



RSA

***National Car Testing Service
(NCTS)***

2021 Annual Report

Final Report

Údarás Um Shábháilteacht Ar Bhóithre
Road Safety Authority

Table of Contents

1. Introduction & 2021 overview	3
2. Operational audit	9
3. Observed test inspections	13
4. Customer satisfaction	16
5. Complaints & appeals	18
6. Performance management	20
7. Financial matters	22
Appendix 1 – NCTS Service Levels	24

This report was prepared by Deloitte Ireland LLP ('Deloitte') and approved by the Road Safety Authority ("RSA") to present information on the operations of the National Car Testing Service ("NCTS"), in 2021. Its contents are strictly confidential. The performance analysis presented herein are based on provided inputs from: Applus Inspection Ireland Limited AISIL; and the Technical Inspection Services Partner (TISP), the Automobile Association (AA).

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The matters raised in this report are only those which came to our attention during the preparation of this report and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all matters that exist, or all actions that might be taken. This report is made solely to the RSA. We do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the RSA.

1. Introduction & 2021 overview

Introduction

This report sets out a summary of the National Car Testing Service (NCTS) operations in the 12-month period from 01 January 2021 to 31 December 2021.

Periodic roadworthiness testing of passenger cars and commercial vehicles is mandatory in all Member States of the European Union, in accordance with Directive 2014/45/EU. The NCTS was introduced in Ireland in January 2000 as part of the EU Directive that makes car testing compulsory in all member states. It is aimed primarily at improving road safety and enhancing environmental protection by providing an independent assessment of the roadworthiness and emissions level of vehicles at regular intervals throughout their life.

Following a competitive tendering process, a contract between the RSA and Applus Inspection Services Ireland Ltd. (“AISIL” or “the Contractor”), a member of the Applus+ Group, to operate the NCTS in Ireland, for a period of ten years, came into effect on the 27 June 2020.

The NCTS contract sets out a suite of eight Service Levels used to assess the Contractors performance in delivering the NCTS. Full details of these Service Levels are set out in **Appendix 1**.

The performance of the Contractor is monitored in line with agreed and documented performance standards which have been set out in the Project Agreement. The performance of AISIL is monitored on behalf of the RSA by the Supervisory Services Contractor (SSC), currently Deloitte Ireland LLP (Deloitte), and the Technical Inspection Services Partner (TISP), currently the Automobile Association.

Significant matters which impacted the NCTS in 2021

Throughout 2021 there were a number of issues which had a material impact upon the delivery of the NCTS:

1. The on-going impact of Covid-19.
2. The introduction of the New NCT Manual and OBD Technology.

2021 Performance Summary

Test volumes increased when compared with 2020. However, as a result of the shutdown of the NCT Service from 28 March 2020 – 08 June 2020, NCTS throughput for 2020 was significantly below the amount projected for the year, thereby reducing the usefulness of this comparator. Please see **Section 6** (performance management) of this report for more detail in this regard.

Note – The information presented hereunder is extracted from the Contractors ICT system.

1. 2021 activity levels across the service were higher than those seen in 2020 as can be seen below.

Table 1.1: Test volumes 2016 – 2021

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Full test	1,465,702	1,355,546	1,343,760	1,390,586	1,006,982	1,418,118
Lane re-test	497,163	448,387	444,628	474,796	471,919	476,613
Non lane re-test	262,335	239,950	236,135	233,513	130,337	197,625
Total	2,225,200	2,043,883	2,024,523	2,098,895	1,609,237	2,092,356

2. Pass rates for full NCT tests conducted decreased in 2021. Pass rates for non-lane re-tests also decreased marginally, while the pass rate for lane re-tests increased in 2021.

Table 1.2: Pass rates 2016 – 2021

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Full test (%)	47.95	49.20	49.25	49.98	54.94	52.76
Lane re-test (%)	86.20	86.89	87.65	88.77	81.76	88.30
Non lane re-test (%)	99.45	99.45	99.50	99.60	99.57	99.56

The quarterly pass rates for 2021 are set out hereunder:

	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	Q3 2021	Q4 2021
Full test (%)	52.30	53.27	54.11	51.31
Lane re-test (%)	88.30	88.53	88.27	88.06
Non lane re-test (%)	99.56	99.66	99.61	99.39

- NCT test accuracy for 2021 was 99.25% (see **Section 3**).
- NCT customer satisfaction in 2021, measured via the Customer Performance Index (CPI) was 87.77% (see **Section 4**).

2021 NCT test volumes overview

A monthly analysis of the throughput, based on full-tests, of vehicles and pass / fail rates for the NCT in the period January 2020 – December 2021 is presented below in **Figure 1.1**.

The axis on the left details the throughput of vehicles, the axis on the right details the pass rate.

Figure 1.1: 2020 – 2021 throughput and pass rates

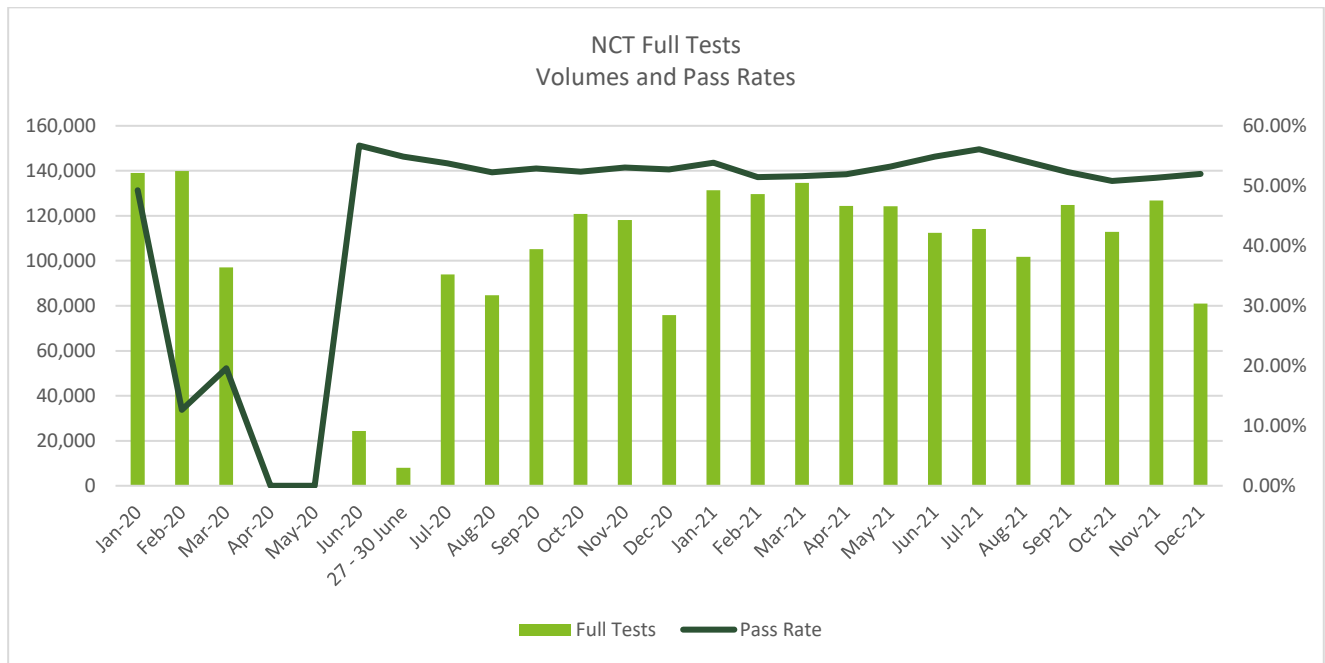


Table 1.3 below sets out a high-level annual summary of NCT activity levels and test outcomes for 2021.

	Pass	Pass advisory	Pass – Pending Recheck	Visual fail	Visual fail dangerous	Non-Visual Fail	Non-Visual Fail Dangerous	Total
Full tests	502,174	228,809	17,205	142,091	32,564	445,773	49,502	1,418,118
	35.41%	16.13%	1.21%	10.02%	2.30%	31.43%	3.49%	100%
Lane re-test	298,004	119,320	3,523	8,569	713	44,669	1,815	476,613
	62.53%	25.03%	0.74%	1.80%	0.15%	9.37%	0.38%	100%
Non lane re-test	135,699	60,557	493	668	207	1	-	197,625
	68.66%	30.64%	0.25%	0.34%	0.10%	0.00%	0.00%	100%

Table 1.4 below sets out a summary of NCT activity levels, based on full tests, and associated test outcomes on an NCT test centre basis for 2021.

