



An Agency within the Department for

Infrastructure

Gníomhaireacht laistigh den Roinn

Bonneagair

www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk



BIENNIAL MOT TESTING

CALL FOR EVIDENCE

MINISTERIAL FOREWORD

This Call for Evidence (CfE) primarily seeks your views about potentially changing the frequency of MOT testing of private cars and light goods vehicles after their initial test at 4 years and 3 years respectively.

At present, subsequent MOT tests are conducted annually but in 2020 I made it clear that I was actively considering the option of moving to biennial testing (every two years) for these vehicles, taking account of all the implications associated with this option. In addition, I also believe there is merit in considering whether motorcycles should also be tested biennially after their initial MOT test.

Due to the impact of Covid-19, work on this CfE exercise was delayed as the focus of my officials turned to dealing with the pandemic, including developing and administering financial support schemes. However, as we progress out of the pandemic I have decided now is the time to ask the public and those with a direct interest in MOT testing, road safety and environmental protection for their views.

I realise there will be those in Northern Ireland who favour a change in the frequency of MOT testing and others opposed to any change to the current process. Therefore, I would encourage you to respond to the CfE putting forward your views, if possible with supporting verifiable evidence. I would however, emphasise that regardless of the frequency of MOT testing, the statutory responsibility to ensure that a vehicle is roadworthy rests with the owner at all times.

Once the responses to the Call for Evidence have been analysed, my officials will provide me with a report, at which time I will consider what action to take. Due to timing, it is not possible to make legislative change within this mandate, even if it was considered appropriate. I nevertheless feel it is important to give an opportunity to the public and those with a direct interest in this issue to express their views. Any change to the current position will then be a matter for consideration in the next Assembly mandate.

Nichola Mallon MLA
Minister for Infrastructure

August 2021

CONTENT

Background	3
Why Undertake a Call for Evidence	5
Key Issues	5
Potential Impact on the Automotive Industry	6
Potential Impact on Road Safety	6
Potential Environmental Impact	6
Comparison with other jurisdictions	7
Potential impact on DVA operational arrangements and fee income	8
Questions and Feedback	10
How to Respond	12
Confidentiality & Data Protection	12
Next Steps	14
Annex A: Road Safety and vehicle testing statistics produced by DFI Analysis, Statistics and Research Branch	15
Annex B: MOT Testing Data Produced By DVA Statistics Unit	17
Annex C: MOT Testing Data Produced By DVA Statistics Unit	26
Annex D: Vehicle Testing Models – Private Cars	29

BACKGROUND

In Northern Ireland (NI) the current roadworthiness test, more commonly referred to as the “MOT test”, is a devolved matter and is the responsibility of the Minister for Infrastructure. The key Northern Ireland legislation which governs this is Part 3 of the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, the Motor Vehicle Testing Regulations (NI) 2003, the Goods Vehicles (Testing) Regulations (NI) 2003 and the Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations (NI) 1999. This legislation remains in force following the decision to leave the European Union on 31 December 2020.

Testing of all vehicles which use the public roads in NI is the responsibility of the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) through vehicle inspection at its 15 test centres. Currently private cars and motorcycles are first MOT tested at 4 years old and light goods vehicles under 3,500kg are first tested at 3 years old. Each of those vehicle categories are tested annually thereafter.

The Minister has previously indicated that she wishes to review the current testing regimes for some vehicle categories to ensure they remain fit for purpose, both now and in the future.

The need to undertake this review has been brought into sharper focus following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the testing process for private cars, light goods vehicles and motorcycles, which followed shortly after the failure of a number of scissor lifts at DVA vehicle test centres. These factors led to the suspension and curtailment of testing arrangements and the use of Temporary Exemption Certificates (TECs) to ensure that all eligible vehicles may continue to be driven legally on the road.

As we move out of the pandemic, the Minister has issued this Call for Evidence (CfE) which seeks views on the option to introduce biennial testing (every two years) for private cars, light goods vehicles under 3,500kg and motorcycles, as compared to the current annual testing arrangements. We are also seeking your views on whether, if biennial testing were to be introduced, the first test for light goods vehicles should move from 3 years old to 4 years old, i.e. making their first test due at the same age as for private cars.

Any subsequent introduction of biennial vehicle testing would require the development, related consultation and introduction of primary legislation which would not be deliverable within the current Assembly mandate.

The CfE is being issued for an 8 week period and invites you to provide evidence, including local, national and best practice examples, relevant data and views that could help shape the vehicle testing policy in question. We are keen to hear from individuals, groups, organisations, the automotive industry (particularly those involved in MOT preparation) and those with a specific interest in road safety or the environment.

Following the closure of the CfE, the results will be analysed, along with other sources of evidence, and a report provided to the Minister for her consideration. This may result in the need for further engagement and formal consultation.

WHY UNDERTAKE A CALL FOR EVIDENCE

A decision to implement biennial testing would require amendment of primary legislation. Since vehicle testing is a devolved matter, this would entail an Act of the NI Assembly. Given the significance of potentially moving from annual vehicle testing to biennial testing, the Minister has decided that an evidence gathering exercise should be undertaken to help inform the way ahead.

