

RSA

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

2023 Annual Report

Final Report

Údarás Um Shábháilteacht Ar Bhóithre
Road Safety Authority

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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 2023. 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 Provider (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 & 2023 overview

Introduction

This report sets out a summary of the National Car Testing Service (NCTS) operations in the 12-month period from 01 January 2023 to 31 December 2023.

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 2023

Throughout 2023 there were a number of issues which had a material impact upon the delivery of the NCTS:

1. **Recruiting and retaining VIs** – At the start of 2023 there were 595 Vehicle Inspectors (VIs) employed in the NCTS. Throughout 2023, the overall lack of, and high demand for qualified mechanics impacted the retention and recruitment of VIs in the NCTS. The Contractor continued to recruit VIs throughout the year including the recruitment of two further tranches of VIs from the Philippines, and the secondment of VIs from Applus Spain. Throughout 2023:
 - 179 VIs joined the Service.
 - 108 VIs ceased employment.

At the end of 2023 there were 666 VIs employed in the Service which is the highest number of VIs employed since the NCTS was introduced in Ireland in January 2000. The higher number of VIs allowed the NCTS Contractor to deliver higher capacity throughout the NCTS network during the second half of 2023 and facilitated the introduction of third shifts in a number of NCTS centres.

2. **Slot availability** – Throughout 2023 there was a lack of slots for NCTS customers which in turn led to high numbers of NCTS customers on the Priority List. This was most noticeable in the period Q1 – Q2 2023. Following the on-boarding of new VIs this situation started to improve from Q3 2023 onwards.

2023 Performance Summary

Test volumes increased when compared with 2022. Please see **Section 6** (performance management) of this report for more detail in this regard.

Note – The information presented hereunder is extracted from the Contractor’s ICT system.

- 2023 activity levels across the service were higher than those seen in 2022 as can be seen below.

Table 1.1: Test volumes 2018 – 2023

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Full test	1,343,761	1,390,586	1,006,982	1,418,113	1,395,505	1,587,999
Lane re-test	444,628	474,796	471,919	476,613	454,790	523,373
Non lane re-test	236,135	233,513	130,337	197,625	191,491	224,218
Total	2,024,524	2,098,895	1,609,237	2,092,351	2,041,786	2,335,590

- Pass rates for full NCT tests and lane re-tests decreased in 2023. Pass rates for non-lane re-tests increased marginally in 2023.

Table 1.2: Pass rates 2018 – 2023

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Full test (%)	49.25	49.98	54.94	52.76	54.31	52.91
Lane re-test (%)	87.65	88.77	81.76	88.30	88.01	87.81
Non lane re-test (%)	99.50	99.60	99.57	99.56	99.55	99.57

The quarterly pass rates for 2023 are set out hereunder:

	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
Full test (%)	54.46	53.41	53.10	50.36
Lane re-test (%)	87.87	87.84	87.77	87.74
Non lane re-test (%)	99.55	99.55	99.60	99.60

- NCT test accuracy for 2023 was 99.11% (see **Section 3**).
- NCT customer satisfaction in 2023, measured via the Customer Performance Index (CPI) was 85.83% (see **Section 4**).

2023 NCT test volumes overview

A monthly analysis of the throughput, based on full-tests, of vehicles and pass rates for the NCT in the period January 2022 – December 2023 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: 2022 – 2023 throughput and pass rates

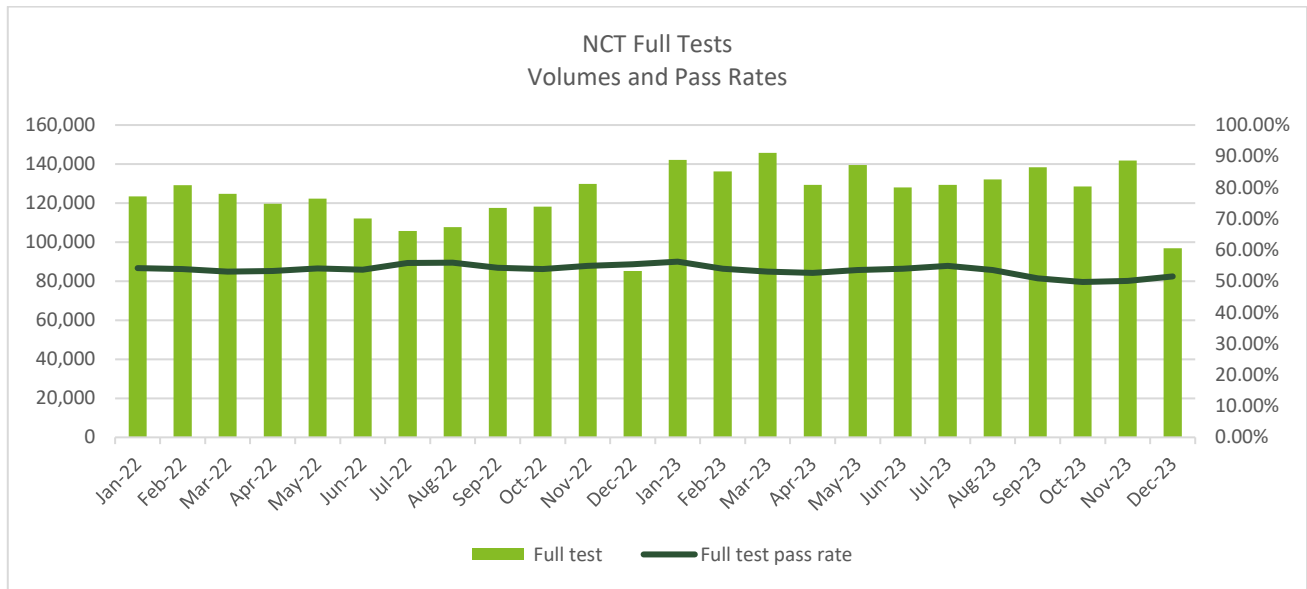


Table 1.3 below sets out a high-level annual summary of NCT activity levels and test outcomes for 2023.

