

## DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

### SECTION 75 EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY SCREENING ANALYSIS FORM

The purpose of this form is to help you to consider whether a new policy (either internal or external) or legislation will require a full equality impact assessment (EQIA). Those policies identified as having significant implications for equality of opportunity must be subject to full EQIA.

The form will provide a record of the factors taken into account if a policy is screened out, or excluded for EQIA. It will provide a basis for quarterly consultation on the outcome of the screening exercise, and will be referenced in the biannual review of progress made to the Minister and in the Annual Report to the Equality Commission.

Further advice on completion of this form and the screening process including relevant contact information can be accessed via the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Intranet site.

### HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

When considering the impact of this policy you should also consider if there would be any Human Rights implications. Guidance is at:

- <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/articles/human-rights-and-public-authorities>

Should this be appropriate you will need to complete a Human Rights Impact Assessment. A template is at:

- <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/human-rights-impact-assessment-proforma>

## Part 1. Policy scoping

The first stage of the screening process involves scoping the policy under consideration. The purpose of policy scoping is to help prepare the background and context and set out the aims and objectives for the policy, being screened. At this stage, scoping the policy will help identify potential constraints as well as opportunities and will help the policy maker work through the screening process on a step by step basis.

Public authorities should remember that the Section 75 statutory duties apply to internal policies (relating to people who work for the authority), as well as external policies (relating to those who are, or could be, served by the authority).

### Information about the policy

Name of the policy

Increase to Vehicle Test Fees

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Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

Revised

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What is it trying to achieve? (intended aims/outcomes)

The revised policy proposes increasing the fees paid for vehicle tests. This is necessary because of the rising cost of delivering vehicle testing services. Increasing the fees will increase the income collected which will be used to pay the costs of delivering the service.

A fee increase to all types of full vehicle tests ranging from £8.50 for taxis to £36.50 for HGV 1 axle trailers, with private cars (which accounts for approximately 82% of our total tests) increasing by £7.50.

A fee increase to all types of retest ranging from £10.00 for taxis to £15.50 for motorcycles with private cars (which accounts for approximately 82% of our total retests) increasing by £11.00.

This fee increase is necessary to address the current and projected fees deficit and will ensure that the DVA meets its financial and statutory obligations. In the

absence of a fees increase the DVA will be unable to meet its financial and statutory obligations and the financial sustainability of the DVA could be impacted in future years, which ultimately, could impact the Department's financial position.

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Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?  
If so, explain how.

Vehicle testing is a road safety measure and as such the increase to fees is necessary to continue delivering the vehicle testing service and contributing to road safety. Potentially all Section 75 categories may benefit from improved road safety and environmental standards, and the ongoing improvements and modernisation of the vehicle testing environment and vehicle test booking and information systems.

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Who initiated or wrote the policy?

DfI - Driver and Vehicle Agency

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Who owns and who implements the policy?

DfI - Driver and Vehicle Agency

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## **Background**

The DVA is responsible for conducting statutory annual vehicle roadworthiness tests and related roadside tests in compliance with The Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 and the Taxis Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. Private cars are tested annually from 4 years old, HGV's are tested annually from 1 year old and public service vehicles (buses and taxis) are tested annually from entry into service. These tests make a positive contribution towards improved road safety and environmental standards.

The DVA operates a Trading Fund, which is required to generate sufficient revenue to cover its outgoings, in line with the Financial Provisions Order 1993. The Department of Finance guidance on fees and charges within 'Managing Public Money Northern Ireland' requires the DVA to recover in full the costs

associated with delivering its vehicle testing services. This fee increase is necessary to address the current and projected fees deficit and will ensure that the DVA meets its financial and statutory obligations in the future.

The fees for conducting annual roadworthiness tests on cars, motorcycles, private buses and light goods vehicles have not been increased since October 2005. The fees for conducting public service vehicle (PSV) Bus & Taxi licencing tests have not been increased since 2009 (taximeter test introduced in May 2016 has also not increased) whilst heavy goods vehicle (HGV) test fees have not increased since October 2012. All associated roadside enforcement acquittal fees for the above vehicle categories have not increased since 2005.