Attached at Annexes A, B and C is statistical information prepared by the Department's statisticians which you may find helpful in expressing your views. Annex A sets out the Department's most recent statistics on road safety, including those related to vehicle defects, Annex B sets out statistics on MOT testing in general and Annex C provides more detailed statistics specific to motorcycle testing. You will note that the data provided in these Annexes relates to the 2019 calendar year. This approach has been taken since 2019 is more representative of the level of demand for DVA services than 2020 due to the impact of Covid-19 on both customers and DVA services during the periods of lockdown. Annex D is a comparison between private car testing models used here and in other European countries.

In summary, moving to biennial testing would remove approximately 240,000 (24%) cars and light goods vehicles from the vehicle testing regime here each year, out of a current annual total of around 1,000,000. This assumes that the first test for light goods vehicles will move from 3 years old to 4 years old. In addition, if motorcycle testing in NI also moved from an annual process to a biennial one, an estimated 10,500 fewer motorcycle MOT tests would be conducted annually by DVA.

Key Issues

Key issues which you are asked to consider in making your response are the potential impact on:

- a) the automotive industry here, specifically those involved in MOT preparation and vehicle servicing;
- b) road safety;
- c) the environment;
- d) our comparison with other jurisdictions; and
- e) DVA operational arrangements.

This is not prescriptive and you may wish to offer views on other impacts which a change to the frequency of testing may produce. If so, please include them in your response with, if possible, any supporting evidence.

Potential Impact on the Automotive Industry

It should be emphasised that the owner has a statutory responsibility to maintain their vehicle and ensure that it is roadworthy at all times and therefore any change in the test regime need not necessarily have an impact on the automotive industry.

However, moving to biennial testing could have an adverse economic impact on those in the automotive industry who are exclusively or partially engaged in MOT preparation and vehicle servicing. Despite the statutory requirement, there is the potential that customers may delay having this type of work undertaken until their vehicles are due to undergo an MOT. While the Department does not hold data to quantify the potential impact if this was to happen, it is reasonable to assume those engaged in these services could lose revenue and may need to scale back their business operations.

Potential Impact on Road Safety

Statistical evidence provided in Annex A indicates that the majority of collisions are caused by careless driving, excessive speed, alcohol/drugs or as a result of a pedestrian fault. It also indicates that the number of casualties and collisions with vehicle defects noted as a causation are very low. Modern vehicles are better built and have considerable safety features which contributes to the low level of fatalities and serious injuries. However it may be that, even if a change to biennial testing was introduced for newer vehicles, an annual testing regime should remain in place for older vehicles to protect road safety.

Potential Environmental Impact

Road vehicles are a major source of air pollution that can have adverse environmental impacts and damage human health. Vehicles emit a range of pollutants and particulates which are usually more prevalent and therefore harmful in urban areas, mainly due to the volume of private cars and vans. While NI does not yet have its own climate change legislation, it does contribute to the UK targets set out in the UK Climate Change Act 2008 which

was updated in 2019. There are two proposals under consideration by the Assembly to introduce Climate Change legislation here. One is a Private Members Bill and the second is being brought forward by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs. The UK Government also recently announced that it will ban the sale of new wholly powered diesel and petrol cars and vans in the UK from 2030.

Due to health and safety concerns in DVA test centres, the legal requirement to conduct a metered diesel smoke emissions test during an MOT was suspended in 2006 for light vehicles. The DVA currently conducts a fully compliant diesel emissions test on all heavy goods vehicles, buses and vans over 3,500kg, and a partial diesel emissions test for cars and light goods vehicles. This includes a visual inspection of the vehicle's smoke emissions and, from May 2019, a check of the engine Malfunction Indicator Lamp (MIL), which indicates a defect in the vehicle emission control systems.

Moving to biennial testing could provide the capacity to resume the metered smoke emissions test for diesel cars, subject to suitable investment in the test centre network.

Comparison with other jurisdictions

To facilitate comparison, the table below sets out the vehicle testing models currently used in Northern Ireland, Great Britain and the South of Ireland in relation to private cars, light goods vehicles weighing less than 3,500kg and motorcycles.

In relation to private cars, impacts that could be considered include that moving to a biennial testing model in NI would provide a degree of harmonisation with testing in the South of Ireland. However it would also remove the existing alignment with the annually based GB testing regime. Moving to a biennial testing model for light goods vehicles would also remove the existing alignment with both GB and the South of Ireland who both test annually. While moving to a biennial testing model for motorcycles would be a move away from the annual testing carried out by GB but would remain a more rigorous approach than the South of Ireland where motorcycles are not tested.