	Pass	Pass advisory	Pass – Pending Recheck	Visual fail	Visual fail dangerous	Non-Visual Fail	Non-Visual Fail Dangerous	Total
Full tests	460,369	27,374	352,439	146,642	44,309	491,590	65,276	1,588,001
	28.99%	1.72%	22.19%	9.23%	2.79%	30.96%	4.12%	100.00%
Lane re-test	309,918	4,514	145,120	10,217	884	50,518	2,202	523,373
	59.22%	0.86%	27.73%	1.95%	0.17%	9.65%	0.42%	100.00%
Non lane re-test	148,629	662	73,970	712	242	3	0	224,218
	66.29%	0.30%	32.98%	0.32%	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%

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 2023.

Test centre	Pass		Pass – Pending Recheck*		Fail		Fail dangerous		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Abbeyfeale	10,025	59.47%	222	1.32%	5,516	32.72%	1,093	6.48%	16,856
Arklow	17,897	55.36%	573	1.77%	11,775	36.42%	2,085	6.45%	32,330
Athlone	12,738	45.97%	432	1.56%	12,308	44.42%	2,229	8.04%	27,707
Ballina	9,934	44.60%	149	0.67%	10,317	46.32%	1,874	8.41%	22,274
Ballinasloe	9,951	61.89%	138	0.86%	4,941	30.73%	1,049	6.52%	16,079
Cahir	16,324	53.47%	407	1.33%	11,898	38.97%	1,900	6.22%	30,529

Test centre	Pass		Pass – Pending Recheck*		Fail		Fail dangerous		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Cahiriveen	1,894	52.83%	53	1.48%	1,350	37.66%	288	8.03%	3,585
Carlow	12,088	45.37%	533	2.00%	12,230	45.90%	1,792	6.73%	26,643
Carndonagh	3,803	46.33%	96	1.17%	3,793	46.21%	516	6.29%	8,208
Carrick-on-Shannon	6,981	46.18%	154	1.02%	6,531	43.21%	1,450	9.59%	15,116
Castleisland	1,260	50.89%	22	0.89%	1,001	40.43%	193	7.79%	2,476
Castlerea	6,892	45.02%	157	1.03%	7,010	45.79%	1,251	8.17%	15,310
Cavan	6,054	39.66%	178	1.17%	7,295	47.79%	1,738	11.39%	15,265
Charleville	9,521	55.67%	222	1.30%	6,062	35.44%	1,299	7.59%	17,104
Clifden	2,618	44.49%	67	1.14%	2,789	47.39%	411	6.98%	5,885
Cork-Blarney	30,610	55.93%	1,065	1.95%	19,412	35.47%	3,642	6.65%	54,729
Cork-Little Island	33,815	54.90%	947	1.54%	22,393	36.36%	4,434	7.20%	61,589
Deansgrange	57,015	57.93%	2,717	2.76%	33,633	34.17%	5,056	5.14%	98,421
Derrybeg	2,927	42.87%	96	1.41%	3,253	47.65%	551	8.07%	6,827
Donegal	6,667	47.57%	173	1.23%	6,095	43.49%	1,080	7.71%	14,015
Drogheda	20,043	52.36%	679	1.77%	15,249	39.84%	2,305	6.02%	38,276
Dundalk	13,440	47.88%	562	2.00%	12,102	43.11%	1,969	7.01%	28,073
Ennis	16,381	46.76%	527	1.50%	15,196	43.38%	2,925	8.35%	35,029
Enniscorthy	19,123	46.06%	610	1.47%	18,627	44.87%	3,156	7.60%	41,516
Fonthill	43,212	46.87%	2,608	2.83%	39,876	43.25%	6,494	7.04%	92,190
Galway	22,662	45.96%	738	1.50%	21,785	44.18%	4,126	8.37%	49,311
Greenhills (Exit 11,M50)	33,393	48.47%	2,005	2.91%	28,893	41.94%	4,607	6.69%	68,898
Kells	17,202	49.93%	569	1.65%	14,418	41.85%	2,263	6.57%	34,452
Kilkenny	17,952	53.37%	314	0.93%	13,076	38.87%	2,295	6.82%	33,637
Killarney	12,283	58.22%	218	1.03%	7,233	34.28%	1,365	6.47%	21,099
Letterkenny	10,978	47.55%	252	1.09%	10,179	44.09%	1,676	7.26%	23,085
Limerick	32,350	56.57%	488	0.85%	20,385	35.65%	3,958	6.92%	57,181
Longford	7,114	49.81%	168	1.18%	6,035	42.25%	966	6.76%	14,283
Macroom	9,294	53.01%	247	1.41%	6,757	38.54%	1,236	7.05%	17,534
Monaghan	6,818	44.19%	199	1.29%	7,108	46.07%	1,304	8.45%	15,429
Mullingar	14,444	52.33%	302	1.09%	10,869	39.38%	1,985	7.19%	27,600
Naas	26,453	52.30%	731	1.45%	20,632	40.79%	2,767	5.47%	50,583
Navan	12,458	43.16%	544	1.88%	13,589	47.08%	2,273	7.87%	28,864
Nenagh	13,317	53.75%	294	1.19%	8,915	35.98%	2,250	9.08%	24,776
Northpoint 1 (Exit 4, M50)	31,291	48.02%	1,887	2.90%	27,578	42.32%	4,410	6.77%	65,166