Test centre	Pass		Pass – Pending Recheck*		Fail		Fail dangerous		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Abbeysfeale	9,076	56.99%	212	1.33%	5,849	36.73%	789	4.95%	15,926
Arklow	15,251	52.16%	355	1.21%	12,121	41.46%	1,510	5.16%	29,237
Athlone	10,525	53.61%	236	1.20%	7,585	38.64%	1,286	6.55%	19,632
Ballina	8,328	46.59%	182	1.02%	8,223	46.00%	1,142	6.39%	17,875
Ballinasloe	8,575	57.59%	111	0.75%	5,427	36.45%	776	5.21%	14,889
Cahir	12,472	51.15%	272	1.12%	10,502	43.07%	1,135	4.66%	24,381
Cahirciveen	1,716	53.03%	33	1.02%	1,257	38.84%	230	7.11%	3,236
Carlow	9,946	40.35%	288	1.17%	12,586	51.07%	1,827	7.41%	24,647
Carndonagh	3,772	48.90%	86	1.12%	3,361	43.58%	494	6.40%	7,713
Carrick-on-Shannon	6,120	43.23%	149	1.05%	6,666	47.09%	1,222	8.63%	14,157
Castlerea	5,142	36.84%	178	1.28%	7,620	54.60%	1,016	7.28%	13,956
Cavan	6,208	40.16%	143	0.92%	7,867	50.89%	1,242	8.03%	15,460
Charleville	9,565	55.82%	222	1.30%	6,296	36.74%	1,052	6.14%	17,135
Clifden	2,277	43.04%	52	0.98%	2,663	50.34%	298	5.63%	5,290
Cork-Blarney	28,165	54.96%	689	1.34%	19,735	38.51%	2,656	5.18%	51,245
Cork-Little Island	35,103	57.44%	814	1.33%	21,621	35.38%	3,579	5.86%	61,117
Deansgrange	52,996	57.72%	1,547	1.68%	33,134	36.09%	4,136	4.50%	91,813
Derrybeg	2,243	43.12%	74	1.42%	2,328	44.75%	557	10.71%	5,202
Donegal	6,464	50.83%	135	1.06%	5,361	42.15%	758	5.96%	12,718
Drogheda	18,834	51.60%	449	1.23%	15,257	41.80%	1,963	5.38%	36,503
Dundalk	9,638	50.41%	174	0.91%	8,284	43.32%	1,025	5.36%	19,121
Ennis	15,868	50.37%	371	1.18%	13,056	41.45%	2,205	7.00%	31,500
Enniscorthy	19,031	46.34%	497	1.21%	18,938	46.11%	2,605	6.34%	41,073
Fonhill	38,566	46.64%	1,078	1.30%	37,791	45.71%	5,246	6.34%	82,684
Galway	23,667	49.31%	581	1.21%	21,048	43.86%	2,697	5.62%	47,993
Greenhills (Exit 11,M50)	31,166	49.76%	962	1.54%	26,784	42.76%	3,723	5.94%	62,635
Kells	14,981	52.29%	282	0.98%	11,827	41.28%	1,561	5.45%	28,651
Kilkenny	17,940	57.67%	292	0.94%	11,362	36.52%	1,516	4.87%	31,110
Killarney	11,573	56.04%	194	0.94%	7,721	37.39%	1,162	5.63%	20,650
Letterkenny	9,196	47.63%	264	1.37%	8,828	45.72%	1,021	5.29%	19,309

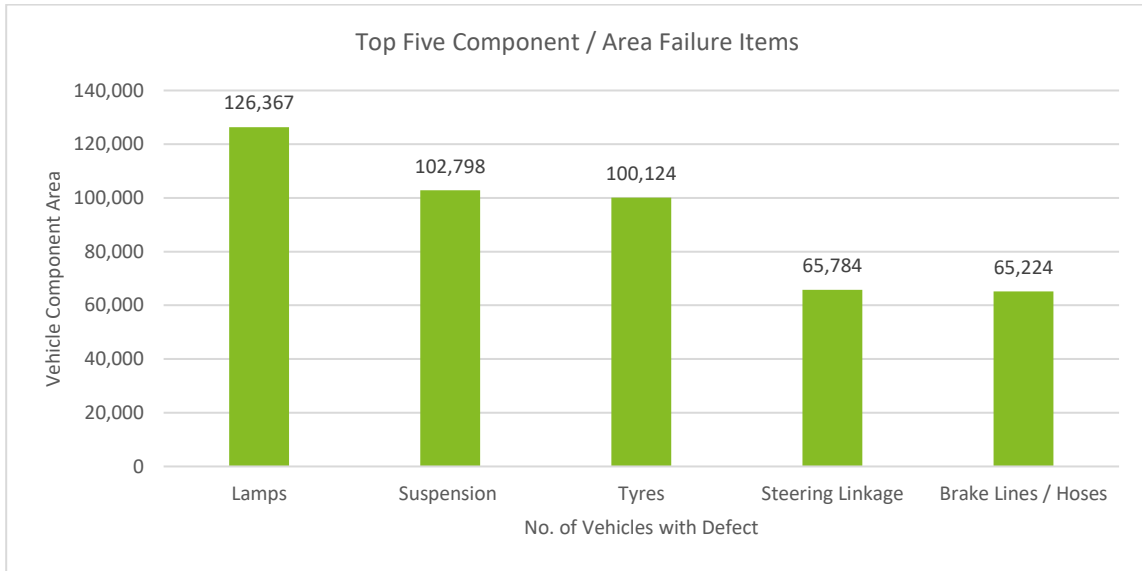
Test centre	Pass		Pass – Pending Recheck*		Fail		Fail dangerous		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Limerick	27,764	53.01%	437	0.83%	20,805	39.72%	3,369	6.43%	52,375
Longford	6,115	47.54%	143	1.11%	5,841	45.41%	763	5.93%	12,862
Macroom	8,623	54.13%	228	1.43%	6,137	38.53%	941	5.91%	15,929
Monaghan	6,599	44.55%	182	1.23%	6,926	46.76%	1,106	7.47%	14,813
Mullingar	11,078	53.37%	200	0.96%	8,173	39.38%	1,305	6.29%	20,756
Naas	28,629	51.75%	635	1.15%	23,313	42.14%	2,742	4.96%	55,319
Navan	5,089	51.10%	97	0.97%	4,139	41.56%	633	6.36%	9,958
Nenagh	12,979	53.97%	255	1.06%	9,059	37.67%	1,755	7.30%	24,048
Northpoint 1 (Exit 4, M50)	25,956	47.17%	755	1.37%	25,130	45.67%	3,184	5.79%	55,025
Northpoint 2 (Exit 4, M50)	40,785	50.02%	1,119	1.37%	34,839	42.73%	4,797	5.88%	81,540
Portlaoise	18,178	59.51%	223	0.73%	10,512	34.41%	1,635	5.35%	30,548
Skibbereen	8,828	49.78%	258	1.45%	7,548	42.56%	1,101	6.21%	17,735
Sligo	10,186	47.96%	236	1.11%	9,214	43.38%	1,603	7.55%	21,239
Tralee	13,016	55.41%	298	1.27%	9,172	39.05%	1,003	4.27%	23,489
Tuam	5,418	47.72%	92	0.81%	5,262	46.34%	582	5.13%	11,354
Tullamore	13,963	56.70%	214	0.87%	9,277	37.67%	1,172	4.76%	24,625
Waterford	23,844	56.36%	513	1.21%	15,828	37.41%	2,124	5.02%	42,309
Westport	11,159	52.17%	200	0.94%	8,991	42.04%	1,038	4.85%	21,388
Youghal	8,371	52.49%	198	1.24%	6,596	41.36%	783	4.91%	15,948
Total (Full tests only)	730,984	50.74%	17,205	1.15%	587,860	42.08%	82,065	6.03%	1,418,118

Top Component / Vehicle Failure Items

We set out hereunder (for the three areas listed below) the five most commonly recorded individual fail items recorded in 2021:

1. Component / area.
2. Visual fail items.
3. Equipment items.

Figure 1.2: Top five – component / area failure items – 2021



Note: 'Tyres' encompasses condition, specification and tread.