Comparison of MOT Models (NI, GB and RoI)

VEHICLE CATEGORY	JURISDICTION
Private Cars	<p>Northern Ireland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>First MOT tested at 4 years old and annually thereafter</i> <p>Great Britain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>First MOT tested at 3 years old and annually thereafter</i> <p>Republic of Ireland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>First MOT tested at 4 years old, then every two years (biennially) until the vehicle is 10 years old and annually thereafter</i>
Light Goods Vehicles < 3,500kg	<p>Northern Ireland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>First MOT tested at 3 years old and annually thereafter</i> <p>Great Britain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>First MOT tested at 3 years old and annually thereafter</i> <p>Republic of Ireland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>First MOT tested at 1 year old and annually thereafter</i>
Motorcycles	<p>Northern Ireland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>First MOT tested at 4 years old and annually thereafter</i> <p>Great Britain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>First MOT tested at 3 years old and annually thereafter</i> <p>Republic of Ireland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Not tested</i>

Annex D provides a further comparison between the private car testing models above and those used in other European countries.

Potential impact on DVA operational arrangements and fee income

Through its current network of 15 test centres and 2 satellite driver testing centres, the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) carries out over 1,000,000 roadworthiness checks and over 100,000 driving related tests each year. In addition to enforcement, the Agency's Compliance and Roadside Enforcement Section implements a broad range of legislative requirements relating to goods vehicles, buses, taxis, private cars and agricultural vehicles, through education, advice and guidance.

It is currently projected that the total number of roadworthiness checks will rise to around 1.2 million for light vehicles and to 65,000 for heavy vehicles by 2030. This means that additional testing lanes are required to meet demand. In addition, legislative changes require modification of the vehicle testing process. Longer testing lanes are required to accommodate an additional stage for emissions testing and to provide greater resilience within the system to cater for any future changes in the testing process and also changing vehicle types. As a result, investment is needed in the current test centre network. This programme of investment is already underway with the construction of a new test centre at Hydebank in Belfast scheduled for completion by October 2022 and a further test centre at Mallusk to be in operation by March 2024.

The recent announcement by the UK Government of a ban on the sale of new diesel and petrol vehicles by 2030 combined with biennial testing, if introduced, would help to address future testing capacity issues given the projected increasing demand. However it would also have an impact on the size of the test centre network required by DVA in the future. As mentioned above, this could provide the capacity to resume the metered smoke emissions test for diesel cars, subject to suitable investment in the test centre network.

It is estimated that moving to biennial testing would remove approximately 240,000 cars and light goods vehicles from the vehicle testing regime each year, which would reduce available income to the DVA by around £8 million on an annual basis. However some of this income could be replaced through increasing demand. A review of MOT fees would need to be carried out to ensure there was full cost recovery for DVA MOT services. A reduction in the required number of tests annually would also require the existing staffing complement to be reviewed, while taking account of the increasing demand and the need to complete the diesel emissions tests.

QUESTIONS AND FEEDBACK

Whilst the Department welcomes comments on all aspects of vehicle testing it is particularly keen to receive a response to the following key questions:

1. **Do you believe that vehicle testing by DVA of private cars, light goods vehicles under 3,500kg and/or motorcycles should be conducted on a biennial basis (every 2 years)? Please answer yes or no.**

- **Private Cars – Yes/No**
- **Light Goods Vehicles – Yes/No**
- **Motorcycles – Yes/No**

The Department would welcome factual evidence supporting your response, including details of the source

2. **If biennial vehicle testing were to be introduced in Northern Ireland for private cars, light goods vehicles under 3,500kg, and/or motorcycles should the first mandatory vehicle test remain at 4 years for private cars and motorcycles and 3 years for light goods vehicles?**

Please answer yes or no.

- **Private Cars (first test at 4 years old) – Yes/No**
- **Light Goods Vehicles (first test at 3 years old) – Yes/No**
- **Motorcycles (first test at 4 years old) – Yes/No**

If no, at what point do you believe that a first mandatory vehicle test should be conducted?

The Department would welcome factual evidence supporting your response, including details of the source.

3. **If biennial testing is introduced for private cars, light goods vehicles under 3,500kg, and/or motorcycles should this be extended to vehicles over 10 years old? Please answer yes or no.**

- **Private Cars – Yes/No**
- **Light Goods Vehicles – Yes/No**
- **Motorcycles – Yes/No**

If no, at what point do you believe that biennial testing should be stopped and annual testing commenced?

The Department would welcome factual evidence supporting your response, including details of the source.

4. **Do you believe moving to biennial vehicle testing for private cars, light goods vehicles under 3,500kg and/or motorcycles would have any impact on road safety? Please answer yes or no.**

Yes/No

The Department would welcome factual evidence supporting your response, including details of the source.

5. **Do you believe moving to biennial vehicle testing for private cars, light goods vehicles under 3,500kg and/or motorcycles would have an adverse economic impact on the automotive and vehicle maintenance industry and those specifically involved in MOT preparation?**

Please answer yes or no.

Yes/No

The Department would welcome factual evidence supporting your response, including details of the source.

6. **Do you believe moving to biennial vehicle testing for private cars, light goods vehicles under 3,500kg and/or motorcycles would have an adverse environmental impact, including an impact on the health and well-being of the public? Please answer yes or no.**

Yes/No

The Department would welcome factual evidence supporting your response, including details of the source.

7. **Do you believe the frequency in NI of the diesel smoke emissions testing of private cars and light goods vehicles should be biennial?**

Please answer yes or no.

Yes/No

The Department would welcome factual evidence supporting your response, including details of the source.

