabled customers who answered this question declaring themselves as dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

The overall way in which the query/application was handled

There was a high level of satisfaction in response to the overall way customer's queries or applications were handled. All groups satisfaction levels were above 80%, the most satisfied groups was customers ages 61+ with satisfactions levels of 92%.

Repeat enquiries

Only 161 of all the respondents felt that they needed to make repeat enquiries to the DVLA. This represents 10% of all respondents. Of the respondents who said that they were from a BME background, 18.9% said that they had to make repeat enquiries. Similarly of those who said they were disabled 12.3% said they had to make repeat enquiries with 6.8% of them having to make contact two or more times. This is a slight improvement on last year where 23% of Ethnic minority customers had to make repeat enquiries.

DVLA Facilities

There were a large number of customers in this section for whom some of the questions were not applicable. Therefore, we have calculated answers based only on the responses that were applicable.

Opening hours at DVLA Local Office

This was not applicable to many customers. Of those who found it applicable 73% were satisfied or very satisfied. The most satisfied group were Disabled

customers where 79% declared themselves as satisfied or very satisfied. The least satisfied group were customers aged 22 to 30 where only 54% of customers declared themselves satisfied or very satisfied which may reflect comments on the difficulty found in attending during working hours.

Convenience of the DVLA Local Office in relation to your home

Again this question was not applicable to the majority of customers. 54.1% of those for whom it did apply found the convenience of local offices in relation to their home satisfactory or very satisfactory and 20.1% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. 40% of Disabled customers, for whom this question was applicable, declared themselves as dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Finding the appropriate person to speak to

Of those who found it applicable, 86.7% declared themselves as satisfied or very satisfied. However, 16.8% of customers from the age group of 46 to 60 and 11.1% of males were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Finding the information you required

The majority of customers were satisfied with finding the information they required. There were instances where customers declared dissatisfaction. The most dissatisfied group was customers aged 46 to 60 where 15.2% of customers declared themselves as dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Facilities available to customers at DVLA premises

Overall customers were slightly more satisfied than dissatisfied with the facilities available at DVLA premises. 43.5% of customers who felt this was applicable to them said that they were satisfied or very satisfied and 24.4% said that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. The most satisfied group were females where 47.3% declared themselves as satisfied or very satisfied. There were prominent dissatisfaction levels amongst the groups ranging from 15% to 30%. The most dissatisfied group were customers aged 46 to 60 where 29.8% of them declared themselves dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

In 2004 there were also prominent dissatisfaction levels where 20% of disabled customers stated they were dissatisfied with the facilities available at DVLA.

Disabled access to DVLA premises

Of those who thought it was applicable 45.7% of customers felt that disabled access to DVLA was satisfactory or very satisfactory compared with 55% last year. Only 10% of those customers felt that it was not. Of the disabled customers who answered the question, 27.3% said that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied compared with 13% last year.

Time taken to get through to a member of staff on the telephone

Although 48.1% of customers who found this applicable were satisfied or very satisfied, there was a large proportion, 28%, of customers who were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. The most satisfied group were disabled customers, where 62.6% of customers said they were satisfied or very satisfied, who were closely followed by females at 57.3%. The most dissatisfied group were males where 31.1% declared themselves as dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

However, from the comments provided on this question, there was considerable amount of customer dissatisfaction with the Interactive Voice Recognition system used to get through to a member of staff on the telephone. This includes comments around the number of options and the amount of time spent trying to get through to an operator.

Time spent queuing at DVLA premises

44% of those who thought it applicable were satisfied or very satisfied with the queuing times at DVLA premises. 22% of those felt that it was not. The most satisfied group were females where 51.1% of them declared themselves are satisfied or very satisfied and the least satisfied group were customers aged 61+ where 27.9% of them said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

The quality of the website

Of those who had accessed the DVLA website, 66% declared themselves as satisfied or very satisfied. Only 5.7% of those said that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. The most satisfied group were customers aged 16 to 21, who are more likely to use electronic services, where 80% of them declared themselves as satisfied or very satisfied.

Internet services

Only 61.5% of all customers said that they had access to the Internet. The group who had least amount of access to the Internet were customers age 61+ where only 34.2% of those customers had access and more women than men had access to internet.

Of those who had Internet access, only 26.4% had accessed the DVLA website services and 11.5% had accessed the Direct.gov website. More young customers accessed the electronic services than older customers. Although more women than men had access to the Internet, more men than women chose to access the electronic services.

The main reason for accessing the internet sites were vehicle enquiries at 18.5%, driver information at 15.2%, personalised registration marks at 13% and other purposes at 22.3%. This was the same across all groups.

Forms in other languages

Only 2.9% of all customers said that they would use forms in languages other than English or Welsh, however, 16.3% of BME customers said that they would use translated forms which is the same as in 2004.

Provision of information

There were large numbers of customers in this section for whom some of the questions were not applicable. Therefore, we have calculated answers based only on the responses that were applicable.

Printed information provided by DVLA in the most recent contact

Availability of information leaflets

The vast majority of customers, 86.5% were satisfied or very satisfied with the availability of information leaflets the DVLA provide. Only 1.3% were not satisfied. The most satisfied group were customers aged 61+ where 90.9% said they were satisfied or very satisfied.

Ease of understanding

84.4% of customers thought that the forms provided were easy to understand. Only 2.2% of customers thought that they were not. The most satisfied group again were customers aged 61+ of whom 90.2% said they were satisfied or very satisfied.