Until recently, we have been able to avoid increases to the fees for vehicle tests however the rising cost of delivering the service means we are facing a shortfall in income. Staff costs, accommodation costs (including energy bills) and contracted services costs have all increased, which means the current fees no longer cover all of the costs.

Since the majority of vehicle test fees were last increased, we have improved and modernised the vehicle test booking and information systems and invested in testing equipment replacement programmes. In addition, we are constructing a new test centre at Hydebank in Belfast, which is due to open later this year. The proposed new fees will help us cover the costs of running and improving our services and meeting our related statutory obligations to recover in full the costs of delivering these services.

In the absence of a fees increase the DVA will be unable to meet its financial and statutory obligations and the financial sustainability of the DVA could be impacted in future years, which ultimately, could impact the Department's financial position. In addition, if the policy is not taken forward, there is the possibility that services would have to be reduced or stopped to minimise losses. The reduction or stopping of vehicle testing services would lead to the use of increased numbers of defective vehicles which would have a significant negative impact upon all road users.

In most instances the proposed full test fees, for annual vehicle tests, are below what they would be if an annual inflationary increase had been applied since fees were last increased. A small number of proposed full test fees are above inflation (e.g., private buses, trailers & HGV 2 axle vehicles). In all cases the increase reflects the costs associated with delivering those particular tests. The full test fee increases range between £7.50 (Car) and £36.50 (Trailer). The proposed increase of £7.50 to the full MOT/Car test fee affects the vast majority of vehicle

tests conducted in Northern Ireland and equates to approximately 82% of all full tests conducted.

<b>SUMMARY OF MAIN (FULL) VEHICLE TEST FEES</b>		
<b>Category</b>	<b>Current fee £</b>	<b>Proposed fee £</b>
Car	30.50	38.00
Minibus - Large passenger carrying vehicle	41.50	70.50
Motorcycle	22.00	34.00
Light goods vehicle	30.50	38.00
HGV 2 axle	76.00	101.00
HGV 3 axle	87.00	109.00
HGV 4 axle	98.50	117.50
HGV Articulated 2 axle	80.50	101.00
HGV Articulated 3 axle	93.50	109.00
HGV Trailer 3 axle	52.00	86.50
Taxi	138.50	147.00
PSV bus	90.50	102.50

The vast majority of private vehicle retest fees (including cars that equate to approximately 82% of the total number of retests conducted) are proposed to increase from £18.50 to £29.50, whilst the vast majority of commercial vehicle retests (including HGVs, Trailers & PSV Buses) are proposed to increase from £19.50 to £38.00 (see table below).

Over 90% of the retests conducted (cars and light goods vehicles) will attract a fee that is below what they would be if an annual inflationary increase had been applied since fees were last increased. In all cases the increase reflects the costs associated with delivering those particular retests.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN VEHICLE RE-TEST FEES

Category	Current fee £	Proposed fee £
Car	18.50	29.50
Minibus - Large passenger carrying vehicle	18.50	38.00
Motorcycle	14.00	29.50
Light goods vehicle	18.50	29.50
HGV	18.50	38.00
HGV Articulated	19.50	38.00
HGV Trailer	19.50	38.00
Taxi	19.50	29.50
PSV bus	19.50	38.00

The proposed full test fees and retest fees referred to above will in general be applied to their respective roadside enforcement full test acquittal fee and roadside enforcement partial (retest) acquittal fee, although the difference between the current fee and the proposed fee may be greater in a number of cases as the acquittal fees have not been increased since 2005. The table below shows the proposed main full test fee increases compared with the current corresponding fees charged in GB. These proposed fees will in general continue to remain lower than those charged in GB, although a small number will be above GB. All proposed fees have been set on the basis of recovering in full the cost of delivering the individual vehicle tests.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN (FULL) VEHICLE TEST FEES

Category	Current NI fee £	Proposed fee £	GB Fees £
Car	30.50	38.00	54.85
Minibus - Large passenger carrying vehicle	41.50	70.50	59.55
Motorcycle	22.00	34.00	29.65
Light goods vehicle	30.50	38.00	58.60
HGV 2 axle	76.00	101.00	112.00
HGV 3 axle	87.00	109.00	144.00
HGV 4 axle	98.50	117.50	177.00
HGV Articulated 2 axle	80.50	101.00	112.00
HGV Articulated 3 axle	93.50	109.00	144.00
HGV Trailer 3 axle	52.00	86.50	84.00
Taxi	138.50	147.00	N/A
PSV bus	90.50	102.50	168.00

## Implementation factors

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision?