Figure 1.3: Top five – visual failure items – 2021

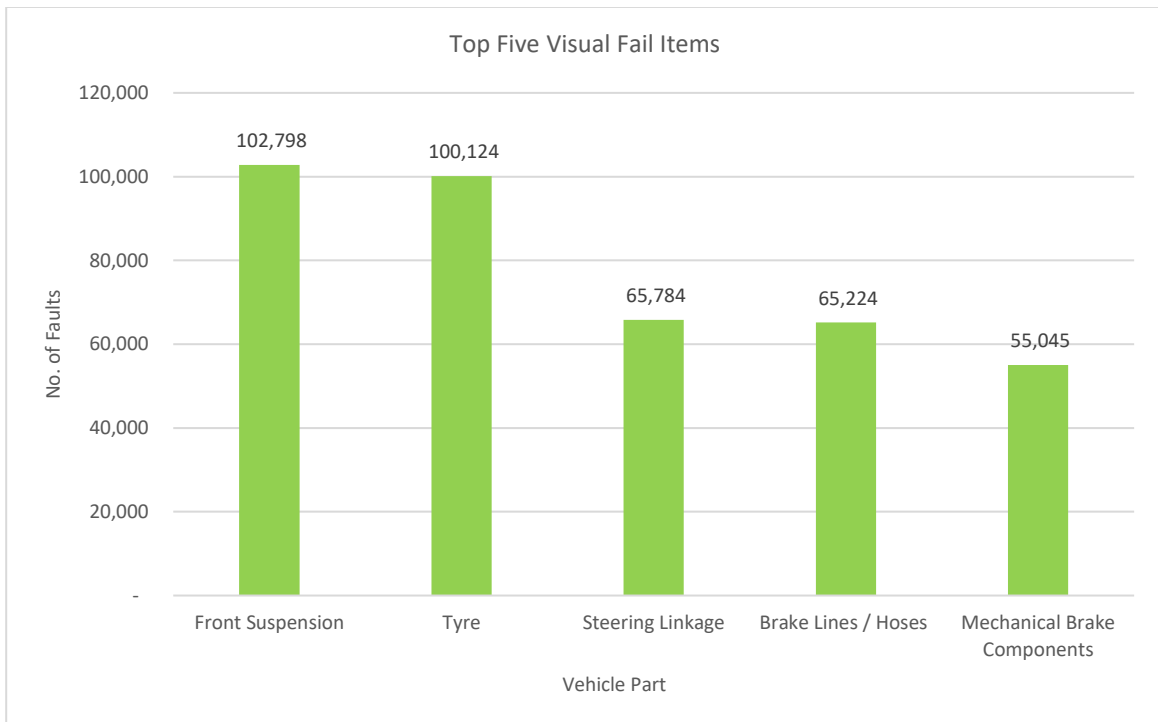
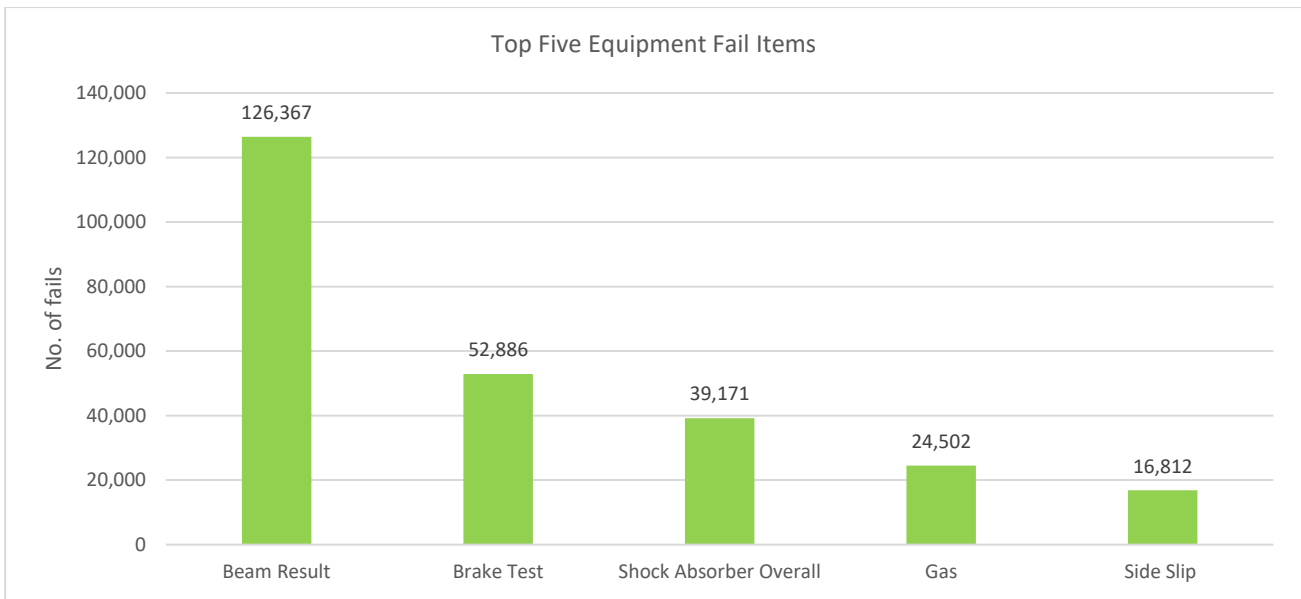


Figure 1.4: Top five - equipment failure items – 2021



The remainder of this report reviews the operation and performance of the Contractor during 2021 as follows:

- ❖ **Section 2** – Operational audit – Contractor performance in the area of operational audit.
- ❖ **Section 3** – Observed test inspections – Contractor performance in the area of observed test inspections.
- ❖ **Section 4** – Customer satisfaction – Contractor performance in the area of customer satisfaction.
- ❖ **Section 5** – Complaints & appeals - complaints levels in 2021.
- ❖ **Section 6** – Performance management – Contractor performance against Project Agreement Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- ❖ **Section 7** – Financial matters – Contractor financial performance in the period under review.

2. Operational audit

Background & Methodology

The Operational Audit assesses the performance of the Contractor against the requirements of the contract specification across four areas:

Area	Service Level
IT / Systems	90%
Testing Arrangements	90%
Facilities	90%
Operations & Customer Services	90%

Operational audits are performed on a quarterly basis by the SSC and the TISP with a breakdown as set out below:

1. IT / Systems – performed by the SSC.
2. Testing arrangements – performed by the TISP.
3. Facilities – performed by the TISP.
4. Operational and customer services – performed by the SSC with support from the TISP.

The format of the Operational Audit was amended as part of the contract transition from 27 June 2020. The new methodology was introduced in Q3 2020.

Table 2.1 below shows the operational audit scores achieved in the period Q1 2021 – Q4 2021.

Table 2.1: Operational audit scores Q1 2021 – Q4 2021

Category	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	Q3 2021	Q4 2021
IT / Systems	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Testing arrangements	99.51%	99.19%	97.73%	98.86%
Facilities	94.09%	96.10%	97.23%	95.49%
Operations and customer services	99.92%	99.06%	96.22%	95.11%

2.3 2021 outcomes

This section details in relation to key areas addressed during the operational audit.

Call Centre

Figure 2.1 below sets out the monthly call centre performance for 2021.

Throughout 2021 the NCTS call centre has experienced challenges in relation to absenteeism due to Covid-19 as a result of both positive cases, and the requirement for close contacts to self-isolate. Furthermore, as in many call centres, Mondays presented challenges throughout the year owing to the high volume of calls that are typically received on this day of the week. Additionally, the 10-year-old certificate issue which arose resulted in an increase in call volumes and call complexity.

As a result of the above factors the Contractor was granted relief by the RSA from achieving the 90% target throughout the year. Details of call centre performance are set out in **Section 6**.

Overall call volumes decreased in 2021 (see **Figure 2.2** below).

Internet bookings, for full tests, decreased in 2021 as can be seen in **Figure 2.3** below. This reverses the trend seen in recent years.