Ease of completing forms

86.2% of customers felt that the forms at DVLA were easy to complete, 1.9% did not. There were high rates of satisfaction across all groups and 92% of customers aged 61+ said they were satisfied or very satisfied.

Accuracy of the printed information

There were high satisfaction levels with the accuracy of printed information from customers. 88.1% of customers declared themselves as satisfied or very satisfied. This was the trend across all of the Diversity strands.

Relevance of information

Overall, 84.9% of customers were satisfied or very satisfied with the relevance of the information that they were provided and only 2.5% were not. There were particularly high satisfaction rates where 88.2% of females declared themselves as satisfied or very satisfied.

Quality of printed information

88.2% of customers felt that the quality of printed information was satisfactory or very satisfactory. There were high levels of satisfaction amongst all groups and customers aged 61+ were most satisfied where 92.4% declared themselves as satisfied or very satisfied.

Accuracy of documentation

Overall 97.2% of customers said that the documentation they had received was correct. There was very high levels of satisfaction across all groups.

Of those who said that it was incorrect 60.6% returned the documentation for it to be amended. The number of customers across each group who felt they needed to return their documentation as it was inaccurate was low.

Obtaining information

Forms and Leaflets

The majority of customers found out where to gain information from the application form at 32.5% or from the Post Office at 31.1%.

These are similar to the 2004 results where most customers gathered information from the application form and the Post Office.

The most popular way of obtaining information was from information leaflets. This was similar across all groups.

TV

28.8% of customers said they had obtained information via television advertising except for disabled customers where only 17.7% had obtained information from the television.

In 2004, between 22% to 40% of customers stated that they had gained information from TV.

Internet

Only 20.6% of customers had obtained information via the Internet. However, on the question of medical fitness to drive, around 24% of customers aged 16 to 45 said they would seek advice from the DVLA or Directgov websites. Recommendation: Dedicate a page for disabled customers.

Phone

7.9% of customers had received information over the telephone from DVLA Swansea. However, on the question of medical fitness to drive, 19.6% said they would seek information from the DVLA by telephone.

Forms of Communication

The most popular choice of communications from DVLA, with 74.4% of customers, was by letter. This was the same preference in 2004. Other

popular choices included 28.9% customers preferring television and 37.4% of customers preferring information leaflets. The least popular choice overall was Mobile phone text messaging. Younger people wanted information through email and the website and more disabled customers than other groups wanted information via the telephone.

Awareness

Medical conditions

95.6% of customers were aware that they needed to notify DVLA if they developed or had a condition that might affect their ability to drive and 91% said that they would seek advice on their medical fitness to drive from their General Practitioner. The lowest awareness levels came from customers aged 22 to 30 where 88.7% of those customer said they were aware that they needed to notify DVLA.

DVLA involvement

93.4% of customers thought that the DVLA worked with the police to help enforce the law and 85% thought DVLA ensured drivers were insured when they licensed their vehicle. Only 68.8% of customers thought DVLA were involved with keeping disqualified drivers off the road and only 69% thought that DVLA was responsible for registering number plate suppliers. This was similar across all diversity groups.

Overall impression

87.1% of customers felt that DVLA was effective or very effective as an Agency. There were similar results across all groups.

Overall satisfaction

88% of customers were either satisfied or very satisfied with the overall service that they had received from DVLA in their most recent contact which is in line with the Secretary of State target of 88% satisfaction outlines at the beginning of this report. High satisfaction levels were expressed across all customer groups.

This is similar in comparison to last year's result, which was 87% to 88%.

Areas for Improvement

23% of respondents whose most recent contact was by personal visit were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied with the time spent queuing at DVLA premises.

24% of all respondents were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied with the facilities available to customers at DVLA premises (e.g. waiting area, car parking etc).

There was a 15% decrease in overall satisfaction since the 2004 survey among respondents whose most recent contact was by telephone and IVR.

The satisfaction level of customers that had to make repeat enquiries [52%] was much lower, compared to the satisfaction level of customers that did not have to make repeat enquiries [92%].

Recommendations

Involve customers in the local communities, including local BME and disability groups, to improve services.

During 2006, the DVLA website is due to merge with the Directgov website. With an increasing use of electronic channels there is a need to look at ways to develop and expand the Directgov website to increase the facility for customers to transact online with DVLA and ensure that they are accessible to all.

GPs were considered an important source of advice on medical standards of fitness to drive. It is important to ensure that GPs and relevant medical practitioners are made aware that any revisions to medical standards are posted on the website periodically. This would ensure that GPs provide DVLA customers with up to date information on medical conditions that could affect their ability to drive.

Build upon the improvements made in respect of wheelchair access to premises and front of house signage.

Provide additional guidance for staff on handling customer issues particularly when assisting disabled customers.

Continue to improve the queue management system.

Provide targeted translation of information based on identified demand/need.

Include actions to address access and diversity issues for customers in the DVLA Diversity Action Plan. Address the significant areas of dissatisfaction with the service provided by DVLA (e.g. time taken to get through on the phone, facilities available to customers at DVLA premises and time spent queuing at DVLA premises) in the Local Office Customer Service Development Plan and report back to customers via the website.

Reference Documents

This report was written alongside DVLA Market Research Team's (Business Innovation Support) report on this survey. A summary of which is available on the DVLA website under publications.