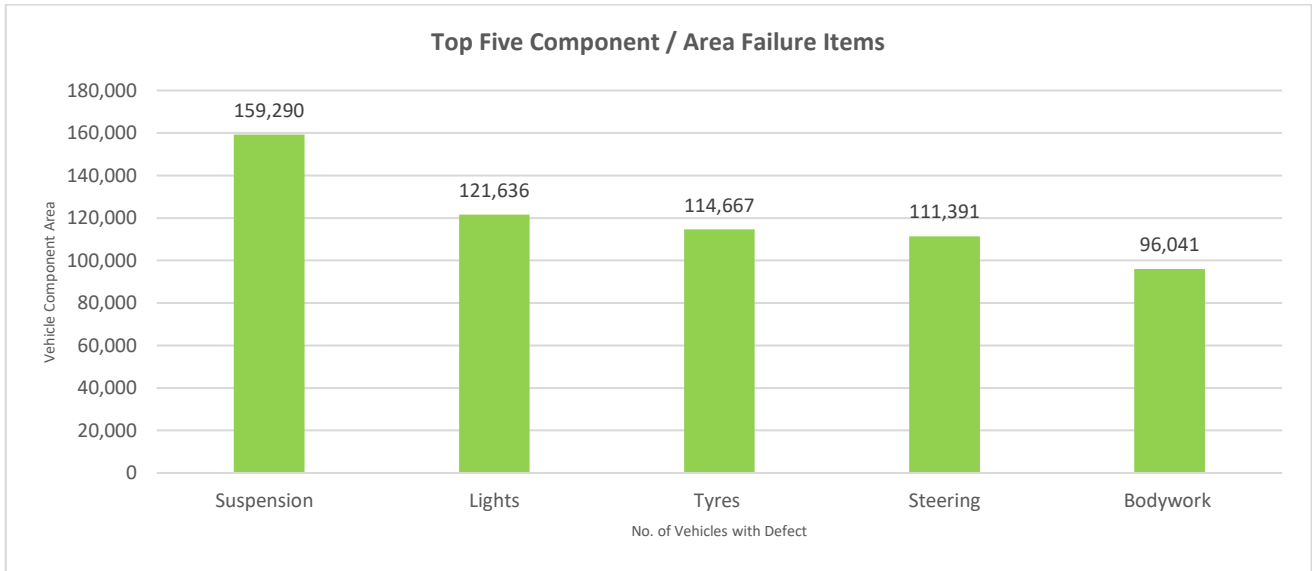
Test centre	Pass		Pass – Pending Recheck*		Fail		Fail dangerous		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Northpoint 2 (Exit 4, M50)	49,391	50.75%	2,418	2.48%	39,590	40.68%	5,925	6.09%	97,324
Portlaoise	15,933	52.49%	302	0.99%	11,984	39.48%	2,137	7.04%	30,356
Skibbereen	9,635	49.61%	287	1.48%	7,902	40.69%	1,597	8.22%	19,421
Sligo	11,682	51.98%	155	0.69%	9,036	40.21%	1,600	7.12%	22,473
Tralee	15,373	57.47%	355	1.33%	9,450	35.33%	1,570	5.87%	26,748
Tuam	10,114	49.74%	161	0.79%	8,857	43.56%	1,202	5.91%	20,334
Tullamore	16,526	59.07%	295	1.05%	9,416	33.66%	1,739	6.22%	27,976
Waterford	22,891	55.28%	563	1.36%	15,386	37.16%	2,567	6.20%	41,407
Westport	13,164	48.94%	274	1.02%	11,530	42.86%	1,931	7.18%	26,899
Youghal	8,877	51.82%	221	1.29%	6,977	40.73%	1,056	6.16%	17,131
Total (Full tests only)	812,808	51.18%	27,374	1.72%	638,232	40.19%	109,585	6.90%	1,587,999

Top Component /Vehicle Failure Items

We set out hereunder (for the three areas listed below) the five most common individual fail items recorded in 2023:

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

Figure 1.2: Top five – component /area failure items – 2023



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

Figure 1.3: Top five – visual failure items – 2023

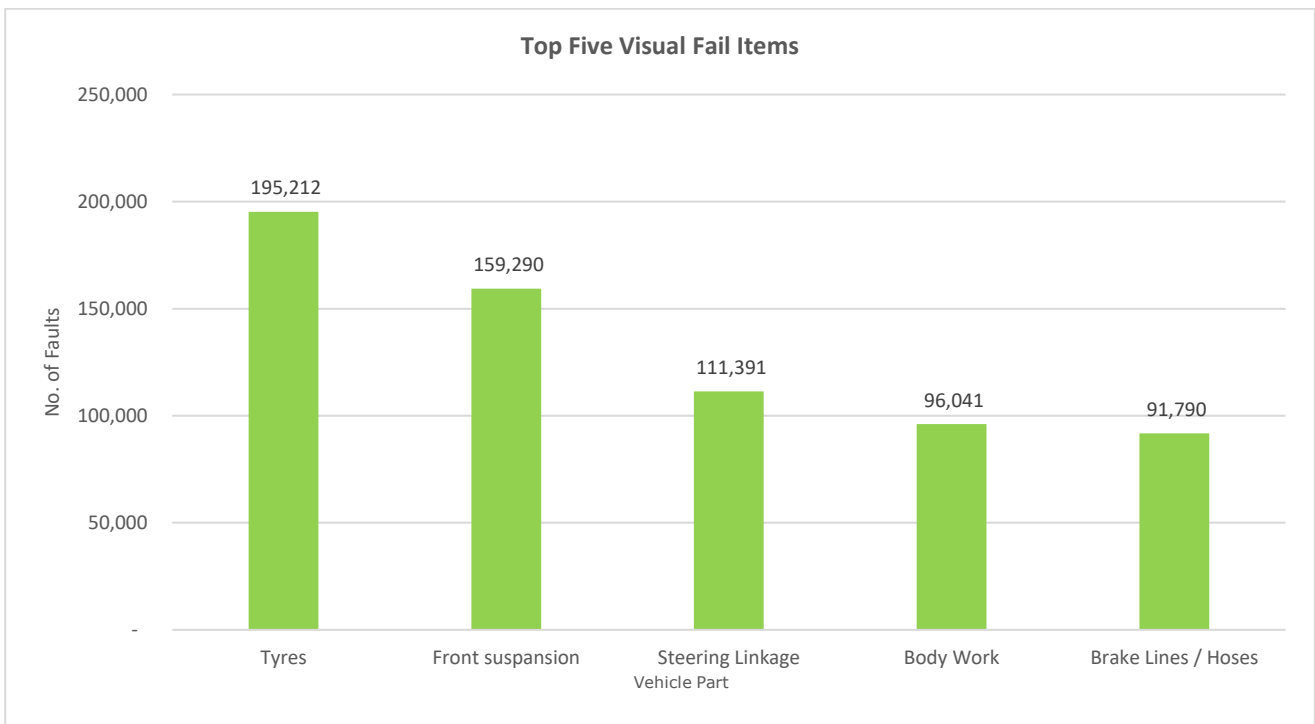
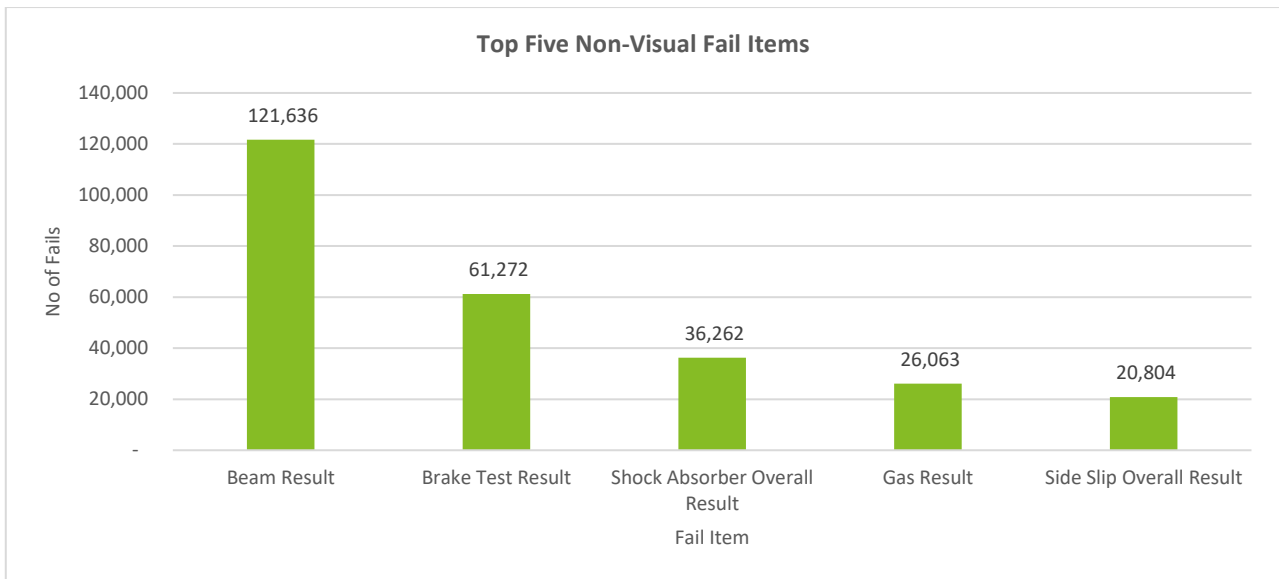


Figure 1.4: Top five - equipment failure items – 2023



The remainder of this report reviews the operation and performance of the Contractor during 2023 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 2023.
- ❖ **Section 6** – Performance management – Contractor performance against Project Agreement Service Levels.
- ❖ **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
Operations & Customer Services	90%
Facilities	90%
Testing Arrangements	90%
IT /Systems	90%

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

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

The existing format of the current Operational Audit was first introduced in Q3 2020 as part of the contract transition associated with the current NCTS contract.

Table 2.1 below shows the operational audit scores achieved in the period Q1 2023 – Q4 2023.

Table 2.1: Operational audit scores Q1 2023 – Q4 2023

Category	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
Operations and customer services	93.04%	93.04%	90.47%	90.47%
Facilities	95.04%	95.04%	93.66%	93.66%
Testing arrangements	98.86%	98.86%	96.43%	96.43%
IT /Systems	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

2.3 2023 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 2023.

Owing to the reduced number of available slots on the NCTS website, there was an increased number of customers who used the NCTS call centre to secure an NCTS appointment. Overall call volumes increased in 2023 by 182,010 calls (13.95%) when compared with 2022 (see **Figure 2.2** below).