Figure 2.1: 2021 monthly call centre performance

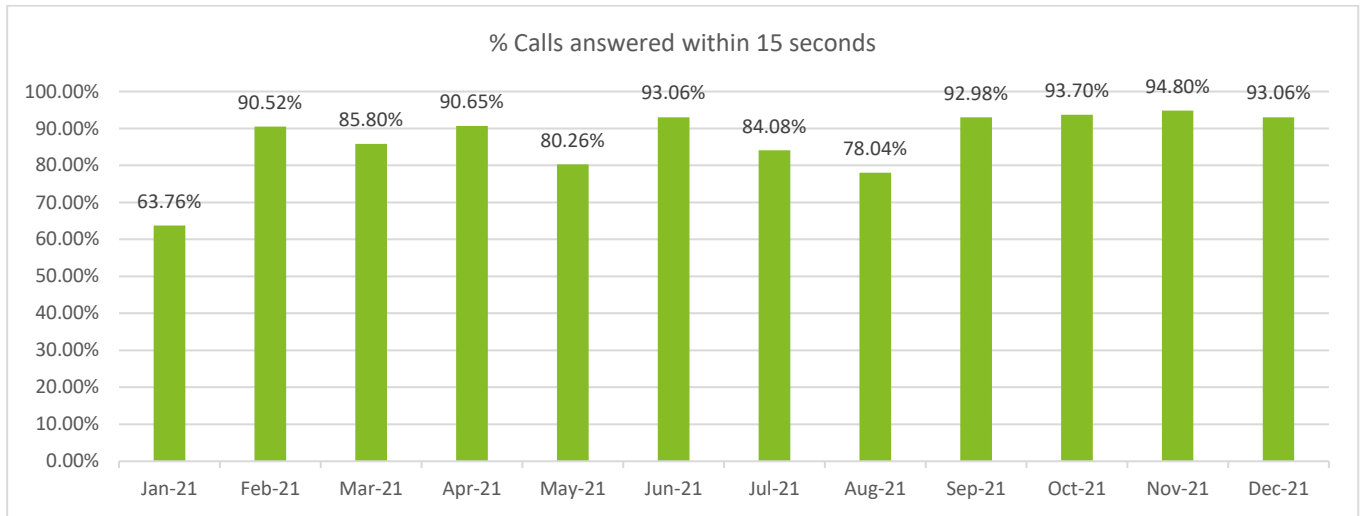


Figure 2.2: 2016 – 2021 call volumes

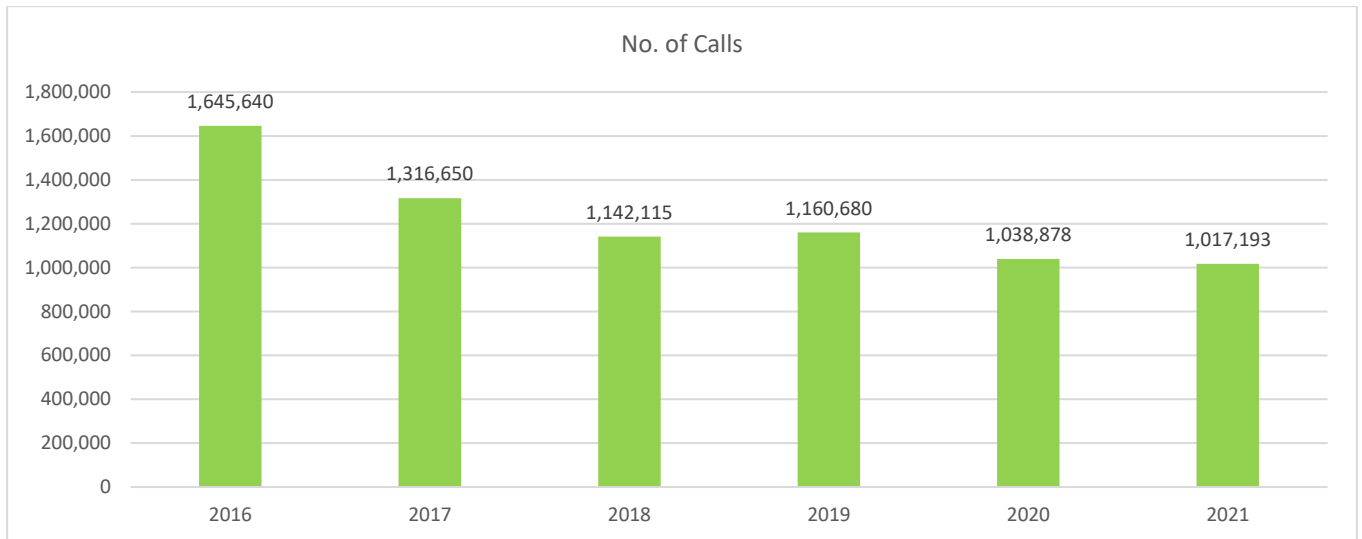
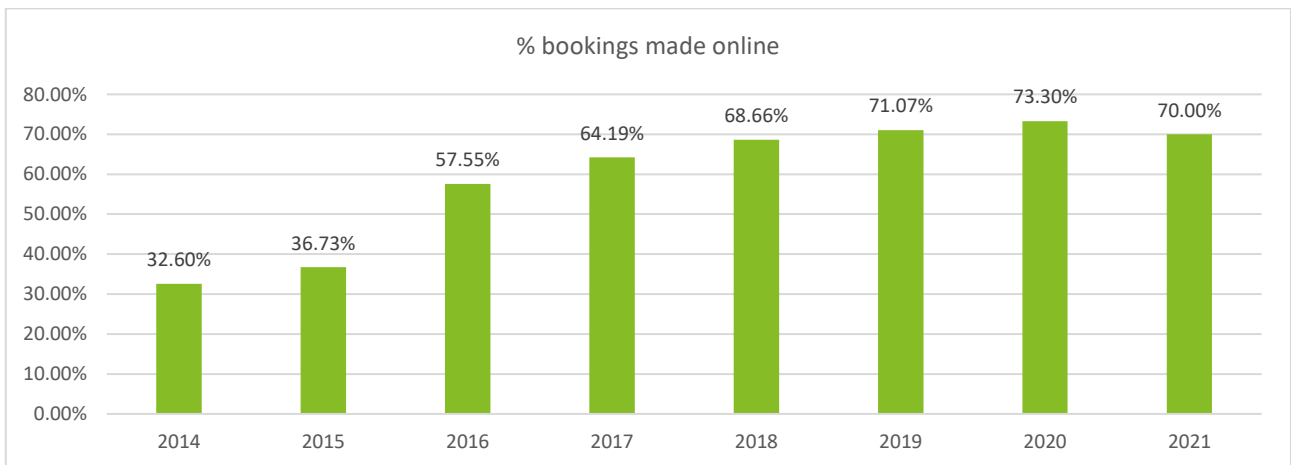


Figure 2.3: 2014 - 2021 internet booking levels (full tests)



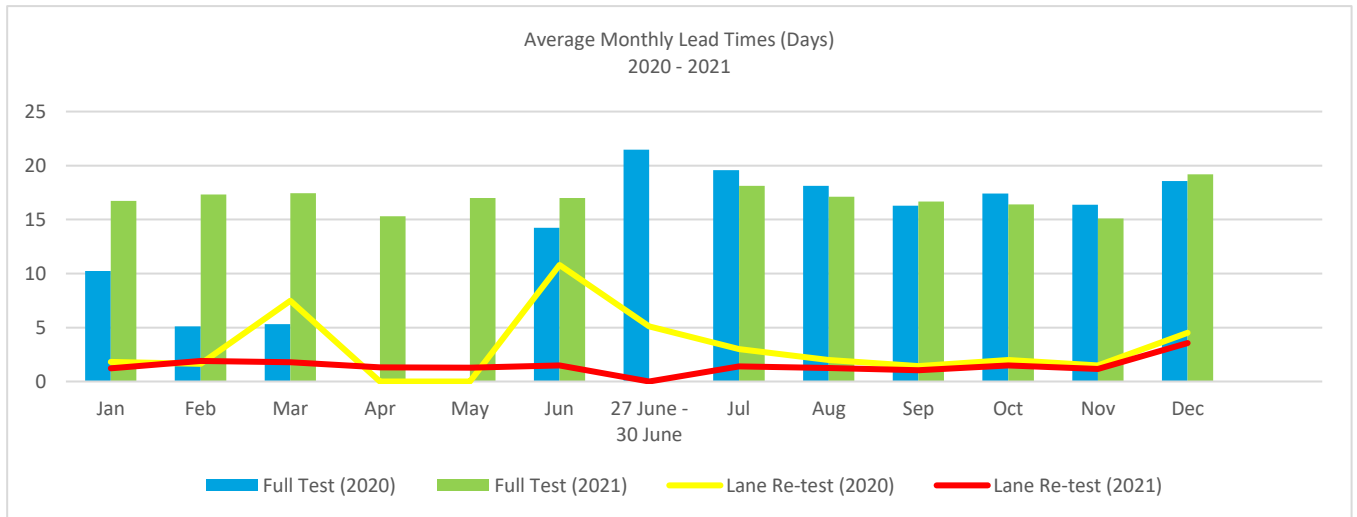
Waiting times for NCT bookings

The NCTS Project Agreement sets a target average lead time across the NCT network of 12 days with no individual NCT test centre to exceed 15 days. As a result of the impact of Covid-19 restrictions and its impact on the delivery of the NCTS service, the Contractor applied for and was granted relief by the RSA from achieving this Service Level throughout each quarter in 2021.