8. **Do you believe that there would be other impacts arising from a move to biennial vehicle testing for private cars, light goods vehicles under 3,500kg and/or motorcycles? Please answer yes or no.**

Yes/No

The Department would welcome factual evidence supporting your response, including details of the source.

HOW TO RESPOND

The Call for Evidence period will begin on 25th August 2021 and end on 19th October 2021.

Where possible, response should be made via Citizen Space on the NIDirect website via the following link:

[Biennial MOT Testing - Call for Evidence](#)

The Department for Infrastructure has actively considered the needs of people with visual impairments in accessing this CfE document. The text will be made available in full on the [Department's website](#) which allows for e-readers (including the most recent versions of JAWS, NVDA and VoiceOver). The text may be freely downloaded and translated by individuals or organisations for conversion into other accessible formats. Our accessibility statement at [Department's Accessibility Statement](#) gives more information.

Please ensure that your response reaches us before the closing date. If you would like further copies of this CfE document, it can be found on the [Department's Website](#) or you can contact the Department on 028 905 40170 if you would like alternative or accessible formats (Braille, audio CD, etc.).

Responses to the CfE should be made online via Citizen Space as indicated above or, if that is not possible, by e-mailing BiennialTesting-CFE@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk. If you prefer to respond by post please contact the Department on 028 905 40170 to arrange this. When responding, please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation or group. If responding on behalf of a larger organisation, please make it clear who the organisation represents and, where applicable, how the views of members were assembled.

Confidentiality & Data Protection

Information contained in your response may be made public by DfI. If you do not want all or part of your response made public, please state this clearly in the response by marking your response as 'CONFIDENTIAL'. Any confidentiality disclaimer that may be generated by your organisation's IT system or included as a general statement in your correspondence will be

taken to apply only to information in your response for which confidentiality has been specifically requested. Information provided in response to this Call for Evidence, excluding personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes (this is primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)).

The Department will process your personal data in line with the [Department's Privacy Notice](#). Personal data provided in response to this Call for Evidence will not be published.

If you want other information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this, it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

As indicated above, the Department will publish a summary of responses following completion of the CfE process. Your response, and all other responses to the CfE, may be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. Before you submit your response, please read the paragraph below and it will give you guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this Call for Evidence.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, namely, the Department in this case. This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation or a call for evidence. The Department cannot automatically consider as confidential information supplied to it in response to a consultation or a call for evidence. However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to this CfE, excluding information about your identity, should be made public or treated as confidential.

NEXT STEPS

The information gathered as a result of this Call for Evidence will be considered by the Department and an analysis presented to the Minister for her consideration. This process may result in a formal consultation which will include a Departmental preferred option to help inform the future of DVA vehicle testing of private cars, light goods vehicles under 3,500kg and motorcycles.

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Safe and Accessible Travel Division
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ANNEX A

Road Safety and vehicle testing statistics produced by DFI's Analysis, Statistics and Research Branch.

Analysis, Statistics and Research Branch annually produce a [monitoring report](#) on the current Road Safety Strategy. Included within the report is information on the causation of road traffic collisions.

The majority of collisions are caused by careless driving, excessive speed, alcohol/drugs or pedestrian fault. However, other causation factors are recorded and analysis was undertaken to look at collisions which were caused by vehicle defects.

The tables below show the number of casualties and collisions which had vehicle defects assigned by severity for the period 1st January 2015 to 31st December 2019.

The first table shows road traffic **casualties** for 2015 – 2019 and those caused by vehicles defects are highlighted in the green column (and the proportion of overall casualties, the blue column).

Road traffic casualties by severity of injury – vehicle defects¹ vs other causation factors 2015-2019

Casualties	Total	Vehicle Defects	Other	% Vehicle Defects
Killed	316	5	311	1.6%
Seriously injured	3,821	53	3,768	1.4%
Slightly injured	41,967	454	41,513	1.1%
Total	46,104	512	45,592	1.1%

This second table shows road traffic **collisions** for 2015 – 2019 and those caused by vehicles defects are again highlighted in the green column (and the proportion of overall casualties, the blue column).

¹ See 'Note A' on next page

Road traffic collisions by severity of collision – vehicle defects² vs other causation factors 2015-2019

Collisions	Total	Vehicle Defects	Other	% Vehicle Defects
Fatal Collision	302	5	297	1.7%
Serious Collison	3,166	43	3,123	1.4%
Slight Collision	26,410	289	26,121	1.1%
Total	29,878	337	29,541	1.1%

As noted in the two tables above, the number of casualties and collisions with vehicle defect noted as a causation are low. For both, vehicle defect was a causation in 1.1% of the overall totals.

It should be noted that while these tables highlight collisions caused by vehicle defects that should not infer any indication of whether the vehicle was due an MOT or how recently the vehicle may have been through an MOT.

In addition, PSNI Statisticians have confirmed there were 33 fatal collisions between January 2020 and July 2020 and vehicle defect has not featured in either the primary or contributory causation factors for any of these 33 collisions.