Yes, financial and legislative.

### Financial

The DVA's vehicle test fees are not covering the costs for delivering the vehicle testing services. If costs continue to increase further than projected, this would mean the aim of the policy decision to increase fees to the proposed levels would not be achieved. A subsequent review of fees would then be necessary.

### Legislative

If fees are not increased the DVA would not be able to meet its costs for conducting current and future tests in compliance with The Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 and the Taxis Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, and the following related Regulations:

- Motor Vehicle Testing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003
- Goods Vehicle (Testing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003
- The Taxi Licencing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015
- The Taxis (Taximeter, Devices and Maximum Fares Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015
- Public Service Vehicle Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1985
- Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003

In addition the DVA would fail to meet its statutory obligations to ensure full cost recovery in compliance with 'Managing Public Money Northern Ireland' and the Financial Provisions Order 1993.

In the absence of a sitting NI Assembly, the Department's Permanent Secretary may approve the policy decision to increase vehicle test fees under powers contained in the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc) Act 2022.

## Main stakeholders affected

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon?

Service users: This policy has the potential to impact service provision thereby affecting the users of all DVA testing services which will include S75 groups.

## Other policies with a bearing on this policy

The Draft Road Safety Strategy for NI to 2030.

The Draft Road Safety Strategy for NI to 2030 sets out the following targets

- To reduce the number of people killed in road collisions by at least 50% by 2030 (a target of fewer than 35 people killed in road collisions)
- To reduce the number of people seriously injured in road collisions by at least 50% by 2030 (a target of fewer than 376 people seriously injured in road collisions)
- To reduce the number of children (aged 0-15) killed or seriously injured in road collisions by 60% by 2030 (a target of fewer than 29 children killed or seriously injured)
- To reduce the number of young people (aged 16-24) killed or seriously injured in road collisions by 60% by 2030 (a target of fewer than 79 young people killed or seriously injured)

The vehicle testing services provided by the DVA will make a positive contribution to achieving these targets.

## Available evidence

Evidence to help inform the screening process may take many forms. Public authorities should ensure that their screening decision is informed by relevant data. The Commission has produced this guide to [signpost to S75 data](#).

What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories.

The tables below show the volume of vehicle full tests and vehicle retests by category for the last five years. Volumes were reduced due to the DVA operational difficulties (vehicle testing lifts issue) and the COVID-19 pandemic, to varying degrees in the three years following 2018-19. For year 2022-2023 the overall pass-rate for full tests was approximately 82%.

The annual pass-rate for full tests varied by category, from approximately 77% for light goods to 93% for motorcycles.



VOLUME OF VEHICLE FULL TESTS									
Year	Car	LPCV	Motorcycle	Light goods	Heavy Goods	Trailers	Taxi	PSV Bus	Total
2018/19	772,740	1,904	20,447	71,439	25,397	17,473	8,691	3,497	921,588
2019/20	703,521	1,681	20,291	68,235	25,124	17,536	8,525	3,485	848,398
2020/21	169,754	203	3,925	17,682	16,100	10,375	848	418	219,305
2021/22	604,022	2,721	17,987	62,039	25,449	17,952	6,959	3,448	740,557
2022/23	819,523	5,733	21,283	89,713	25,082	18,523	7,136	3,456	990,449

VOLUME OF VEHICLE RETESTS									
Year	Car	LPCV	Motorcycle	Light goods	Heavy Goods	Trailers	Taxi	PSV Bus	Total
2018/19	138,425	406	1,239	15,344	5,714	2,528	1,938	666	166,260
2019/20	123,047	351	1,163	14,609	5,238	2,344	1,693	637	149,082
2020/21	22,986	46	291	3,144	3,220	1,334	132	40	31,193
2021/22	126,307	501	1,172	14,731	4,857	2,159	1,388	501	151,616
2022/23	134,245	1,061	1,087	18,394	4,332	2,130	1,259	477	162,985

