

**DVA ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT**  
**2021/22**

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## **1. Introduction**

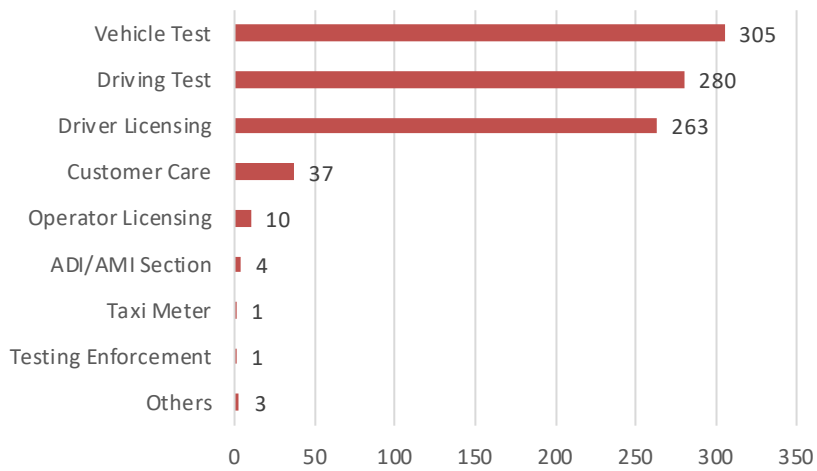
This report details complaints received by DVA for the period April 2021 to March 2022. It provides analysis on the reasons for the complaints and suggests areas for improvement in the processing of complaints by the Agency.

Complaints can provide a unique insight into how customers feel about our service, giving us a different perspective on how the services we provide, and the decisions we make, can create difficulties or inconvenience for customers. They are crucial in identifying areas or processes that are not working for customers and are an opportunity to not only resolve a problem for that particular customer but, perhaps, also for a much larger number of customers. Valuable lessons can be learnt from the feedback we receive from customers and although it can be disappointing to report that we fall short in certain areas, we should value complaints by using the information supplied within these complaints to continually improve our services.

Based on previous advice from the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman (NIPSO), DVA has stopped recording “informal complaints” as this may imply that these are less important than other complaints.

## 2.0 Summary Complaints Dashboard: April 2021 – March 2022

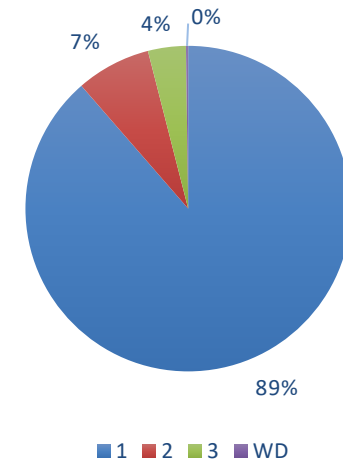
### Complaints by Business Area



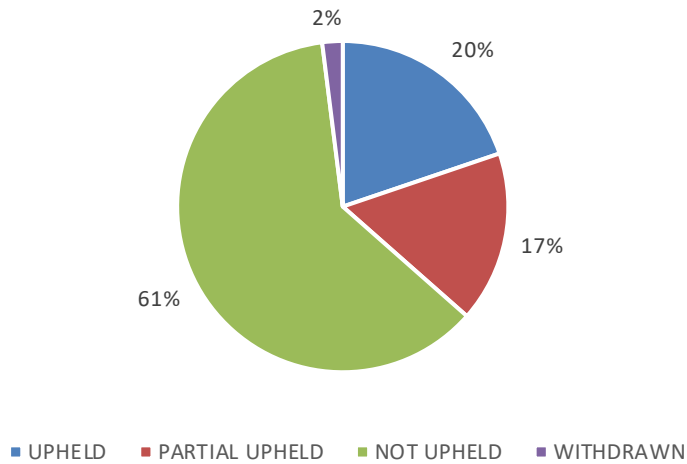
96.6% of complaints responded to on time  
**TARGET NOT ACHIEVED**