Note A

Road Traffic Collision causation factors noted under vehicle defects are:

- Defective brakes
- Defective steering/suspension
- Defective front lights
- Defective rear lights
- Defective tyres
- Tyre blow-out before impact
- Unattended vehicle running away
- Other vehicle factor

² See 'Note A'

ANNEX B

MOT Testing Data Produced By DVA Statistics Unit

The Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) is an executive agency within the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). The DVA was formed on 1st April 2007 as part of the Review of Public Administration, through a merger of two existing Agencies, namely the Driver and Vehicle Testing Agency (DVTA) and Driver and Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland (DVLNI).

DVA produces quarterly National Statistics. The latest reporting is the twenty-sixth edition of the publication '[DfI Driver, Vehicle, Operator, and Enforcement Statistics](#)'. The latest report is for the quarter ending March 2021. The statistics reported within this publication include summary key business volumes and transactions for drivers, vehicles, and operators and in the area of regulation and enforcement during quarter four of 2020-21. This covers the period from 1st January 2021 to 31st March 2021.

Statistical series published cover the following business areas:

- Vehicle testing;
- Vehicle licensing and registration;
- Driver theory testing;
- Driver practical testing;
- Driver licensing;
- Road transport licensing (i.e. buses, heavy goods vehicles and taxis);
- Enforcement and compliance; and
- DVA target monitoring.

DVA administrative systems provide the majority of data, although some data is sourced from within the wider Department for Infrastructure. In addition, while the DVA is no longer responsible for vehicle registration and licensing with the transfer of those functions to DVLA in Swansea in July 2014, statistics relating to these areas are presented in section two of published reporting.

Vehicle testing forms the most significant aspect, in terms of volumes, of the work of the Operations Directorate in DVA, and by extension, the DVA as a whole.

To supplement DVA published statistics, presented below are detailed tables in respect of 2019 showing full vehicle tests conducted and pass-rates by age of vehicle at the time of test, and a chart presenting the trend in pass-rates for private cars, motorcycles, light goods and heavy goods again by age of vehicle. In addition to these, there is a table which shows the most common faults identified in private cars that failed their first full MOT during 2019. We are providing data for 2019 as it is more representative of the level of demand for DVA services than 2020 due to the impact of Covid-19 on both customers and DVA services during periods of lockdown.

Finally, and given the recent interest in the uptake of electric vehicles, there is a chart detailing the latest trend in newly registered alternative fuel vehicles as a proportion of registered/licensed cars.

Sources for published vehicle testing statistics for GB and ROI are detailed at the end to help provide context and relevant background information.

Full Vehicle Tests Conducted in Northern Ireland in 2019

Age at Test	Private Car	Motor-cycles	Light Goods	Heavy Goods	Trailer	Taxi	Other	Total
Under 4	368	79	8,577	3,845	2,211	2,192	1,268	18,540
4	77,570	1,154	8,825	1,370	619	748	304	90,590
5	78,245	972	7,614	1,413	457	661	402	89,764
6	71,601	883	6,496	1,679	433	534	370	81,996
7	65,387	796	5,708	1,458	475	482	343	74,649
8	61,649	813	5,406	1,448	372	462	205	70,355
9	61,139	819	4,455	1,074	420	464	362	68,733
10	55,565	994	3,788	1,045	388	409	339	62,528
11	57,898	1,204	4,872	1,671	491	525	467	67,128
12	65,798	1,261	5,228	1,589	605	568	501	75,550
13	55,183	1,119	4,222	1,797	612	415	394	63,742
14	44,429	1,074	3,301	1,579	547	389	332	51,651
15	34,145	968	2,612	1,136	431	238	167	39,697
16	24,971	1,087	1,873	908	334	124	214	29,511
17	16,641	1,040	1,204	707	221	80	110	20,003
18	9,708	925	709	598	191	63	81	12,275
19	5,931	898	453	489	135	58	54	8,018
20	3,871	787	239	318	114	91	56	5,476
21 and over	14,823	3,910	714	1,272	526	131	186	21,562
Total	804,922	20,783	76,296	25,396	9,582	8,634	6,155	951,768

Points to note:

1. Just over 950,000 full vehicle tests were conducted in 2019.
2. Private cars are first tested at 4 years old then annually every year thereafter until they are 40 years old, after which point, in common with light goods vehicles and motorcycles, they are not subject to a mandatory test.
3. A small number of vehicles for specific reasons may require testing before they reach 4 years old, and in the table above there will be a few vehicles counted in this group due to rounding issues when computing age.
4. Private car tests accounted for over 800,000 tests, almost 85% of all vehicle tests conducted that year.

