

DVLA CUSTOMER SURVEY DIVERSITY REPORT 2006/7

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of a survey of DVLA customers carried out in 2006 by the Market Research Team, from a diversity perspective and builds upon the findings of the 2004 and 2005 surveys. 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 has annually conducted Customer Satisfaction Surveys to ensure that high standards are maintained or improved upon as set out in the Secretary of State targets. In 2006/7 the target was to maintain or improve customer satisfaction at the 2005/6 level of 88%.

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

DVLA AND DIVERSITY

The information gathered from conducting surveys such as this is also valuable in providing evidence for compliance with equality legislation that the DVLA is bound by as a Public Sector Organisation. This includes the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and its 2004 and 2006 amendments, The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and The Equality Act 2006, in respect of gender equality.

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

RESPONSE RATE AND CUSTOMER PROFILE

In October 2006 this survey was sent by post to 8,000 customers who had recently been in contact with the DVLA. Of these, 1,423 responded (18%). This compared with a 20% response rate the previous year.

The small size of the survey and low response rate, coupled with the fact that not all questions were applicable to all customers, means that these results are only an indication of differences between the groups monitored.

KEY FINDINGS

- The Diversity monitoring section of the questionnaire had high completion rates for gender (99%), disability (97%) and nationality (95%) questions but only 56% of respondents completed the ethnicity section.
- 91% of customers were either satisfied or very satisfied with the overall service that they had received from DVLA in their most recent contact, an increase of 3% from 2005. There were high satisfaction levels across all customer groups.
- The overall satisfaction of customers who had to make a repeat enquiry was 68% compared with 94% of those who did not. This may negatively impact more on BME groups who proportionally had more repeat enquiries.
- The main reason for dissatisfaction was facilities available to customers at DVLA premises and their location. This may negatively impact more on BME and disabled customers who have proportionally higher dissatisfaction rates and also, traditionally, women.
- 15% of respondents were dissatisfied with the time taken to get through to a member of staff on the telephone and time take to obtain a response. This may impact more on disabled staff who proportionally make greater use of telephone contact and have recorded higher dissatisfaction rates.
- Dissatisfaction with time spent queuing is down from 22% in 2005 to 14% in 2006. However, proportionally, queuing may impact negatively slightly more on BME customers as they recorded higher dissatisfaction rates.
- Satisfaction with disabled access to premises increased from 46% in 2005 to 66% in 2006. However, access to premises impacts more negatively on disabled customers and those with children (traditionally women) and may affect more BME customers as they recorded slightly higher dissatisfaction rates.
- The most common means of obtaining information was via leaflets (53%) although this has declined by 5% since 2005. Use of the internet has increased substantially but this method is less accessible to disabled customers and those over 61 who have less access to the internet than other groups.

CONCLUSIONS

- It is important to improve the response rate to the ethnicity monitoring section of the questionnaire.
- Although very high rates of satisfaction have been recorded for all groups of customers there are a number of areas which still need to be addressed and which may proportionally adversely impact on certain groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The low response rate to the ethnicity question may be due to the number of categories on the form. As the BME categories comprise very low numbers they are not meaningful when broken down. It is recommended, therefore, that in the next survey the categories be reduced to see if it results in a higher response rate. order to increase the response rate. The categories could be confined to White and BME (Asian, black, mixed ethnic background white Chinese, any other ethnic background). (For larger surveys it may be feasible to use the full range of ethnic categories)

In respect of customers having to make repeat enquiries consideration should be given to undertaking an exercise to identify the business areas/transactions that result in repeat enquiries. Use should be made of this information to identify why this may affect some groups, and BME customers in particular, more than others.

Facilities at DVLA premises caused highest dissatisfaction. Further consideration should be given to assessing the viability of providing facilities such as toilets or seats to improve the customer experience particularly for disabled, elderly, pregnant women and customers with children.

Although the call centre performance has improved since 2005 further consideration should be given to improving the response time to telephone enquiries.

Continue to work with Charter Mark team and Facilities Management to identify means to reduce queuing times and improve access to premises.

Although access to internet facilities is growing and many customer groups are able to take advantage of services provided on-line, it is important to continue to provide services by other means for those groups who do not have computer access.

Consider how diversity issues can be identified in developing and monitoring ongoing customer service initiatives such as in the PO mystery shopper exercises and LO feedback cards.

It has been proposed that the online panel research facility should be utilised throughout 2007 to measure assess and record customer views and perceptions of the DVLA and its processes. The panel should allow for continuous feedback from a designated panel of customers. **It is recommended that the panel and customers selected should reflect the diversity of the population served by the Agency.**

DETAILED RESULTS

Of the customers who completed the monitoring form:

- 874 (62%) were male and 533 (38%) were female compared with 60% male and 40% female in 2005
- 52 (3.8%) considered themselves to be disabled compared with 4.8% in 2005
- 65% were English and 22% British or Mixed British and 12% were of other nationalities
- 91 (11%) were from a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) background compared with 5.4% in 2005, of these the largest groups were Asian (3%) and Black(1%)
- 705 (89%) were from a white background
- ? (36%) were in the 61+ age bracket which was in line with 2005

Of the customers who completed the questions in each category:

Method of Contact

- As in previous surveys the majority of customer contact with the DVLA, for all groups, was written contact via the postal service or a personal visit (at DVLA Swansea or the Post Office)
- A slightly higher proportion of BME customers (46%), compared to white (35%), used the post office but less used personal visit to DVLA offices (35% compared with 45%)
- A slightly higher proportion of disabled customers (20%), compared to other groups, preferred to contact the DVLA via the telephone as in the 2005 survey
- 66% of white and BME customers had access to the internet
- Only 51% of disabled customers had access to the internet
- Only 35% of customers over 61 had access to the internet
- Proportionally slightly more women (64%) than men (60%) had access to the internet but slightly fewer women(41%) than men (46%) had obtained services via the website

DVLA Premises and service

- Proportionally slightly more disabled customers were dissatisfied with the location of DVLA premises (27%) than other groups but this is less than 2005 (40%). This also applied to dissatisfaction with access (22%) which is slightly down on 2005 (27%)
- Proportionally more BME (46%) customers were dissatisfied with facilities at premises and disabled access (40%) compared with other groups (based on a very low response to this question)
- Slightly more BME(23%) customers dissatisfied with time spent queuing at premises
- Slightly higher proportion of BME (13%) customers had repeat enquiries

Response times

- Proportionally slightly more disabled (23%) customers were dissatisfied with time taken to get through to staff on the telephone
- Slightly more BME (12%) customers were dissatisfied with response times

Leaflets and application forms

- 17% of BME customers said that they would use leaflets/application forms if they were available in other languages but non expressed dissatisfaction with ease of understanding or completing them.

Sources of information

- All groups obtained the information they needed from application forms and leaflets, more than through any other source, followed by the Post Office
- Proportionally more BME and disabled customers obtained information from the contact centre, posters, newspapers than other groups
- More BME customers used TV
- More BME (48%) customers and those aged 16-21 (53%) obtained information from internet reflecting their access to it
- More BME (78%) customers obtained information from leaflets than white groups but slightly less (13%) chose them as the preferred method of receiving information