The continued effective delivery of annual vehicle tests will make a positive contribution to the draft Road Safety Strategy NI to 2030, which seeks to reduce the number of people killed in road traffic collisions by at least 50% by 2030, to reduce the number of people seriously injured in road traffic by at least 50% by 2030, and to reduce the number of children (aged 0-15) and young people (aged 16-24) killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions by 60% by 2030.

The Travel Survey for Northern Ireland 2021 indicated the following:

- On average, 583 car journeys were taken per person in 2021. This equates to just under 69% of all journeys made.
- During 2021, more than 84% of the total distance travelled was by car (as a driver or passenger). On average, 4,130 miles were travelled per person by car during this period.
- In 2021, 20 public transport journeys were made per person. This equates to 2% of all journeys made.
- There were 117 education and escort education journeys made per person in 2021 (e.g. a schoolchild going to school, a student going to college/university, a parent taking a child to school). This accounted for 14% of all journeys made.

The table below shows road traffic casualty statistics for 2015 – 2019 provided by DfI's Analysis, Statistics and Research Branch highlighting the proportion of vehicle defects as a causation factor.

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%

**Religious belief** evidence / information:

The 2021 Census breakdown of religious belief in Northern Ireland (NI) showed that 44% of the population are Protestant, 46% Catholic, 1.5% other religions and 9% no religion.

Whilst there is no robust vehicle testing information in Northern Ireland on this S75 group it is likely that those who fall into this group and use the vehicle testing service will be impacted by the fee increases.

**Political Opinion** evidence / information:

In Census 2021, 814,600 people (42.8%) living here identified solely or along with other national identities as 'British'. This is down from 876,600 people (48.4%) in 2011. The Census also found, 634,600 people (33.3%) living here identified solely or along with other national identities as 'Irish'. This is up from 513,400 people (28.4%) in 2011. Finally, the Census 2021, identified 598,800 people (31.5%) living here as solely or along with other national identities 'Northern Irish'. This is up from 533,100 people (29.4%) in 2011.

There has been a historical tendency for voting preferences to closely reflect the religious affiliations of the population. Statistics for first preference votes in the 2022 NI Assembly Election showed 42% unionist, 42% nationalist and 16% other. This implies that any issues and differentials identified in relation to people of different religion may also impact on people of different political opinion.

Whilst there is no robust vehicle testing information in Northern Ireland on this S75 group it is likely that those who fall into this group and use the vehicle testing service will be impacted by the fee increases.

## Racial Group evidence / information:

Ethnic Group Table population: All usual residents

<b>Total</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Irish Traveller</b>	<b>Roma</b>	<b>Indian</b>
1.9M	96.55%	0.14%	0.08%	0.52%
	<b>Chinese</b>	<b>Filipino</b>	<b>Pakistani</b>	<b>Arab</b>
	0.50%	0.23%	0.08%	0.10%
	<b>Other Asian</b>	<b>Black African</b>	<b>Black Other</b>	<b>Mixed</b>
	0.28%	0.42%	0.16%	0.76%
	<b>Other Ethnicities</b>			
	0.19%			

Source: [NI Census 2021](#)

The 2021 Census recorded that 3.5% (66,600) people were from ethnic minority groups.

Whilst there is no robust vehicle testing information in Northern Ireland on this S75 group it is likely that those who fall into this group and use the vehicle testing service will be impacted by the fee increases.

## Age evidence / information:

The 2021 census indicated that 17% of the 1.9m people resident in Northern Ireland are 65 and over.

### Total population:

Age: All usual residents

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>0-14</b>	<b>15-24</b>	<b>25-44</b>	<b>45-64</b>	<b>65+</b>
<b>Number</b>	365,219	224,575	491,970	484,825	326,585
<b>%</b>	19.19%	11.8%	25.85%	26%	17.16%

Source: [NI Census 2021](#)

Whilst there is no robust vehicle testing information in Northern Ireland on this S75 group it is likely that those who fall into this group (excluding the 0–14 age group) and use the vehicle testing service will be impacted by the fee increases.