Following an increasing trend in prior years, the percentage of internet bookings fell in 2023, due to difficulties experienced by customers in obtaining suitable booking slots as overall capacity tightened (see **Figure 2.3** below).

Figure 2.1: 2023 monthly call centre performance

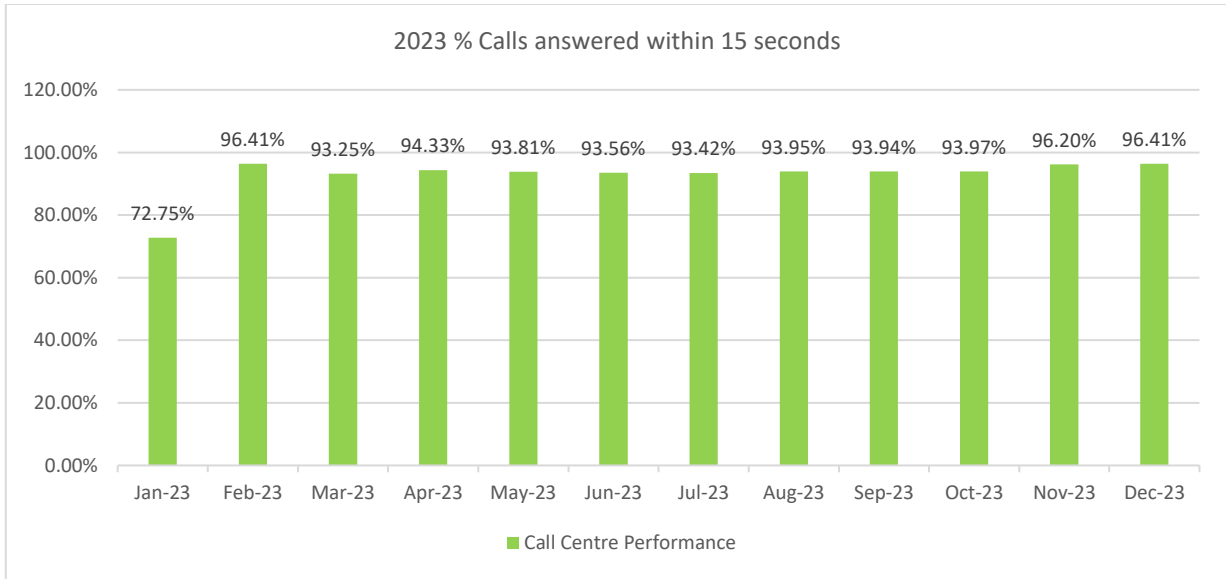


Figure 2.2: 2018 – 2023 call volumes

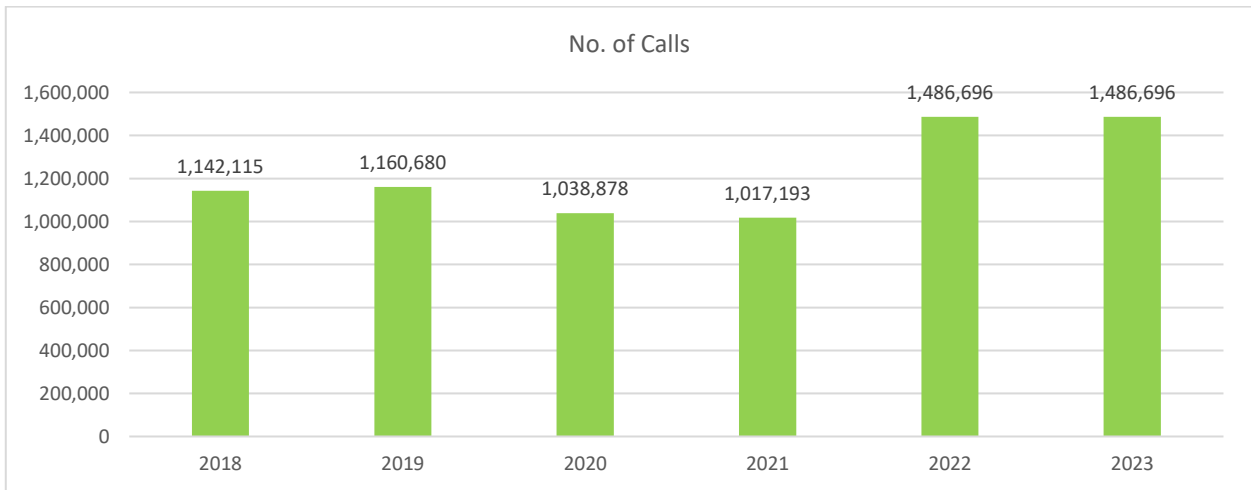
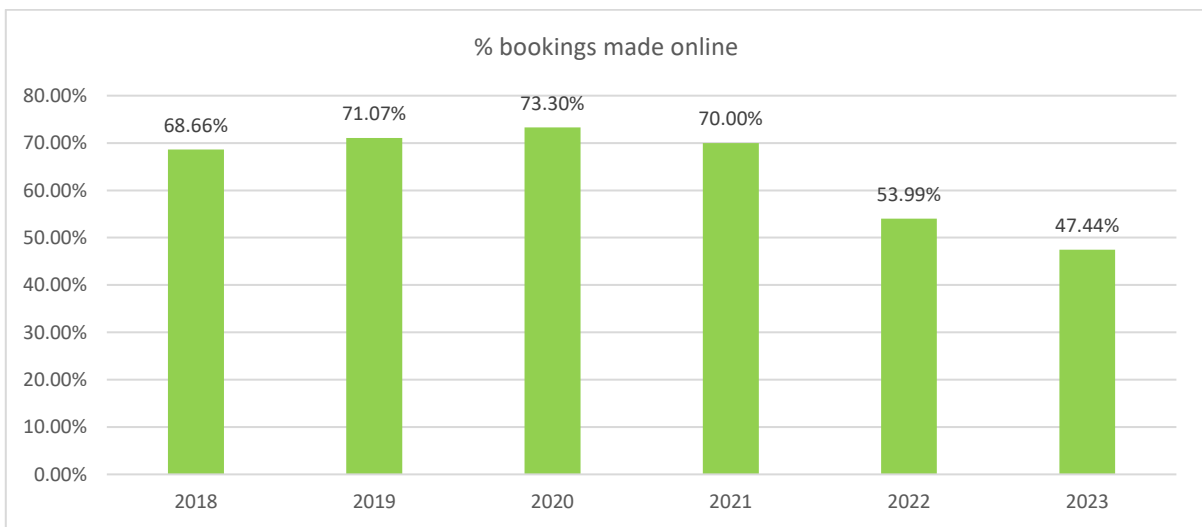