904 Complaints

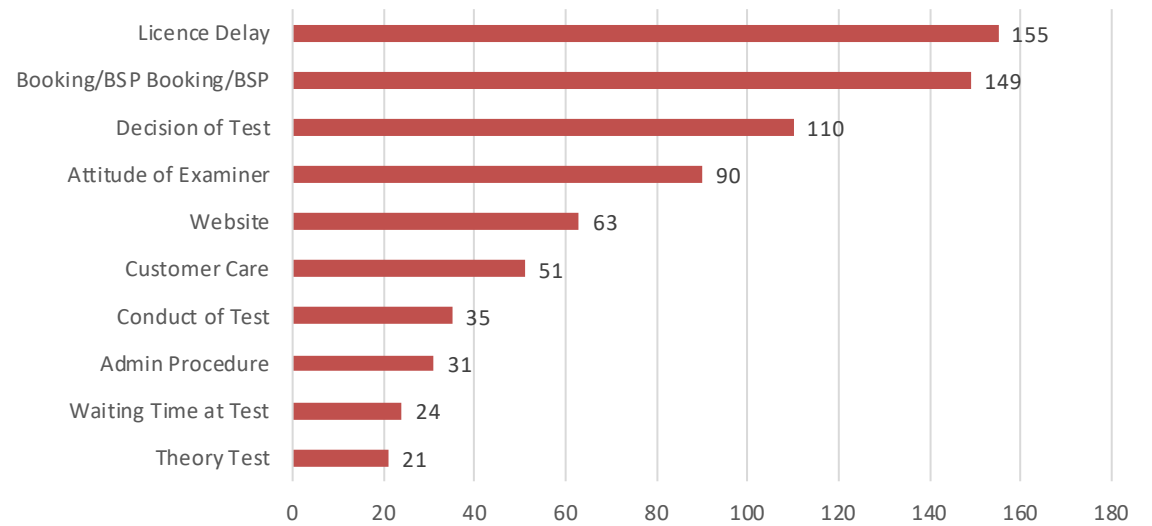
### Stage Complaint Resolved



### Complaint outcome



### Complaints by Reason - Top Ten



### 3. Executive Summary

This section of the report provides statistical information on the number of complaints DVA received, performance in handling these in terms of timeliness and effectiveness in resolving complaints at various stages.

During this reporting year DVA dealt with a total of **904** complaints. This figure is over three times that of the previous year (298 complaints received in 2020-2021). In 2021-22 we received **41** compliments from customers, compared with **15** in 2020-21.

During the year DVA Customer Services received 98,783 correspondence queries, a decrease of 26% from the previous year's queries but still a significant number. 65% of queries were answered at the first point of contact. The Agency also received 5,714 requests regarding MOT histories.

In 2021-22, DVA conducted the following customer transactions –

- 894,120 Vehicle Tests
- 89,520 Theory Tests
- 65,190 Driving Tests
- 277,510 Licensing Transactions.

The proportion of complaints for each service area compared with the total number of transactions is given below.

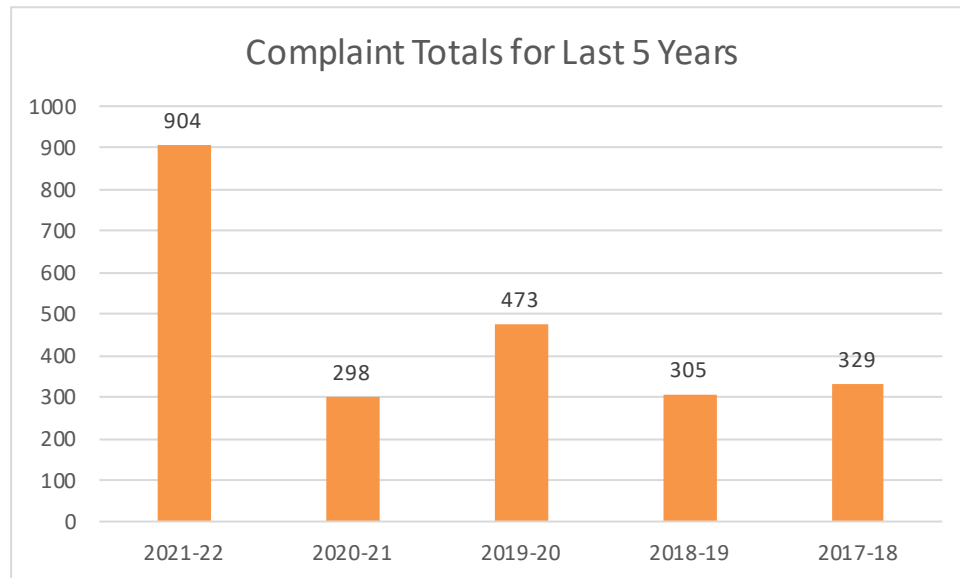
- 1 complaint regarding Vehicle Tests every 2,931 Vehicle Tests
- 1 complaint regarding Theory Test every 4,263 Theory Tests
- 1 complaint regarding Driving Test every 232 Driving Tests
- 1 complaint regarding Licensing every 1,055 Licensing Transactions

Overall DVA had 904 complaints in 1,326,340 transactions, which resulted in a ratio of 1 complaint to every 1,467 transactions. This is compared with 1 complaint to every 4,098 transactions in 2020-21, a significant decline in performance.