Full Vehicle Tests Pass-Rate in Northern Ireland in 2019

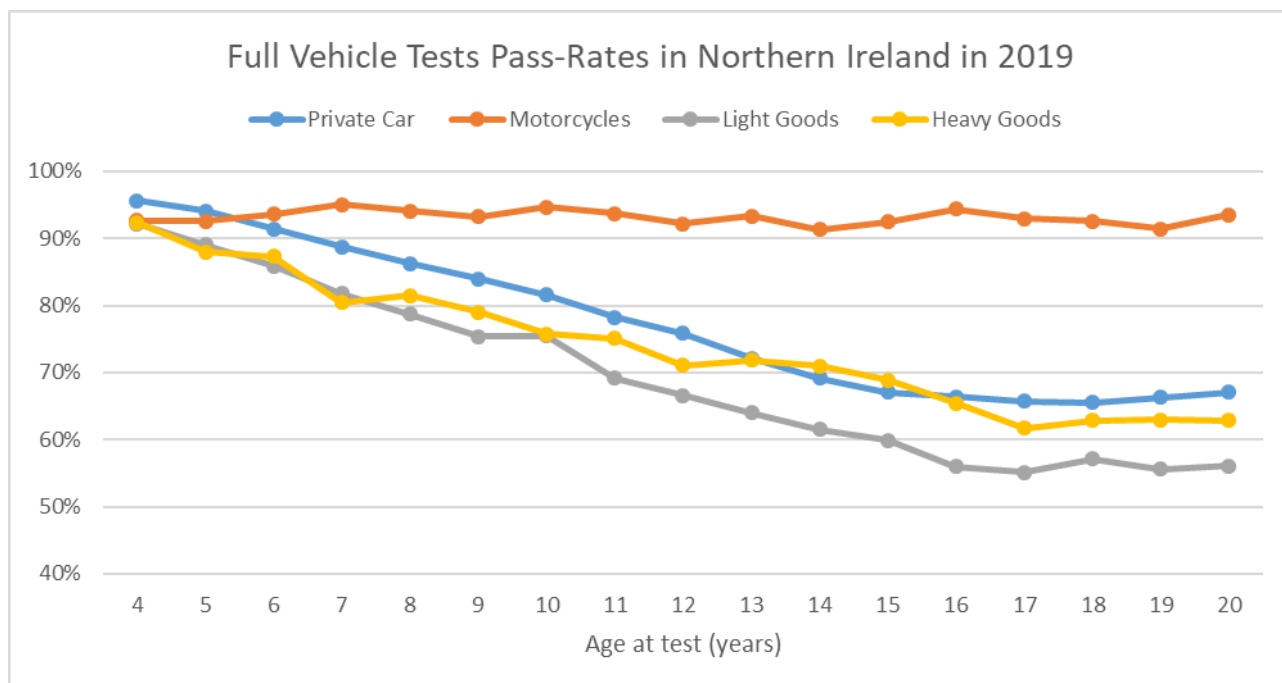
Age at Test	Private Car	Motor-cycles	Light Goods	Heavy Goods	Trailer	Taxi	Other	Total
Under 4	93%	92%	94%	95%	97%	93%	94%	94%
4	96%	93%	92%	92%	97%	91%	93%	95%
5	94%	93%	89%	88%	93%	90%	91%	93%
6	91%	94%	86%	87%	94%	85%	89%	91%
7	89%	95%	82%	80%	90%	84%	88%	88%
8	86%	94%	79%	81%	86%	83%	85%	86%
9	84%	93%	75%	79%	87%	78%	84%	83%
10	82%	95%	75%	76%	80%	77%	83%	81%
11	78%	94%	69%	75%	81%	75%	81%	78%
12	76%	92%	67%	71%	80%	74%	81%	75%
13	72%	93%	64%	72%	79%	64%	82%	72%
14	69%	91%	62%	71%	80%	68%	73%	69%
15	67%	92%	60%	69%	77%	67%	66%	67%
16	66%	94%	56%	65%	75%	76%	73%	67%
17	66%	93%	55%	62%	81%	71%	68%	67%
18	66%	93%	57%	63%	73%	63%	58%	67%
19	66%	91%	56%	63%	63%	59%	46%	68%
20	67%	94%	56%	63%	75%	63%	63%	70%
21 and over	73%	93%	62%	68%	73%	65%	52%	76%
Total	82%	93%	78%	79%	86%	82%	83%	82%

Points to note:

1. In 2019, the overall total first test pass rate for all vehicle categories was 82%.
2. Private cars, which accounted for over 8 in 10 of all vehicle tests, had a first test pass rate of 82%.
3. For private cars, first test pass rates declined gradually from 96% at 4 years old, to 82% at 10 years old, then to 67% at 15 years old. There were similar falling trends in pass rates for light and heavy goods vehicles.
4. Pass rates for private cars tended to increase from 21 years or older. The suggested reason for this is that older 'vintage' cars are owned by car

enthusiasts and are well maintained, which is reflected in their relatively higher pass rates.