Figure 2.3: 2018 – 2023 internet booking levels (full tests)



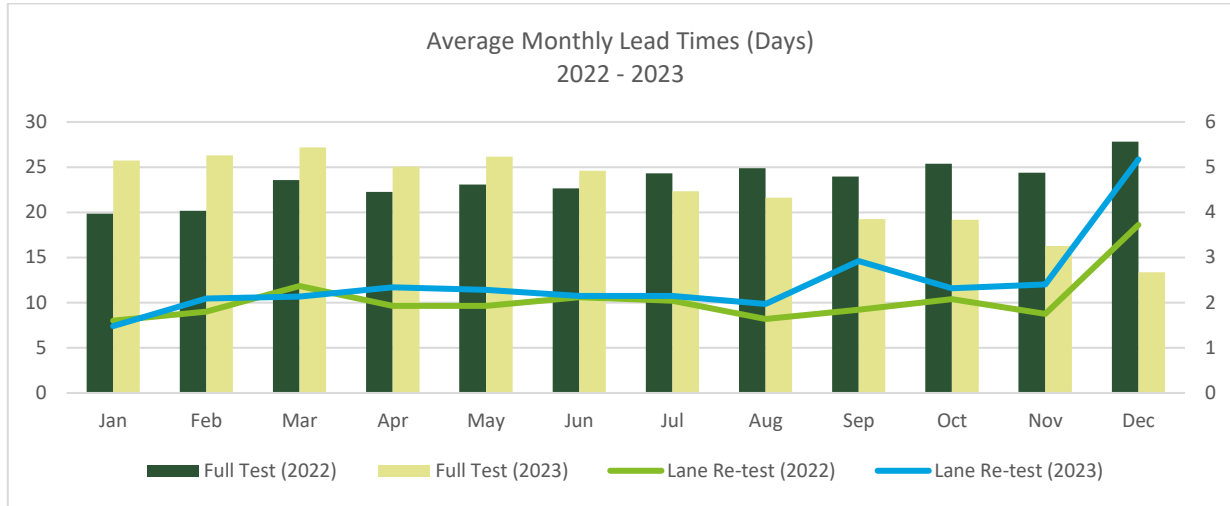
Waiting times for NCT bookings

The NCTS Project Agreement sets a target average booking lead time across the NCT network of 12 days with no individual NCT test centre to exceed 15 days.

Lead-times for tests and retests are monitored monthly and quarterly at both a national and test centre basis.

Throughout Q1 and Q2 2023 average booking lead times for full tests were higher than those levels seen in 2022. This situation improved from Q3 2023 onwards as can be seen in **Figure 2.4** with average booking lead times lower than those seen in 2022.

Figure 2.4: 2022 – 2023 average lead times



Priority list

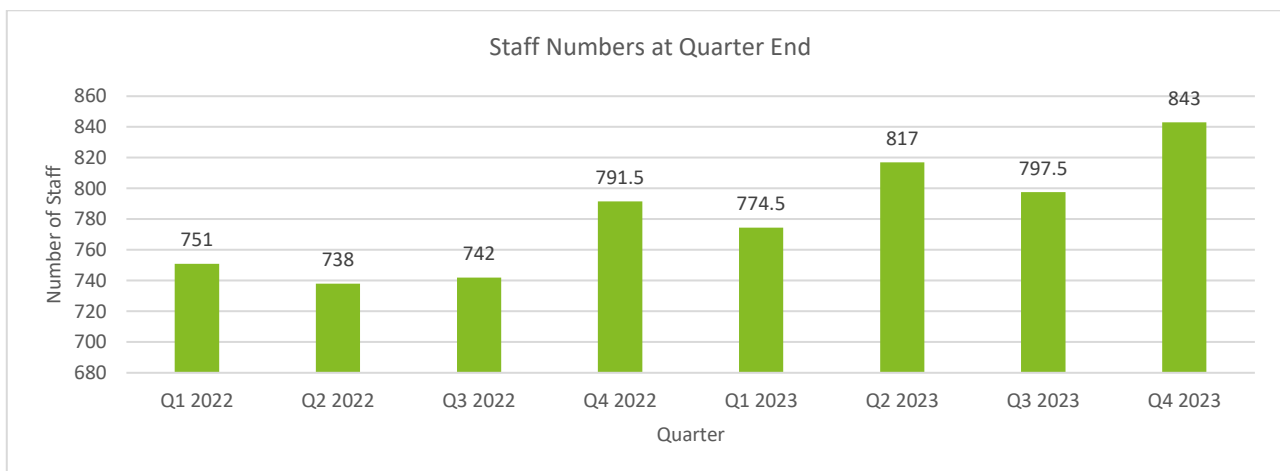
In circumstances where an Owner is unable to obtain a suitable National Car Test appointment, customers can add their application for a National Car Test to a priority waiting list.