Section 4 provides more detail on individual areas.

## 4.0 Complaints Infographics

### 4.1 Total Complaints Year on Year

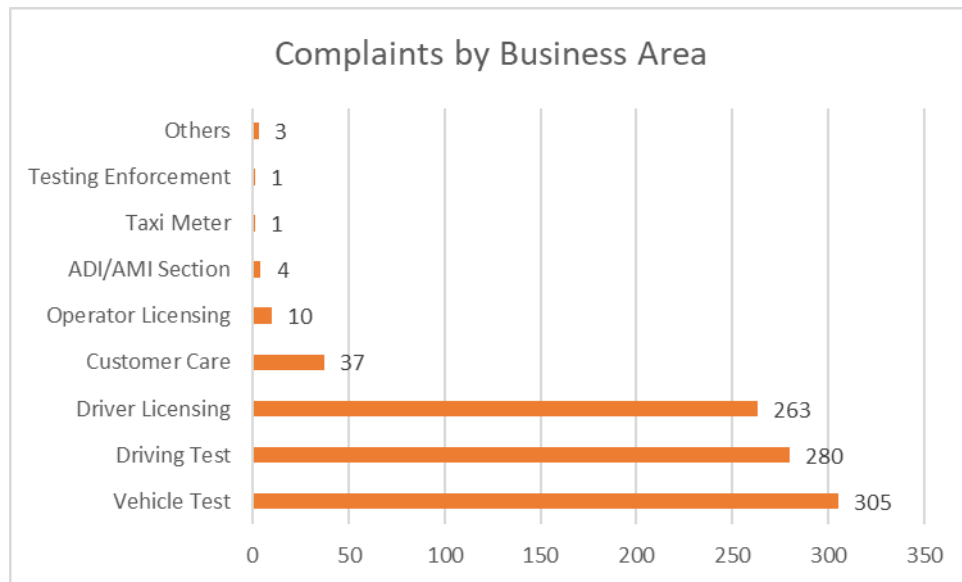


### 4.2 Performance against Target

The Agency constantly monitors target dates but ultimately fell short of the target over the course of the year. In 2021/22 the percentage of complaints answered within 10 working days was 96.6%, 0.4% short of the 97% target. - Possible reasons for missing the target are discussed in the “Issues and Lessons Learned” section of the report.