Lead-times for tests and retests are monitored monthly and quarterly at both a national and test centre basis. Throughout 2021 the ongoing impact of Covid-19 impacted on lead times across the service.

Throughout the year, average lead times for full tests generally remained in the high teens as can be seen in **Figure 2.4**. Average lead times increased throughout 2021 by comparison to levels seen in 2020.

Figure 2.4: 2020 – 2021 average lead times



Priority list

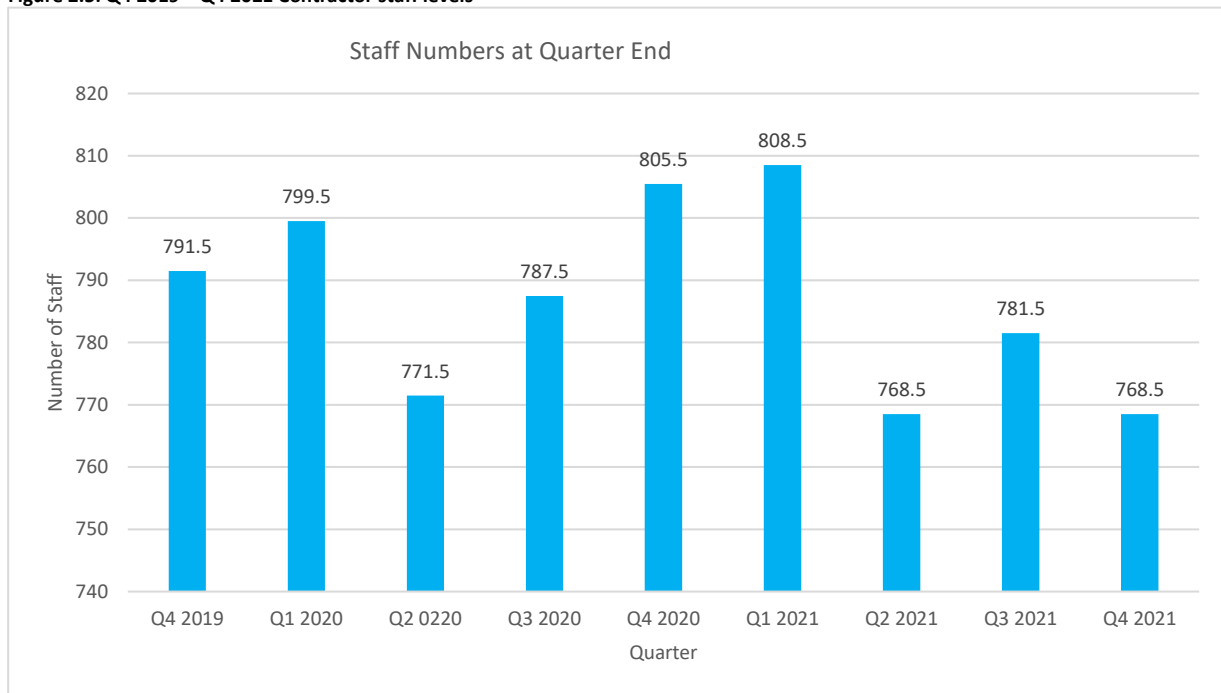
In circumstances where an Owner is unable to obtain a suitable National Car Test appointment, customers can add their application for a National Car Test to a priority waiting list.

Throughout 2021 average numbers on the NCTS priority list increased by comparison to levels seen in 2020. This was largely driven by demand exceeding supply throughout the period which impacted NCT customers opting to have their details added to the NCTS priority list.

Staffing Levels and Human Resources

Overall staffing levels which include headquarters; test centre; and call centre personnel, stood at 768.5 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) in December 2021. The Contractor’s staffing levels throughout the period Q4 2019 – Q4 2021 are shown hereunder in **Figure 2.5**.

Figure 2.5: Q4 2019 – Q4 2021 Contractor staff levels



Annual training of all vehicle inspectors took place in Q3 2021. The training programme delivered to vehicle inspectors is independently accredited.

This training covered elements of the test process and test equipment. An assessment of each vehicle inspector was also conducted. Further training was provided throughout the year as new vehicle inspectors were recruited and inducted.

In addition, specific training courses were provided, including occupational first aid training and Health and Safety training, as well as training for call centre staff. New recruit training provided by the Contractor is assessed and accredited by the Institute of the Motor Industry.

Premises

The service is required to be delivered from premises that are accessible to customers and fit for purpose. This is assessed via a number of methods:

1. By the TISP during on-site inspections of test centres; and
2. Via feedback from NCT customers during mystery shopping and customer satisfaction surveys (see **Section 4**).

TISP inspections revealed that, in general, the Contractor maintained the fabric of the premises to the expected standard during the year.

As part of the NCTS contract transition, the Contractor has committed to a major programme of works on the NCTS network. This will involve the refurbishment of existing NCT centres and a number of new NCT centres. Throughout 2021 the roll-out of this programme has been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Test Equipment

During the regular inspections of all test centre premises, the availability of the test centre equipment was checked by the TISP. These checks did not involve certification of test centre equipment (equipment is certified by equipment manufacturers). The scores for individual test centres against this criterion were gathered and reviewed and a number of minor areas for improvement drawn to the attention of Contractor management.

A key aspect of ensuring the accuracy of testing is to carry out regular consistency checks on all test equipment. Consistency checks were carried out quarterly during the year.

Observed Tests

A key aspect of the operational audit process is an assessment of the quality of work carried out by vehicle inspectors. During the year the TISP carried out 1,806 visits to NCT test centres and audited 3,630 vehicles. This is discussed further in **Section 3**.

3. Observed test inspections

Summary comments

All NCTS Vehicle Inspectors are fully qualified and experienced mechanics with refresher training being provided to every vehicle inspector each year to ensure the highest level of quality and consistency is attained in all test centres.

The NCTS testing systems and Vehicle Inspectors are subject to a stringent regime of audit and inspection carried out independently by the TISP on behalf of the Road Safety Authority. These audits have shown that during 2021, 99.25% of the vehicles audited were correctly and fairly assessed (see **table 3.3** below).

Methodology

The methodology for independently observing test inspections is based on a random selection of test centres and vehicle inspectors for unannounced inspection visits. Additional targeted inspections take place at test centres throughout the year.

Vehicle inspectors (VIs) are observed carrying out full tests, with TISP engineers observing their attention to the inspection sequence and their effectiveness in identifying faults as set out in the NCT Manual. They also assess whether or not any anomalies found would have changed the outcome of the test result.

During 2021 TISP inspections covered:

- 100% of NCTS test centres in the network;
- 100% of test lanes in the network; and
- 98% of VIs.

Further details of the outcome of these inspections are set out hereunder.

During 2021, the TISP team audited 3,630 vehicles. Additionally, throughout 2021 1,987 independent checks were undertaken. The overall number of vehicles audited increased in 2021. This should be considered in light of the fact that the TISP did not carry out independent and observed tests during the period April – June 2020 inclusive, due to the suspension of services as a result of Covid-19, which reduces the usefulness of prior period comparators.

Table 3.1 sets out a summary of inspection details in 2021. On average, each vehicle inspector was observed performing 5 – 6 tests throughout the year. This is higher than the number of observations in 2020 (when the Service was suspended in Q2 2020) and is in line with 2019 when each vehicle inspector was observed performing 5 – 6 tests.

Table 3.1: TISP inspection details 2021

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Individual Centres audited	47	47	47	47	46	47	49	48	49	47	49	43	566
No. of visits in period	162	162	167	149	141	145	153	162	165	146	155	99	1,806
Vehicles audited (observed inspections)	289	272	338	350	329	275	278	265	283	351	366	234	3,630
VIs audited	302	312	346	347	325	304	279	276	315	317	323	234	3,680
Lanes audited	97	98	100	98	96	96	95	96	95	99	100	83	1,153
Independent checks	180	175	191	167	161	165	173	152	177	156	178	112	1,987
Independent re-checks	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Over 2021, a cohort of VIs were audited each month with individual VIs being audited multiple times in the year. A breakdown of the test result outcomes is set out in **table 3.2** below:

Table 3.2 Vehicle Inspector Performance Rating for 2021

Category	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	Q3 2021	Q4 2021	Total
Very Good (0 faults omitted)	930	936	829	845	3,540
Adequate (<=4 faults omitted)	1	0	1	0	2
Unacceptable (any major item or 6 minor items omitted)	26	29	21	19	95
C.N.A (Could Not Assess)	3	11	19	10	43
Total	960	976	870	874	3,680

The above refers to matters noted during the assessment of VI performance and is not an indicator of the accuracy of NCTs completed. This performance measure of VIs should not be used to measure the integrity of the NCT. There are other quality assurance mechanisms in place to measure the integrity and accuracy of the NCT and as referenced above, and in table 3.3 below, 99.25% of the vehicles audited in the year were correctly and fairly assessed.