5. Pass rates for motor cycles remained mostly constant and very high with age, ranging from 91% to 95%.



Full Private Car Tests 2019 - Top 5 Most Common Defects

Five Most Common Defects / Reasons for Failure				
1	2	3	4	5
Brake System	Suspension System	Electrical System	Wheels, Tyres & Hubs	Brakes Performance
54,496 38%	53,391 37%	42,297 30%	21,541 15%	19,562 14%

Points to note:

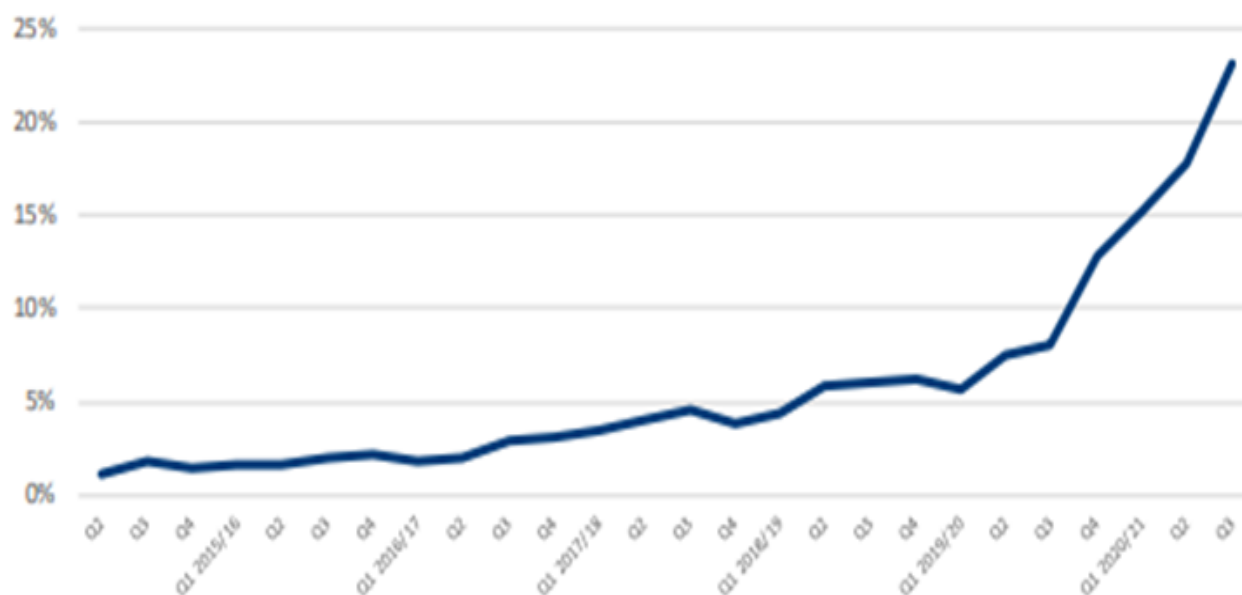
1. These figures relate to the first full test for all cars tested in 2019, and exclude all retests or subsequent full tests of the same car that may have been required.
2. These figures are not available within DVA published statistics but were produced for interest from ad-hoc processing of vehicle tested data for 2019.
3. The Brake System was the most common defect associated with failure, identified in 38% of all failed tests.
4. Suspension System was almost as common a defect as Brake System.
5. Front Suspension was the most common defect for cars tested in ROI during 2019, followed by Mechanical Brake Components. However these categories are not like for like comparisons.

Vehicle Licensing

Points to note:

1. DVLA registered just under 9,760 new vehicles in Northern Ireland during October to December 2020. This is 0.2% lower than the figure recorded for the same period in 2019 and the lowest quarter-three total for eight years. More significantly, this was the first time that alternative-fuel cars out-sold diesel cars.
2. Figures seem to suggest that more people are switching from diesels to hybrids and electrics. The real growth is in hybrids not pure electrics, and from the chart below a significant growth in the use of alternative fuels has only really occurred in the last few quarters.
3. The picture in terms of licensed vehicles is a bit more complicated as our latest figures show 'electric' vehicles are just over 1% of all vehicles licensed. There were 1,219,000 vehicles licensed in Northern Ireland at 31 December 2020 (including private cars, goods vehicles, buses and taxis), an increase of 0.9% compared with December 2019. The overwhelming majority (82%) were cars.

Proportion of New Car Registrations using Alternative Fuels



Sources for GB and ROI Vehicle Testing Statistics

Great Britain (GB)

Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA)

DVSA publishes statistical data sets about MOT testing including results by vehicle type, failures by type of defect, and MOT test stations and testers.

The latest data are available on the DVSA website – link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/mot-testing-data-for-great-britain>

Points to note:

1. GB includes England, Scotland and Wales
2. Latest reporting is for the quarter ending June 2019
3. Data do not include vehicle test outcomes by age of vehicle, so it's not possible to say that pass rates fall with age. May be possible to obtain these data but not within the timescale for inclusion in the call for evidence paper.
4. For 2018/19 the initial fail rate for class 3 and 4 vehicles (cars, vans and passenger vehicles with up to 12 seats) was 34%, a first test pass rate of 64% (82% in NI for private cars, but this is not a like for like comparison)
5. These are not official statistics

Republic Of Ireland (ROI)

Road Safety Authority (RSA)

RSA publishes statistical data relating to road deaths and injuries, road safety performance, safety by county and other transport related statistics.

The latest statistics are available on the RSA website – link below.

<https://www.rsa.ie/en/RSA/Road-Safety/RSA-Statistics/>

Points to note:

1. The section on vehicle statistics is not publically accessible.
2. These are not ROI government statistics.
3. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) for ROI, do not publish these types of statistics. The CSO is the NISRA equivalent for the ROI.