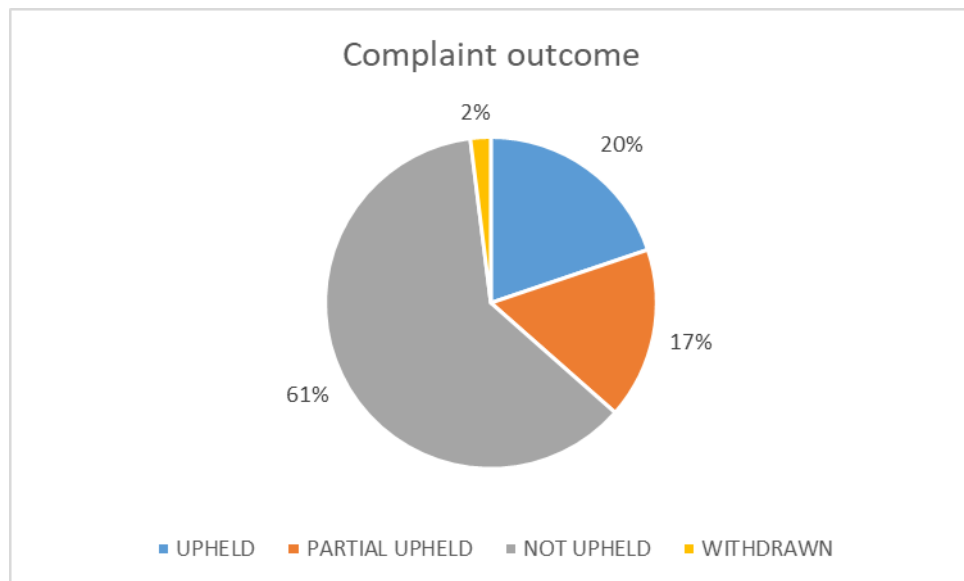


### 4.3 Complaints Received Breakdown

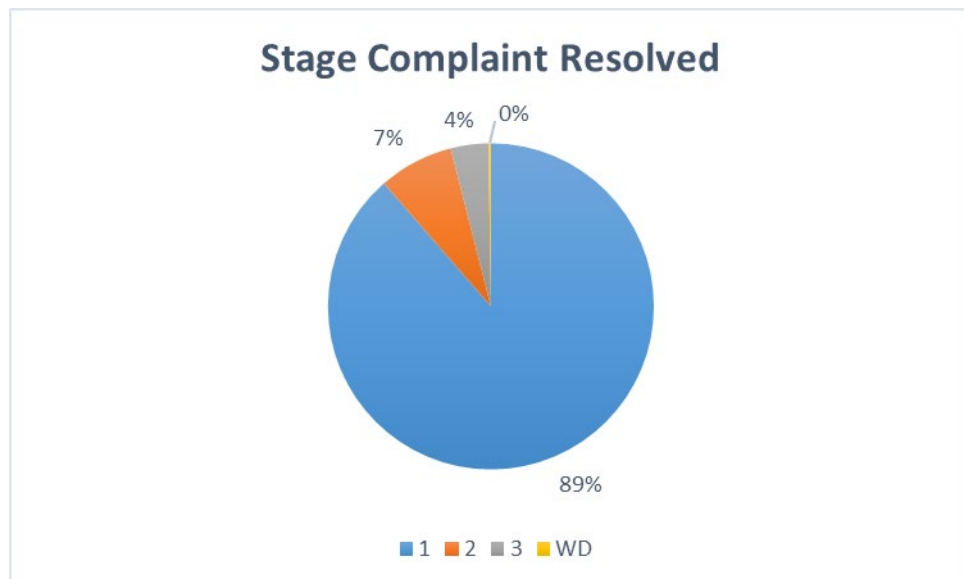


## 4.4 Complaints Outcomes

### Overall Outcome of Complaints Received



### Stage at Which Complaint Completed





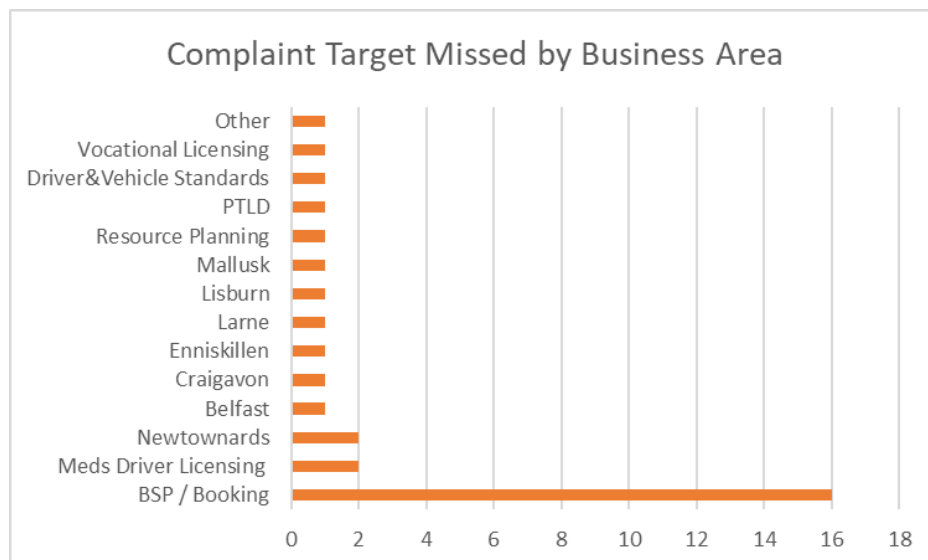
## 4.5 Complaints Outcomes Analysis

As illustrated in the complaints outcomes charts, 37% of complaints received have been either “upheld” or “partially upheld”. Although down by 50% on last year, this is still over a third of all complaints in which the DVA was at fault to some degree.