Throughout Q1 and Q2 2023 average numbers on the NCTS priority list increased by comparison to levels seen in 2022. 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. This position improved in the period Q3 – Q4 2023 when the increased capacity in the Network led to reductions in the number of customers on the priority list.

Staffing Levels and Human Resources

Overall staffing levels which include headquarters; test centre; and call centre personnel, stood at 843 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) in December 2023. The Contractor’s staffing levels throughout the period Q1 2022 – Q4 2023 are shown hereunder in **Figure 2.5**. In response to capacity constraints across the NCTS Network in 2023 the NCTS Contractor recruited Vehicle Inspectors from the Philippines. All new Vehicle Inspectors were appropriately qualified and underwent necessary AISIL training.

Figure 2.5: Q1 2022 – Q4 2023 Contractor staff levels



Annual training of all Vehicle Inspectors took place in Q4 2023. 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.
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.

Throughout 2023 the Contractor continued with the roll-out of a major programme of works on the NCTS network. This involves the refurbishment of existing NCT centres and a number of new NCT centres.

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 2,773 visits to NCT test centres and audited 6,968 vehicles (3,958 vehicle audits and 3,010 independent checks) 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 2023, 99.12% 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 2023 TISP inspections covered:

- 100% of NCTS test centres in the network.
- 100% of test lanes in the network.
- 99% of Vehicle Inspectors.

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

During 2023, the TISP team audited 3,958 vehicles. Additionally, throughout 2023, 3,010 independent checks were undertaken. The overall number of vehicles audited is similar to those audited in 2022.

Table 3.1 sets out a summary of inspection details in 2023. On average, each vehicle inspector was observed performing 8 – 10 tests throughout the year. This is higher than the levels seen in 2022.

Table 3.1: TISP inspection details 2023

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Individual Centre audits conducted	49	47	48	48	49	48	47	48	47	48	50	49	578
No. of visits in period	249	251	249	222	217	257	220	238	197	212	257	204	2,773
Vehicles audited (observed inspections)	489	406	150	368	303	331	288	319	278	298	389	339	3,958
VI audits performed	436	407	296	373	366	381	344	375	340	364	406	352	4,440
Lane audits performed	105	104	59	100	96	103	98	101	95	95	108	99	1,163
Independent checks	277	283	269	241	232	271	234	256	216	221	285	225	3,010

Over 2023, a cohort of VIs were audited each month with individual VIs being audited several times during 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 2023

Category	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023	Total
Very Good (0 faults omitted)	1,021	980	897	964	3,862
Adequate (<=4 faults omitted)	3	4	2	2	11
Unacceptable (any major item or 6 minor items omitted)	16	8	24	14	62
C.N.A (Could Not Assess)	5	10	3	5	23
Total	1,045	1,002	926	985	3,958

The above refers to matters noted during the assessment of Vehicle Inspector (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, 99.12% of the vehicles audited in the year were correctly and fairly assessed.

Note that in relation to the 62 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.
- Contractor senior management.

Examples of the unacceptable matters highlighted in 2023 included incorrect assessments of:

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

Independent check tests

In addition to the 3,958 vehicles audited by the TISP in 2023, the TISP also conducted independent checks on 3,010 vehicles. Therefore, a total of 6,968 vehicles were audited in 2023.

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 2023, 64 pass /fail decisions were overturned as a result of failure items having been omitted or included in error. 62 of these 64 instances were associated with a reduced score attributed to the VI. These 62 instances were included in the test accuracy calculation for 2023 as set out hereunder:

Table 3.3: 2023 Test accuracy calculation

Description	No.
Total vehicles audited (observed inspections + Independent checks)	6,968
No. instances where test outcome was impacted and VI score was reduced	62
Test accuracy (%)	99.11%

NCTS test accuracy results in the period 2018 – 2023 are set out in **Table 3.4** hereunder:

Table 3.4: Average test accuracy 2018 – 2023

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Test accuracy (%)	99.33	99.25	99.42	99.25	99.34	99.11

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 2023 survey was based on a total of 1,186 telephone interviews (998 customer satisfaction and 188 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 2023 the Contractor achieved a CPI of 85.83. This is a marginal increase of 0.30 (0.35%) on the 85.53 achieved in 2022. It should be noted that owing to the changes in how the CPI were calculated from Q1 2021 onwards, the outcome for 2023 is not directly comparable with the CPI reported in Service Periods before Q1 2021. Therefore, CPI outcomes in these 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 2023.

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 2023 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 85.53 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.

2023 Customer Performance Index

The CPI for 2023 was a score of 85.83%. This reflects a high underlying level of satisfaction amongst all 12 individual aspects of service measured as part of the customer satisfaction survey.