Note that in relation to the 95 instances where unacceptable matters were identified as part of VI performance assessment, this was brought to the attention of the following parties:

- The VI in question;
- The test centre team / shift leader; and
- Contractor senior management.

Examples of the unacceptable matters highlighted in 2021 included:

- Damaged ball joint dust covers;
- Broken coil springs;
- Tyres – cords being visible, bulge on tyre, tyres being different sizes, tyres being fitted in the wrong direction;
- Insecure battery;
- Wheel nuts being missing;
- Lights not working; and
- Presence of corrosion.

Independent check tests

In addition to the 3,630 vehicles audited by the TISP in 2021, the TISP also conducted independent checks on 1,987 vehicles. Therefore, a total of 5,617 vehicles were audited in 2021.

Test accuracy

The NCTS Project Agreement sets out a minimum score of 98.5% for test accuracy which the Contractor must achieve throughout the period of the contract.

During observed and independent tests conducted in 2021, 44 pass / fail decisions were overturned as a result of failure items having been omitted or included in error. Of these 44 instances, 42 were associated with a reduced score attributed to the VI. These 42 instances were included in the test accuracy calculation for 2021 as set out hereunder:

Table 3.3: 2021 Test accuracy calculation

Description	No.
Total vehicles audited (observed inspections + Independent checks)	5,617
No. instances where test outcome was impacted and VI score was reduced	42

Test accuracy (%)	99.25%
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NCTS test accuracy results in the period 2014 – 2021 are set out in **table 3.4** hereunder:

Table 3.4: Average test accuracy 2014 – 2021

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Test accuracy (%)	99.1	99.5	99.0	99.1	99.33	99.25	99.42	99.25

4. Customer satisfaction

In 2021 the methodology to capture customer satisfaction with the NCTS was updated to reflect the new NCTS Project Agreement. Details of this updated methodology are set out below. The 2021 survey was based on a total of 1,125 telephone interviews (930 customer satisfaction and 195 mystery shopping) with members of the general public throughout the Republic of Ireland who had their vehicle tested by the NCTS during the calendar year.

Feedback received is collated and, using pre-agreed weightings, used to determine the Customer Performance Index (CPI).

In 2021 the Contractor achieved a CPI of 87.77. It should be noted that owing to the changes in how the CPI were calculated in 2021, the outcome for 2021 is not directly comparable with the CPI reported in prior Service Periods. Therefore, CPI outcomes in earlier Service Periods have not been set out in this report.

Methodology & approach

The objective of this research is to continue to develop an understanding of how well the NCTS network of test centres is performing in the minds of its customers. To this end, the Supervisory Services Contractor (SSC) team at Deloitte conducted quarterly NCTS customer satisfaction and mystery shopping surveys on behalf of the Road Safety Authority (RSA) throughout each quarter in 2021.

The customer satisfaction exercise conducted is made up of two components:

- ✓ A mystery shopping exercise (forming 10% of the calculation of the CPI); and
- ✓ A customer satisfaction survey (forming 90% of the calculation of the CPI).

The sampling methodology employed in the survey has been designed to ensure that the sample selected is representative of the population of NCT customers and is drawn from across the target population.

NCTS customers were selected, based on:

1. A proportional weighting, applied to the total population of NCT customers from the quarter, based on the volume of tests carried out at each NCT test centre and the overall national pass rate.
2. A random selection of NCT customers from those selected in No. 1 above.

The 2021 survey was conducted on a quarterly basis with members of the general public who had their vehicle tested in the prior quarter. Feedback was collated by conducting post-test interviews with customers. Interviews were administered using a structured questionnaire dealing with the level of satisfaction with a range of issues that an NCT customer would expect to encounter. All NCT customer data used in the customer satisfaction exercise is processed in line with GDPR requirements.

The survey is divided into five distinct areas (aspects), each of which is assigned an agreed weighting, which feeds into the overall CPI. The areas assessed are:

- Booking experience;
- Waiting experience;
- Check-in experience;
- Test experience; and
- Facilities experience.

The CPI summarises the overall performance of the Contractor into a single score which allows for each year's results to be interpreted at a glance.

As part of the NCTS contract transition a new methodology for calculating CPI was agreed with the NCTS Contractor. This new methodology was introduced in Q1 2021.

Outcome

This year's CPI score of 87.77 shows a high level of satisfaction with NCTS procedures and staff, with the CPI score in excess of the 83.0 benchmark. These findings set a high standard for NCTS to maintain and improve on in the next monitoring period.

2021 Customer Performance Index

The CPI for 2021 was a score of 87.77%. This reflects a high underlying level of satisfaction with the key aspects of the service that customers deem to be most important.

Table 4.1: Hereunder provides an analysis of the CPI performance achieved in 2021:

Table 4.1: CPI performance 2021

Aspect	Question	Customer Satisfaction				Mystery Shopping				Index
		Customer Satisfaction Outcome	Customer Satisfaction Average	Customer Satisfaction Weighting	Customer Satisfaction Outcome	Mystery Shopping Outcome	Mystery Shopping Average	Mystery Shopping Weighting	Mystery Shopping Outcome	
Booking experience	The convenience of making and confirming my booking	90.13	90.77	25.90%	23.51	72.25	84.85	2.90%	2.46	25.97
	My experience in using the NCT website and / or call centre	90.70				87.42				
	The information I received when making my NCT booking (including resolving any queries that I may have had)	91.32				96.65				
	The convenience of the NCT location that I attended	90.94				83.08				
Waiting experience	The NCT test time and date that I was allocated	87.80	86.59	27.00%	23.38	90.77	89.97	3.00%	2.70	26.08
	Waiting time at the NCT centre on the day of my test	85.38				89.18				
Check-in experience	Check in process at the NCT Centre	89.22	89.13	13.00%	11.59	86.67	88.18	1.40%	1.23	12.82
	The helpfulness of the staff on reception at the test centre	89.03				89.69				
Test experience	The attitude of the member of staff who carried out the test	88.71	87.78	15.10%	13.26	88.14	79.18	1.70	1.35	14.60
	The testers' ability to help you understand the test report	86.85				70.22				
Facilities experience	The cleanliness and comfort of the reception and waiting areas in the NCT centre	83.00	83.00	9.00%	7.47	83.00	83	1.00	0.83	8.30
	The cleanliness and comfort of the bathroom facilities in the NCT centre	83.00				83.00				
				90.00%	79.20			10.00%	8.57	87.77

5. Complaints & appeals

Customer Complaints

The NCTS Project Agreement sets out a maximum threshold of 0.1% in relation to the number of complaints that can be received. In practice this means that the number of complaints received cannot exceed 0.1% of all the vehicle tests performed.

Customer complaints are recorded under a number of agreed categories (as set out in the summary **table 5.1** below).

The Contractor uses a computer system to record initial customer complaints, document their progress and resolution and provide a documented audit trail to retain information regarding promptness and quality of responses to customers.

In 2021, the Contractor received 1,483 complaints. This represents a decrease of 205 complaints (12.14%) from the 1,688 complaints received in 2020.