## Marital Status evidence / information:

In 2021 there were 7,921 marriages in Northern Ireland.

### Total population data

Marital and Civil Partnership Status Table population: All usual residents aged 16 and over.

	Number	%
<b>All usual residents aged 16 and over</b>	1,514,743	100.00%
Single (never married or never registered civil partnership)	576,708	38.07%
Married	690,509	45.59%
In a civil partnership	2,742	0.18%
Separated (but still legally married or still legally in a civil partnership)	57,272	3.78%
Divorced or formerly in a civil partnership which is now legally dissolved	91,128	6.02%
Widowed or surviving partner from a civil partnership	96,384	6.36%

Source: NI Census 2021

Whilst there is no robust vehicle testing information in Northern Ireland on this S75 group it is likely that those who fall into this group and use the vehicle testing service will be impacted by the fee increases.

## Sexual Orientation evidence / information:

In terms of total population data, the 2021 NI Census data indicates that 2.1% of the household population in Northern Ireland identify as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual.

The Continuous Household Survey 2022 records 0.7% of participants as gay/lesbian, 0.6% bisexual, 0.3% Other, 1% undetermined and 97.3% heterosexual.

Whilst there is no robust vehicle testing information in Northern Ireland on this S75 group it is likely that those who fall into this group and use the vehicle testing service will be impacted by the fee increases

## **Men & Women generally** evidence / information:

NISRA population statistics indicate that men and women make up roughly equal parts of NI's 1.9m population.

### Total Population Data

All residents	Male	Female
1,903,175	49.19%	50.81%

Source: NI Census 2021

Whilst there is no robust vehicle testing information in Northern Ireland on this S75 group it is likely that those who fall into this group and use the vehicle testing service will be impacted by the fee increases.

## **Disability** evidence / information:

In terms of total population data, the NI Census 2021 indicated that almost one in four of the usually resident population (24.33%) had a long-term health problem which limited their day-to-day activity to some extent. This drops to 12.74% within the age range of 15-39 years. The 2021 Census also indicates that nearly 45% of households in Northern Ireland with one or more people in the household with a disability (40% for 2011 Census).

21% of adults in Northern Ireland are classed as having a disability (NISRA).

The Travel Survey for Northern Ireland 2021 reports that at the 31 March 2021, 125,828 valid Blue Badges were held in Northern Ireland. Of the 125,828 valid Blue Badges held at 31 March 2021, 67,510 were held by people who automatically qualified for a Blue Badge, 57,437 were held as a result of further assessment and 881 were held by organisations.

Whilst there is no robust vehicle testing information in Northern Ireland on this S75 group it is likely that those who fall into this group and use the vehicle testing service will be impacted by the fee increases.

## **Dependants** evidence / information:

The 2021 NI Census indicated that 29% per cent of households in Northern Ireland contained dependent children and 45% contained at least one person with a long-term health problem or disability.

Whilst there is no robust vehicle testing information in Northern Ireland on this S75 group it is likely that those who fall into this group and use the vehicle testing service will be impacted by the fee increases

### **Needs, experiences and priorities**

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular policy/decision?

Specify details of the needs, experiences and priorities for each of the Section 75 categories below:

#### **Religious belief:**

The DVA vehicle testing services will be used by those of different religious belief. No specific need has been identified for this group.

#### **Political Opinion:**

The DVA vehicle testing services will be used by those of different political opinion. No specific need has been identified for this group.

#### **Racial Group:**

The DVA vehicle testing services will be used by those of different racial groups. No specific need has been identified for this group.

#### **Age:**

The DVA vehicle testing services will be used by those of different ages (excluding the 0-14 age group and part of the 15-24 age group). No specific need has been identified for this group.

#### **Marital status:**

The DVA vehicle testing services will be used by those of different marital status. No specific need has been identified for this group.