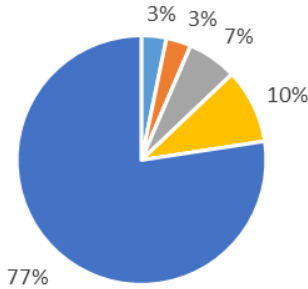
In some processes DVA is dependent on third parties and is therefore limited in the influence it can bring to the service delivery (e.g. the granting of driver licences where external medical advice is required). However DVA remains responsible, therefore these complaints were fully/partially upheld even though Agency staff did everything they could to complete the transaction within the designated time frame.

## 4.6 Complaints that Missed Target

The number of complaints that missed target has increased from 4 in 2020-21 to 31 in 2021-22. Further staff training within DVA has been initiated to ensure that the importance of responding to complaints on time is understood, and that any reasons for late responses are provided.



### Reason Complaint Missed Target



- Late to CS for Issue
- Manager Not on Shift
- TC Not Provide Info on Time
- Work Pressures
- No Reason Given

## 5.0 Issues and Lessons Learned

This section of the report discusses the likely reasons for the 2021/22 complaints performance, considers lessons learned and proposes improvements.

Whilst the number of correspondence queries and complaints increased significantly in 2021-22, this was a particularly challenging year for DVA. The fallout of Covid-19 continued to impact on DVA processes, and a new customer-facing Booking & Rostering system was implemented.

In April 2022 DVA moved from a 3-stage complaints process to 2-stage. This included a new set of procedures, and whilst the new arrangements have taken some time to embed, it is hoped that the refined processes will eventually lead to a faster response to requests and therefore a better service to the customer. The new process was suggested by the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman (NIPSO) when they stated that the 2-stage process *“...may be beneficial to DVA and Customers as it allows for a shorter, more streamlined approach to responding to complaints”*.

A third of all complaints assigned to Vehicle Testing this year related to the booking process, the booking system and appointments issues. These complaints included but were not limited to: fees being taken but no appointment given or made on system, multiple payments taken from customers, no notification or confirmation of appointments made. The high number of complaints may be accounted for by the fact that in 2021-22 DVA was still dealing with changes to the appointments processes following Covid-19. The complexity involved in the introduction of the new booking system in September 2021 also caused some initial issues, and a lessons learned report on the Booking & Rostering system has been developed for future reference.

There was also a big increase in the number of complaints regarding the website (NI Direct) and the information supplied. Fast replies in response to Covid-19 queries were required, therefore the website had to be more dynamic and responsive than normal - as it covers the wider public sector this necessitated a large number of changes. The complainants stated that information was not easy to find and at times was conflicting with what people were being told in other channels. This has been discussed with the DVA Communications team

with a view to implementing improvements.

A recurring theme each year in complaints is the poor attitude of staff, which this year features in complaints for all business areas. DVA expects high standards from its staff when dealing with customers, and any staff working with the public are regularly reminded of the need to deal appropriately with customers - which sometimes can be in the face of difficult customer behavior. Managers will continue to emphasise the need for a good customer service.

Due to the nature of some aspects of the Agency's work, there will always be a number of complaints around certain issues which are outside of the Agency's control. This was evident in the Driving Licensing section where delays in getting licenses produced was the major complaint - many of these complaints related to licences where medical information was required, and as DVA use a third party for medical input and advice it is limited in the improvements it can make to this process.

DVA will use complaints as an opportunity to determine what we can do to improve. We will strive to improve on those areas to make the customer experience more positive and more consistent. The importance of the complaints handling process will be emphasised to all staff, particularly those who have direct responsibility for handling complaints.

It is important to acknowledge that DVA also received 41 compliments throughout the year.

## 6.0 The Way Forward

DVA will continue in its efforts to improve services to customers, and ensure that all staff are aware of the importance of good customer care. The following actions are proposed:

- DVA will issue guidance and meet with staff on an ongoing basis to remind them of the correct processes for handling queries and complaints, the need for ownership of complaints and to discuss any issues across business areas.
- Customer Services will continue to provide support, including procedures, pro formas and templates, and will be available for advice on all aspects of customer service.
- DVA has amended its complaints process to redefine what is/isn't a complaint, and if other procedures or rights of appeal are in place to help resolve the customer's concern we will provide that information instead of treating the issue as a complaint. This will enable DVA complaint handlers to be better informed when dealing with complaints whilst still giving the customer assurances that they have a means of appeal.
- Customer feedback will continue to be a consideration when prioritising changes to DVA's IT applications. It is hoped that by December 2022 MoT requests to the Customer Service team can be eliminated by the introduction of an online service to customers, which will save a significant DVA resource.
- A new iCasework correspondence tracking and reporting system will be introduced in September 2022, which will improve the management of correspondence and complaints and produce detailed analysis automatically.