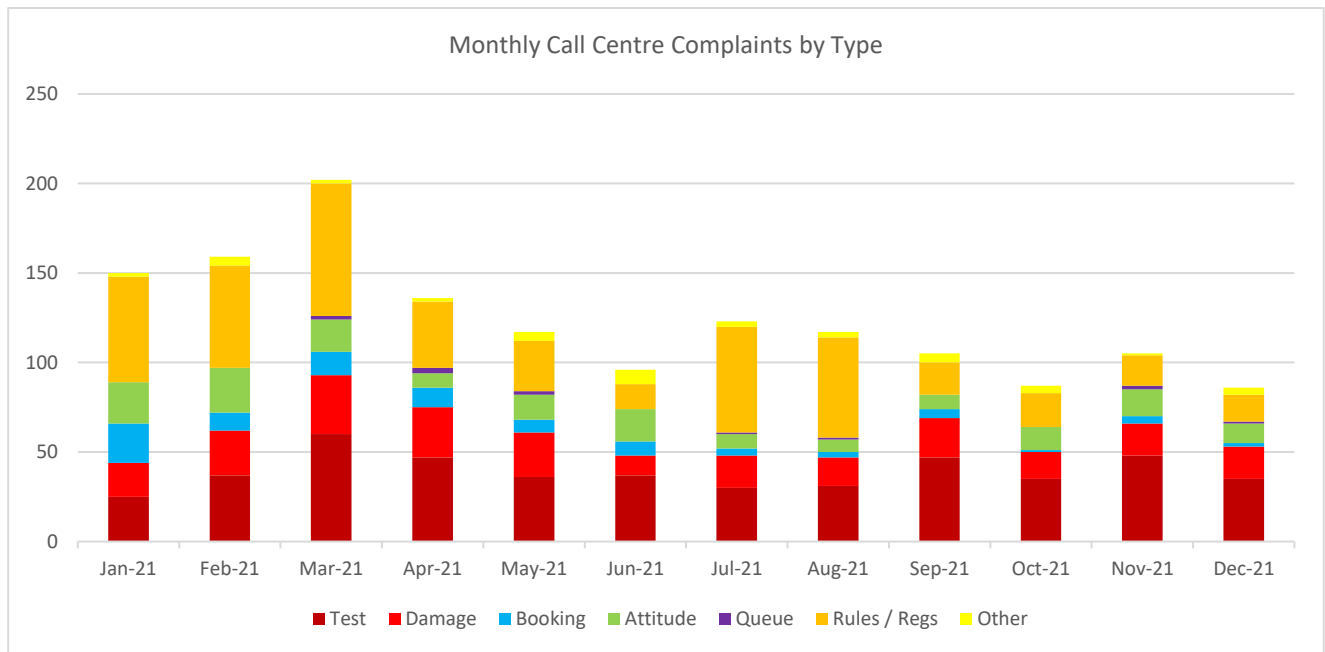
The total number of complaints as a percentage of total tests taken was 0.07%. This is a decrease of 0.03% from the 2020 result (0.10%) and for the year overall is below the target set of 0.10%.

Table 5.1 Year 2021 Customer Complaints (by category)

Complaint category	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	Q3 2021	Q4 2021	Total
Test (conduct of test/results)	122	120	108	118	468
Damage (or loss to property)	77	64	56	51	248
Bookings (& call centre)	45	26	12	7	90
Attitude (of staff)	66	40	23	39	168
Queue (delays at test centre)	2	5	2	3	12
Rules/Regulations	190	79	133	51	453
Other	9	15	11	9	44
Total	511	349	345	278	1,483
Number of vehicle tests performed	579,520	539,390	491,963	481,482	2,092,355
As a % all tests conducted	0.09%	0.06%	0.07%	0.06%	0.07%

A breakdown of the number and category of complaints received in 2021, by month, is set out below.

Figure 5.1: 2021 complaints by category and month



Independent appeals Board

The Independent Appeals Board, overseen by the TISP, provides an independent review service for the resolution of customer issues, for the small number of cases that require additional investigation.

The Independent Appeals Board received 23 appeals throughout 2021, of which four (4) were upheld after investigation.

Test integrity issues

The Contractor operates using an internal Code of Ethics. Each staff member receives refresher training each year on the company's Code of Ethics.

On occasion, matters come to the attention of the Contractor, the SSC, the TISP or the RSA, which give rise to investigations into the integrity with which testing is carried out by particular vehicle inspectors or at particular test centres.

Such matters are investigated and, where appropriate, disciplinary action taken against relevant members of staff. In certain circumstances, An Garda Síochána are informed. During 2021, ten employees were dismissed in relation to breaches of policies and procedures.

6. Performance management

Performance Standards Achieved

A new NCTS contract came into effect on the 27 June 2020 and includes Service Levels to assess Contractor performance in a number of key areas. The new Service Levels that are now being used are set out in Schedule 22 of the contract to deliver the NCT services for a ten-year period commencing 27 June 2020. Please refer to **Appendix 1** for details of the Service Levels applicable under the new NCTS contract.

Table 6.1 sets out the Contractors level of achievement over the period Q1 2021 – Q4 2021.

Table 6.1 NCT Achievement against Performance Standard Q1 2021 – Q4 2021

Ref.	Sub Ref.	Service Level	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	Q3 2021	Q4 2021	Comment
1	Notifying Owners of the requirement to have their vehicle tested	90% 20 – 60 working days before the due date of the test.	97%	97%	104%	99.3%	N/A
		100% 5 working days before the due date of the test.	100%	103%	107%	99.7%	N/A
	At each individual National Car Test centre, notification to Catchment Owners of the requirement to have their vehicle tested	90% 20 – 60 working days before the due date of the test.	See comment	See comment	See comment	See comment	Relief granted for all quarters in period Q3 2020 – Q4 2021
2	Average booking lead time for Full Tests across the National Car Testing Service	Average booking lead time for full tests less than 12 days	17.16 days	16.42 days	16.56 days	16.25 days	Relief granted for all quarters in period Q1 2021 – Q4 2021
	Average booking lead time for Full Tests at each individual National Car Test Centre	Average booking lead time for full tests less than 15 days	0 test centres exceeded 24 days	0 test centres exceeded 22 days	Six test centres above target exceeded 22 days	One test centre above target exceeded 21 days	Relief granted for all quarters in period Q1 2021 – Q4 2021
3	Test accuracy	> 98.5% of test outcomes to be confirmed on check testing	99.45%	98.89%	99.10%	99.56%	N/A
4	Telephone response times	> 90% of telephone calls answered within fifteen (15) seconds.	80.03%	86.57%	85.04%	93.85%	Relief granted for all quarters in period Q1 2021 – Q4 2021
5	Customer Satisfaction rating	A score which is 83% or more achieved for customer satisfaction, as calculated using the Composite Customer Performance Index	87.21%	89.48%	86.94	87.35	N/A
6	Operational audit Q3 2020 – Q4 2020	90% or more achieved in that part of the Operational Audit relating to the Operations and Customer Service.	99.92%	99.06%	96.22%	95.11%	N/A
		90% or more achieved in that part of the Operational Audit relating to Facilities.	94.09%	94.22%	97.23%	95.49%	N/A
		90% or more achieved in that part of the Operational Audit relating to the Testing Arrangements.	99.51%	99.19%	97.73%	98.86%	N/A
		90% or more achieved in that part of the Operational Audit relating to the IT Systems and Controls.	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	N/A
7	Notification of results	Transfer of test results to NVDF daily (or issue of test certificates and discs within two minutes of test completion) on 98 per cent of occasions	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A
8	NCTS compliance	≥60% of NCTS Vehicles have undertaken their National Car Test on or before the end of the Contract Month in which the Test Due Dates of such NCTS Vehicles fall	See comment	See comment	See comment	See comment	Relief granted for all quarters in period Q1 2021 – Q4 2021
		≥ 90% of NCTS Vehicles have undertaken their National Car Test on or before the end of the Contract Month falling three (3) Contract Months after the Contract Month in which the Test Due Dates of such NCTS vehicles fall	See comment	See comment	See comment	See comment	Relief granted for all quarters in period Q1 2021 – Q4 2021

✓ - Denotes satisfactory result by reference to the performance standards.

As shown in the table above:

- The test accuracy standard, at 99.25% for the year as a whole, exceeded the target.
- The Customer Performance Index (CPI) for 2021 was 87.77, above the target of 83.
- Operational audit performance for 2021 was above the target of 90%.

7. Financial matters

The Contractors profit & loss account for 2021 is summarised below in **table 7.1**. These amounts have been extracted from:

1. Audited ACTS financial statements for the year to 26 June 2020.
2. Audited AISIL financial statements for the year-ended 31 December 2020.
3. Audited AISIL financial statements for the year-ended 31 December 2021.