**Sexual orientation:**

The DVA vehicle testing services will be used by those of different sexual orientation. No specific need has been identified for this group.

**Men and Women Generally:**

The DVA vehicle testing services will be used by Men and Women Generally however no specific need has been identified for this group.

**Disability:**

The DVA vehicle testing services will be used by those with a disability. No specific need has been identified for this group.

**Dependants:**

The DVA vehicle testing services will be used by those with dependants. No specific need has been identified for this group.

## **Part 2. Screening questions**

### **Introduction**

In making a decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment, the public authority should consider its answers to the questions 1-4 which are given on pages 66-68 of this Guide.

If the public authority's conclusion is **none** in respect of all of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then the public authority may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is 'screened out' as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, a public authority should give details of the reasons for the decision taken.

If the public authority's conclusion is **major** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then consideration should be given to subjecting the policy to the equality impact assessment procedure.

If the public authority's conclusion is **minor** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality categories and/or good relations categories, then consideration should still be given to proceeding with an equality impact assessment, or to:

- measures to mitigate the adverse impact; or
- the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

### **In favour of a 'major' impact**

- a) The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
- b) Potential equality impacts are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;
- c) Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;
- d) Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are



concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;

- e) The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
- f) The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

### **In favour of 'minor' impact**

- a) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
- b) The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;
- c) Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
- d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

### **In favour of none**

- a) The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations.
- b) The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

Taking into account the evidence presented above, consider and comment on the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations for those affected by this policy, in any way, for each of the equality and good relations categories, by applying the screening questions given overleaf and indicate the level of impact on the group i.e. minor, major or none.

## Screening questions

### 1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?

Please provide details of the likely policy impacts and determine the level of impact for each S75 categories below i.e. either minor, major or none.

The impact of an increase in the fees will be across all Section 75 groups. There will be no specific impact on equality of opportunity for this Section 75 Group as all will be subject to the same vehicle test fee increase.

Research completed by the Department in the Travel Survey 2020 showed that 65% of people used a car for journeys than any other form of transport. This dependence on a car as a primary means of travel to access employment (80%), education and social opportunities. An increase in fees therefore has the potential to impact on some of the most vulnerable consumers that have no alternative means of transport, irrespective of their religious belief, political opinion, racial group, marital status, sex or sexual orientation.

The Statistics sourced from Northern Ireland Household Expenditure Tracker Q4 2022 indicated the following expenditure in relation to lowest earning households in Northern Ireland:

- Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas & Other Fuels 20.8%
- Food & Non-Alcoholic Beverages 20.2%
- **Transport 12.8%**
- Furniture, Equipment & Routine House Repair 8.3%
- Other Expenditure Items 6.7%
- Miscellaneous Goods & Services 6.0%
- Clothing & Footwear 6.0%
- Communication 5.1%
- Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco & Narcotics 4.7%
- Recreation & Culture 4.1%
- Health 3.0%
- Hotels, Cafes & Restaurants 2.1%
- Education 0.1%

As outlined in the background section, the increase in fees is to address the current and projected fees deficit and ensure that the DVA meets its financial

and statutory obligations. In the absence of a fees increase the DVA will be unable to meet its financial and statutory obligations and the financial sustainability of the DVA could be impacted in future years, which ultimately, could impact the Department's financial position.

If the policy is not taken forward, there is the possibility that services would have to be reduced or stopped to minimise losses. The reduction or stopping of vehicle testing services would have an even more adverse impact upon all S75 categories, potentially creating road safety issues. Given that most of the proposed fee increases are below inflationary levels, and the potential alternatives, i.e. reduction to and/or cessation of services, it is considered that this policy revision will have a minor impact.

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Religious belief**:

The impact of an increase in the fees will be across all Section 75 groups. There will be no specific impact on equality of opportunity for this Section 75 Group as all will be subject to the same vehicle test fee increase.

What is the level of impact? **Minor negative**

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Political Opinion**:

The impact of an increase in the fees will be across all Section 75 groups. There will be no specific impact on equality of opportunity for this Section 75 Group as all will be subject to the same vehicle test fee increase.