Staff at all levels within the Agency are committed to seeking improvement for the customer and senior management will continue to show their support for the importance of complaint handling. As stated in Principles of Good Complaint Handling – *“good complaint handling requires strong and effective leadership; those in management positions will take the lead in ensuring good complaint handling, with regard to both the practice and the culture”*. DVA will continue to be proactive in using the information supplied within complaints to constantly improve our services.

## Appendix 1. At a Glance Guide for Test Centres

Test Centre	Formal Complaints	Compliments received	Upheld Incidents of vehicle damage (payment made)	Compensation Payments
Armagh	17	-	2 (2)	£1,317.04
Ballymena	22	-	2 (2)	£184.59
Belfast	30	1	5 (4)	£18,345.03
Coleraine	27	3	1 (1)	£2597.70
Cookstown	19	-	2 (3)	£488.27
Craigavon	20	1	2 (2)	£1,181.00
Downpatrick	10	-	1 (1)	£988.08
Enniskillen	14	1	-	-
Larne	29	5	2 (2)	£722.38
Lisburn	18	-	3 (3)	£2,311.20
Londonderry	41	4	1 (1)	£7,946.00
Mallusk	7	-	5 (5)	£3,223.35
Newry	13	1	3 (2)	£957.00
Newtownards	45	-	3 (3)	£1,311.37
Omagh	5	-	2 (2)	£2,139.24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>34 (33)</b>	<b>£43,876.54</b>

## Appendix 2. Breakdown of Business Area Complaints by Reason

### 2a. Vehicle Test Complaints

COMPLAINT REASON	NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS
Booking/BSP/BSP Booking/B&R	101
Website	46
Decision of Test	40
Attitude Examiner	30
Waiting Times	15
Conduct Test	14
Admin Procedure	12
Damage During Test	11
Customer Service	7
FTA Test	6
MOT Reminder Not Issued	5
Attitude Staff	4
Insufficient Advice	2
Late Arrival	2
Reminder Sent Error	2
Test Procedure	2
Twenty One (21) Rule	1
Health and Safety	1
Other	1
Payment Re Test	1
Road Worthiness	1
Test Fees	1
	<b>305</b>

## 2b. Driving Test Complaints

COMPLAINT REASON	NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS
Decision of Test	70
Attitude of Examiner	60
Booking of Test/BSP Booking/B&R	44
Conduct of Test	20
Theory Test	17
Cancelled Appts	16
Website	15
Legislation	11
Waiting Times	8
Customer Service	7
Admin Procedures	2
Insufficient Advice	2
Test Routes	2
ADI	1
Attitude of TC Staff	1
BSP Staff	1
FTA	1
H&S	1
Test Procedure	1
	<b>280</b>



## 2c. Driver Licensing Complaints

COMPLAINT REASON	NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS
Licence Delay	152
Loss of Documents	17
Customer Service	14
Admin Procedures	13
Non Response to Corrs	13
Errors on Licence	11
Med Revocation Decision	9
Accuracy	8
Others	8
Maladministration	4
Legislation	3
Speed/Efficiency Response	3
Insufficient Advice	2
System Error	2
System Limitations	2
Attitude of Staff	1
Theory	1
	<b>263</b>

## 2d. Customer Care Complaints

<b>COMPLAINT REASON</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS</b>
Customer Service	20
Attitude Staff	5
Theory Test Staff/Result	3
Admin Procedure	2
Booking/BSP/BSP Booking/B&R	3
Insufficient Advice	1
Reminder Sent Error	1
Waiting Times	1
Website	1
	<b>37</b>

## 2e. Operator Licensing Complaints

COMPLAINT REASON	NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS
Customer Care	3
Delay on Licence	3
Admin Procedure	1
Errors on Licence	1
Legislation	1
Other	1
	<b>10</b>