National Car Testing Service (NCTS)

The NCTS publishes statistical information relating to vehicle test defects, test outcomes by location and test outcomes by vehicle manufacturer.

The latest statistics are available on the NCS website – link below.

<https://www.ncts.ie/1277/>

Points to note:

1. Statistics only relate to Cars
2. These are not government statistics
3. The statistics section of the website is interactive and requires users to select data ranges.
4. Using the interactive facility, the full test pass rate for all cars in 2019 was 50% (82% in NI for private cars in 2019).
5. There are no specific published statistics detailing how pass rates change with vehicle age.

ANNEX C

Motorcycle Testing Data Produced By DVA Statistics Unit

Motorcycle Tests Conducted 2019

MOTORCYCLES			
Year of Manufacture	Full Test	Re-Test	Total
2016	11	1	12
2015	1,113	74	1,187
2014	935	58	993
2013	897	51	948
2012	792	33	825
2011	803	48	851
2010	799	40	839
2009	980	49	1,029
2008	1,189	65	1,254
2007	1,260	79	1,339
2006	1,115	69	1,184
2005	1,092	76	1,168
2004	949	62	1,011
2003	1,093	50	1,143
2002	988	58	1,046
2001	842	54	896
2000	826	60	886
1999	769	40	809
1998	612	42	654
1997	499	32	531
1996	321	23	344
1995	256	21	277
1994	207	13	220
1993	182	6	188
1992	177	10	187
1991	184	20	204
1990	174	13	187
1989	147	6	153
1988	98	6	104
1987	90	6	96
1986	102	6	108
1985	83	4	87

1984	95	7	102
1983	87	4	91
1982	99	4	103
1981	115	11	126
1980	101	6	107
1979	81	5	86
1978	91	2	93
1977	52	4	56
1976	70	3	73
1975	46	1	47
1974	41	2	43
1973	23		23
1972	36	3	39
1971	21		21
1970	25		25
1969	17	2	19
1968	12	1	13
1967	14		14
1966	17	1	18
1965	19	1	20
1964	21		21
1963	22		22
1962	18		18
1961	27		27
1960	19		19
1959	5		5
1958	4		4
1957	5		5
1956	2		2
1955	6		6
1954	2		2
1953	2		2
1951	1		1
1950	1		1
1949	1		1
Grand Total	20,783	1,232	22,015

Motorcycle Tests NOT Required If Biennial Testing Were Introduced

As previously indicated, an estimated total of 20,783 full tests and 1,232 retests were conducted in 2019. Based on this estimate, the summary table below highlights that some 2,526 full tests and 131 re-tests wouldn't (subject to certain fluctuations) need to be conducted annually as a consequence of the introduction of biennial testing for motorcycles aged between 4 to 10 years old, i.e. assumes no test required at ages 5, 7 and 9. In this scenario, once a motorcycle is over 10 years old, annual testing would be required.

Test Frequency – first test 4 years old, biennially until 10 years old and annually thereafter

	Full Test	Re-Test	Total
No. of Tests Not Required Annually	2,526	131	2,657

Based on the estimated tests conducted in 2019, the summary table below estimates that some 9,938 full tests and 587 re-tests wouldn't (subject to certain fluctuations) need to be conducted annually as a consequence of the introduction of biennial testing. These estimates are calculated on the basis that tests are conducted biennially from 4 years old and for the remaining life of the motorcycle.

Test Frequency – first test 4 years old and biennially thereafter

	Full Test	Re-Test	Total
No. of Tests Not Required Annually	9,938	587	10,525

ANNEX D

Vehicle Testing Models – Private Cars

The “Periodicity of Inspection” format used in the tables below is a recognised abbreviation for vehicle testing models. The first number indicates the year in which a first test must be conducted. The numbers that follow indicate the subsequent frequency of testing. The final number in each model indicates the frequency of testing that will apply for the remaining life of the vehicle.

Our current model for private cars is therefore 4+1+1. The number four indicates that a car is first tested when it is four years old. The number ones that follow indicate that the car will be tested annually for the remainder of its life.

The model in the South of Ireland is 4+2+2+2+1. Again the number four indicates that a car will be first tested when it is four years old. The number twos that follow indicate that testing will be every two years for the next three tests, i.e. testing when the vehicle is six, eight and ten years old. When the car is over ten years old it will be tested annually, as indicated by the final number one.

Northern Ireland, Great Britain and Republic of Ireland

Country	Periodicity of Inspection
Northern Ireland	4+1+1
Great Britain	3+1+1
Republic of Ireland	4+2+2+2+1

European Countries

Country	Periodicity of Inspection
Denmark	4+2+2
Estonia	4+2+2+2+1
Finland	3+2+1+1
France	4+2+2
Germany	3+2+2

Hungary	4+2+2
Italy	4+2+2
Kosovo	4+1+1
Latvia	2+1+1
Lithuania	3+2+2
Portugal	4+2+2+1
Slovakia	4+2+2
Slovenia	4+2+2+1
Spain	4+2+2+2+1
Switzerland	5+3+2+2
Turkey	3+2+2
EU Minimum Requirement	4+2+2