What is the level of impact? **Minor negative**

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Racial Group**:

The impact of an increase in the fees will be across all Section 75 groups. There will be no specific impact on equality of opportunity for this Section 75 Group as all will be subject to the same vehicle test fee increase.

What is the level of impact? **Minor negative**

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Age**:

The impact of an increase in the fees will be across all Section 75 groups. There will be no specific impact on equality of opportunity for this Section 75 Group as all will be subject to the same vehicle test fee increase.

What is the level of impact? [Minor negative](#)

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Marital Status**:

The impact of an increase in the fees will be across all Section 75 groups. There will be no specific impact on equality of opportunity for this Section 75 Group as all will be subject to the same vehicle test fee increase.

What is the level of impact? [Minor negative](#)

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Sexual Orientation**:

The impact of an increase in the fees will be across all Section 75 groups. There will be no specific impact on equality of opportunity for this Section 75 Group as all will be subject to the same vehicle test fee increase.

What is the level of impact? [Minor negative](#)

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Men and Women**:

The impact of an increase in the fees will be across all Section 75 groups. There will be no specific impact on equality of opportunity for this Section 75 Group as all will be subject to the same vehicle test fee increase.

What is the level of impact? [Minor negative](#)

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Disability**:

The impact of an increase in the fees will be across all Section 75 groups. There will be no specific impact on equality of opportunity for this Section 75 Group as all will be subject to the same vehicle test fee increase.

What is the level of impact? [Minor negative](#)

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Dependants**:

The impact of an increase in the fees will be across all Section 75 groups. There will be no specific impact on equality of opportunity for this Section 75 Group as all will be subject to the same vehicle test fee increase.

What is the level of impact? [Minor negative](#)

2. **Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?**

No

Detail opportunities of how this policy could promote equality of opportunity for people within each of the Section 75 Categories below:

**Religious Belief -**

If No, provide reasons:

DVA uses its fee income to cover the costs associated with delivering vehicle testing services across all of Northern Ireland. As such, it already promotes equality of opportunity across this S75 group.

**Political Opinion -**

If No, provide reasons: [As outlined above](#)

**Racial Group -**

If No, provide reasons: [As outlined above](#)

**Age -**

If No, provide reasons: [As outlined above](#)

**Marital Status -**

If No, provide reasons: [As outlined above](#)

**Sexual Orientation -**

If No, provide reasons: [As outlined above](#)

**Men and Women generally -**

If No, provide reasons: [As outlined above](#)

**Disability -**

If No, provide reasons: [As outlined above](#)

**Dependants -**

If No, provide reasons: [As outlined above](#)

3. **To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?**

Please provide details of the likely policy impact and determine the level of impact for each of the categories below i.e. either minor, major or none.

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Religious belief**:

DVA uses its fee income to cover the costs associated with delivering vehicle testing services across all of Northern Ireland. The fee increase is unlikely to impact on good relations between people in this S75 group.

What is the level of impact?

None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Political Opinion**:

DVA uses its fee income to cover the costs associated with delivering vehicle testing services across all of Northern Ireland. The fee increase is unlikely to impact on good relations between people in this S75 group.

What is the level of impact?

None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Racial Group**:

DVA uses its fee income to cover the costs associated with delivering vehicle testing services across all of Northern Ireland. The fee increase is unlikely to impact on good relations between people in this S75 group.

What is the level of impact?

None

4. **Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?**

Detail opportunities of how this policy could better promote good relations for people within each of the Section 75 Categories below:

**Religious Belief -**

If No, provide reasons:

The services provided by the DVA are universal in nature, and the fee increases will apply to all test categories referred to above. There is no evidence available of any opportunity to better promote good relations for people within any Section 75 Group.

**Political Opinion -**

If No, provide reasons:

No – as outlined above

**Racial Group -**

If No, provide reasons:

No – as outlined above

## Additional considerations

### Multiple identity

Generally speaking, people can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, are there any potential impacts of the policy/decision on people with multiple identities?