Table 7.1: Contractor 2021 Profit & Loss Statement

	2021 €	01 Jan – 26 June 2020 (ACTS) €	27 June – 31 Dec 2020 (AISIL) €	2020 Total €	Increase / (Decrease) €
Turnover	82,390,219	19,752,473	38,171,372	57,923,845	24,466,374
Cost of Sales	(69,138,096)	(18,181,298)	(30,182,393)	(48,363,691)	20,774,405
Gross profit	13,252,123	1,571,175	7,988,979	9,560,154	3,691,969
Administrative expenses	(11,624,573)	(5,290,787)	(6,110,426)	(11,401,213)	223,360
Net unrealised foreign exchange gain / loss realised	(4,520)	(7,500)	(20,465)	(27,965)	23,445
Net unrealised foreign exchange gain / loss un-realised	6,017	-	(902)	(902)	6,919
Operating profit	1,692,047	(3,727,162)	1,857,186	(1,869,976)	3,562,023
Finance income	184,123	230,406	176,803	407,209	(223,086)
Finance Costs	(713,464)	(12,126)	(563,917)	(576,043)	137,421
Profit/(loss) before taxation	1,099,706	(3,508,882)	1,470,072	(2,038,810)	3,138,516
Taxation	(287,266)	(105,409)	(150,424)	(255,833)	31,433
Profit/(loss) after taxation	812,440	(3,614,291)	1,319,648	(2,294,643)	3,107,083
Other comprehensive income	0	0	0	0	0
Comprehensive income / (loss) for the financial year	812,440	(3,614,291)	1,319,648	(2,294,643)	3,107,083

Comments

Total turnover for 2021 was €82,390,219 – this is an increase of €24,466,374 (42.24%) on the €57,923,845 recorded in 2020.

A comprehensive profit of €812,440 was recorded in 2021 – this is an increase of €3,107,083 (135.41%) on the €2,294,643 loss recorded in 2020.

The above should be considered in light of the suspension of the Service in Q2 2020 and its resultant impact on the financial outturn for that year.

The Contractors balance sheet as at 31 December 2021 is summarised below in **table 7.3**. These amounts have been extracted from audited Contractors financial statements for the year-ended 31 December 2021.

Table 7.3: Contractor Balance sheet as at 31 December 2021

	2021	2020	Increase / (decrease)	Increase / (decrease)
	€	€	€	%
Non-Current assets				
Property, plant and equipment	12,419,583	10,210,036	2,209,547	21.64%
Intangible assets	1,875,208	2,119,036	(243,828)	(11.51%)
Right of Use Assets	22,421,753	23,686,523	(1,264,770)	(5.34%)
Amounts due from group undertakings	-	-	-	-
Deferred tax asset	68,866	26,701	42,165	157.92%
Total non-current assets	36,785,410	36,042,296	743,114	2.06%
Current Assets				
Trade and other receivables	8,716,903	19,400,612	(10,683,709)	(55.07%)
Cash and cash equivalents	826,621	4,632,766	(3,806,145)	(82.16%)
Total current assets	9,543,524	24,033,378	(14,489,854)	(60.29%)
Total Assets	46,328,934	60,075,674	(13,746,740)	(22.88%)
Equity				
Called up share capital presented as equity	3,000,000	3,000,000	-	-
Retained earnings	2,132,088	1,319,648	812,440	61.56%
Other reserve	-	-	-	-
Total Equity	5,132,088	4,319,648	812,440	18.81%
Non-Current Liabilities	19,960,283	21,001,093	(1,040,810)	(4.96%)
Provisions	-	-	-	-
Lease Liabilities	-	-	-	-
Defined tax liability	-	-	-	-
Current Liabilities				
Trade and other payables	18,219,069	31,853,181	(13,634,112)	(42.80%)
Lease Liabilities	3,017,494	2,901,752	115,742	3.99%
Total Current Liabilities	21,236,563	34,754,933	(13,518,370)	(38.90%)
Total Liabilities	41,196,846	55,756,026	(14,559,180)	(26.11%)
Total Equity and Liabilities	46,328,934	60,075,674	(13,746,740)	(22.88%)

Comments

Total assets decreased by €13,746,740 (22.82%) in the year to 31 December 2021. This is mainly made up of a decrease of 14,489,854 (60.29%) in current assets.

Total current liabilities decreased by €13,518,370 (38.90%) in the year to 31 December 2021. This is mainly made up of a decrease of €13,634,112 (42.80%) in trade and other payables.

The above is reflective of an improved trading conditions throughout 2021 which resulted in significant decreases in trade receivables and trade payables.

Profit share

No profit share has arisen over the course of the current NCT contract which came into operation on 27 June 2020.

Appendix 1 – NCTS Service Levels

The below Service Levels are set out in Schedule 22 of the contract for the delivery of the NCTS which came into operation on 27 June 2020.

Reference		Service Level	Operating Service Level	Service Threshold
1	1.1	Notifying Owners of the requirement to have their vehicle tested	90% 20 – 60 working days before the due date of the test.	<80% of Owners of NCTS Vehicles to be tested, to be notified at least twenty (20) Working Days, but not more than sixty (60) Working Days before the Test Due Date for their NCTS Vehicles.
			100% 5 working days before the due date of the test.	<90% of Owners of NCTS Vehicles to be tested, to be notified at least five (5) Working Days before the Test Due Date for their NCTS Vehicles
	1.2	At each individual National Car test centre, notification to Catchment Owners of the requirement to have their NCTS Vehicles tested.	≥80% of Catchment Owners of NCTS Vehicles to be tested, to be notified at least twenty (20) Working Days, but not more than sixty (60) Working Days, before the Test Due Date for their NCTS Vehicles.	<70% of Catchment Owners of NCTS Vehicles to be tested, to be notified at least twenty (20) Working Days, but not more than sixty (60) Working Days, before the Test Due Date for their NCTS Vehicles.
2	2.1	Average booking lead time for Full Tests across the National Car Testing Service	Average booking lead time for Full Tests ≤12 days.	Average booking lead time for Full Tests >20 days.
	2.2	Average booking lead time for Full Tests at each individual National Car Test Centre	Average booking lead time for Full Tests ≤15 days.	Average booking lead time for Full Tests being >23 days.
3	N/A	Test accuracy	≥ 98.5% of outcomes of National Car Tests confirmed on being checked.	<97.5% of outcomes of National Car Tests confirmed on being checked.
4	N/A	Telephone response times	≥ 90% of telephone calls answered within fifteen (15) seconds.	< 84% of telephone calls answered within fifteen (15) seconds.
5	N/A	Customer Satisfaction rating	A score which is 83% or more achieved for customer satisfaction, as calculated using the Composite Customer Performance Index.	A score which is less than 75% achieved for customer satisfaction, as calculated using the Composite Customer Performance Index.
6	N/A	Operational audit	A score of 90% or more achieved in that part of the Operational Audit relating to the Operations and Customer Service;	A score which is less than 80% achieved in that part of the Operational Audit relating to the Operations and Customer Service;
			A score of 90% or more achieved in that part of the Operational Audit relating to Facilities;	A score which is less than 80% achieved in that part of the Operational Audit relating to the Facilities;
			A score of 90% or more achieved in that part of the Operational Audit relating to the Testing Arrangements;	A score which is less than 80% achieved in that part of the Operational Audit relating to the Testing Arrangements;
			A score of 90% or more achieved in that part of the Operational Audit relating to the IT Systems and Controls.	A score which is less than 80% achieved in that part of the Operational Audit relating to the IT Systems and Controls.

Reference		Service Level	Operating Service Level	Service Threshold
7	N/A	Notification of results	For so long as there is no webservice allowing for the transfer of NCT results to the NVDF, ≥98% of NCT results transferred to NVDF on same day as the National Car Test is completed;	For so long as there is no webservice allowing for the transfer of NCT results to the NVDF, <92% of NCT results transferred to NVDF on same day as the National Car Test is completed
			Where there is a webservice allowing for the transfer of NCT results to the NVDF, ≥98% of test results transferred to NVDF within 30 minutes of completion of the National Car Test	Where there is a webservice allowing for the transfer of NCT results to the NVDF, <92% of test results transferred to NVDF within 30 minutes of completion of the National Car Test
8	N/A	NCTS compliance	≥60% of NCTS Vehicles have undertaken their National Car Test on or before the end of the Contract Month in which the Test Due Dates of such NCTS Vehicles fall.	< 54% of NCTS Vehicles have passed their National Car Test on or before the end of the Contract Month in which the Test Due Dates of such NCTS Vehicles fall.
			≥ 90% of NCTS Vehicles have undertaken their National Car Test on or before the end of the Contract Month falling three (3) Contract Months after the Contract Month in which the Test Due Dates of such NCTS Vehicles Fail.	< 84% of NCTS Vehicles have passed their National Car Test on or before the end of the Contract Month falling three (3) Contract Months after the Contract Month in which the Test Due Dates of such NCTS Vehicles Fail.



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