*(For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people).*

Even though the majority of the proposed fee increases are below inflation, given the important role that vehicle testing has to play in ensuring road safety, this revised policy decision is likely to impact multiple S75 identities. However, conversely, if the revised policy is not taken forward, there is the possibility that the vehicle testing services would have to be reduced or stopped to minimise losses being incurred by the DVA. Such an action may have a much greater impact on S75 groups.

Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

It is not possible to identify the multiple identity impacts of this decision.



### **Part 3. Screening decision**

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

The screening decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment on this revised policy.

The likely impact is considered to be minor negative given that the majority of fees remain below inflation and have not been increased since October 2005. Fees for conducting public service vehicle (PSV) Bus & Taxi licencing tests have not been increased since 2009, whilst heavy goods vehicle (HGV) test fees have not increased since October 2012.

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment the public authority should consider if the policy should be mitigated or an alternative policy be introduced - please provide details.

This has been considered in the context of the DVA's statutory obligations, and the policy is justified as no undue impact will fall on any particular Section 75 groups, therefore no mitigation is required.

If the decision is to subject the policy to an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

N/A

All public authorities' equality schemes must state the authority's arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by the authority on the promotion of equality of opportunity. The Commission recommends screening and equality impact assessment as the tools to be utilised for such assessments. Further advice on equality impact assessment may be found in a separate Commission publication: Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment.

This draft Equality Screening will be included with the public consultation on the proposed fee increases, and respondents will be asked for their views on the assumptions and draft outcome. The draft Equality Screening will be reviewed in light of feedback received during the consultation exercise.

## Mitigation

When the public authority concludes that the likely impact is 'minor' and an equality impact assessment is not to be conducted, the public authority may consider mitigation to lessen the severity of any equality impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations.

Can the policy/decision be amended or changed or an alternative policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?

If so, **give the reasons** to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative policy.

As set out above, the Department considers the impact of the fees increase to be minor negative and in fact without the additional income this will generate, there is the possibility that vehicle testing services would have to be reduced and have a major impact on road safety. Such an action would have a major impact on S75 groups.

In the absence of a fees increase the DVA will be unable to meet its financial and statutory obligations and the financial sustainability of the DVA could be impacted in future years, which ultimately, could impact the Department's financial position.

## Timetabling and prioritising

Factors to be considered in timetabling and prioritising policies for equality impact assessment.

If the policy has been '**screened in**' for equality impact assessment, then please answer the following questions to determine its priority for timetabling the equality impact assessment.

On a scale of 1-3, with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the policy in terms of its priority for equality impact assessment.

**Priority criterion** [Author pick 1, 2 or 3 if a full EQIA is to take place]

Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations **Rating 1, 2 or 3**

Social need **Rating 1, 2 or 3**

Effect on people's daily lives **Rating 1, 2 or 3**

Relevance to a public authority's functions **Rating 1, 2 or 3**

Note: The Total Rating Score should be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for equality impact assessment. This list of priorities will assist the public authority in timetabling. Details of the Public Authority's Equality Impact Assessment Timetable should be included in the quarterly Screening Report.

Is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities?

No

If yes, please provide details.

N/A

## **Part 4. Monitoring**

Public authorities should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007).

The Commission recommends that where the policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced, the public authority should monitor more broadly than for adverse impact (See Benefits, P.9-10, paras 2.13 – 2.20 of the Monitoring Guidance).

Effective monitoring will help the public authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy which may lead the public authority to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and policy development.

## **Part 5 - Approval and authorisation**

Screened by: Harry Fitzpatrick  
Position/Job Title: SPTO, Driver & Vehicle Standards  
Date: 02 June 2023

Approved by: Siobhan Lynn  
Position/Job Title: Acting Director of Financial Management and Corporate Services  
Date: 02 June 2023

Note: A copy of the Screening Template, for each policy screened should be 'signed off' and approved by a senior manager responsible for the policy, made easily accessible on the public authority's website as soon as possible following completion and made available on request.

### **For Equality Team Completion:**

Date Received:	18.05.23
Amendments Requested:	Yes
Date Returned to Business Area:	24.05.23
Date Final Version Received / Confirmed:	08.06.23
Date Published on Dfl's Section 75 webpage:	08.06.23