Table 4.1: Hereunder provides an analysis of the CPI performance achieved in 2023:

Table 4.1: CPI performance 2023

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	81.26	86.68	25.90%	22.45	79.05	85.46	2.90%	2.48	24.93
	My experience in using the NCT website and /or call centre	85.49				84.64				
	The information I received when making my NCT booking (including resolving any queries that I may have had)	93.16				95.66				
	The convenience of the NCT location that I attended	86.79				82.49				
Waiting experience	The NCT test time and date that I was allocated	72.59	82.57	27.00%	22.29	76.15	83.82	3.00%	2.51	24.81
	Waiting time at the NCT centre on the day of my test	92.55				91.48				
Check-in experience	Check in process at the NCT Centre	92.15	90.18	13.00%	11.72	92.59	92.53	1.40%	1.30	13.02
	The helpfulness of the staff on reception at the test centre	88.21				92.46				
Test experience	The attitude of the member of staff who carried out the test	90.34	88.47	15.10%	13.36	89.16	88.33	1.70	1.50	14.86
	The testers' ability to help you understand the test report	86.59				87.49				
Facilities experience	The cleanliness and comfort of the reception and waiting areas in the NCT centre	82.36	81.98	9.00%	7.38	84.19	83.94	1.00	0.84	8.22
	The cleanliness and comfort of the bathroom facilities in the NCT centre	81.59				83.68				
				90.00%	77.20			10.00%	8.63	85.83

5. Complaints & appeals

Customer Complaints

The NCTS Project Agreement requires the Contractor to use all reasonable endeavours to ensure that Customer complaints as a percentage of National Car Tests conducted shall not exceed 0.1%.

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.

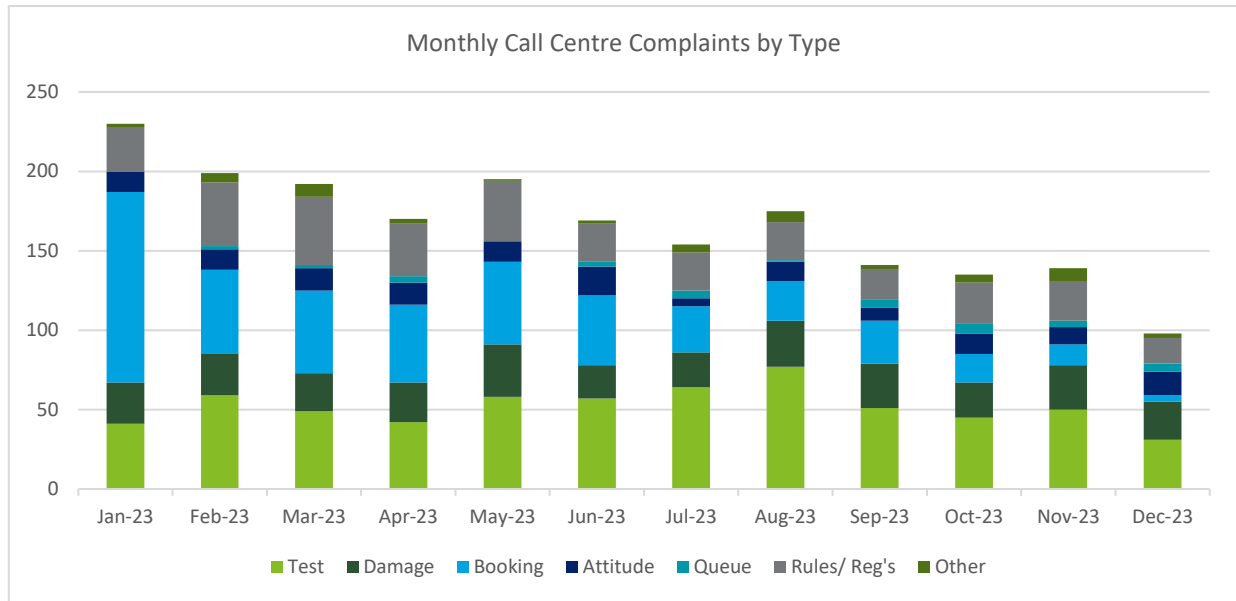
In 2023, the Contractor received 1,997 complaints. This represents an increase of 563 complaints (39.26%) from the 1,434 complaints received in 2022. The total number of complaints as a percentage of total tests taken was 0.08%. This is an increase of 0.01% from the 2022 result (0.07%) and for the year overall is below the target set of 0.10%.

Table 5.1 Year 2023 Customer Complaints (by category)

Complaint category	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023	Total
Test (conduct of test/results)	149	157	192	126	624
Damage (or loss to property)	76	79	79	74	308
Bookings (& call centre)	225	145	81	35	486
Attitude (of staff)	40	45	25	39	149
Queue (delays at test centre)	4	7	11	15	37
Rules/Regulations	111	95	67	67	340
Other	16	6	15	16	53
Total	621	534	470	372	1,997
Number of vehicle tests performed	608,405	589,203	583,847	554,135	2,335,590
As a % all tests conducted	0.10%	0.09%	0.08%	0.07%	0.09%

A breakdown of the number and category of complaints received in 2023, by month, is set out below.

Figure 5.1: 2023 complaints by category and month



Independent appeals Board

The Independent Appeals Board, overseen by the Technical Inspection Service Provider (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 15 appeals throughout 2023, of which three (3) 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 2023, two employees were dismissed in relation to breaches of policies and procedures.

6. Performance management

Service Level Performance

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 2023 – Q4 2023

Table 6.1 NCT Achievement against Service Levels Q1 2023 – Q4 2023

Ref.	Sub Ref.	Service Level	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023	Comment
1	Notifying Owners of the requirement to have their vehicle tested	90% 20 – 60 working days before the due date of the test.	95.02%	93.64%	55.77%	94.42%	N/A
		99% 5 working days before the due date of the test.	99.74%	99.74%	98.93%	99.94%	
	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.	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved	
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	26.25 days	25.21 days	20.92 days	15.81 days	N/A
	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	49 test centres	49 test centres	49 test centres	30 test centres	N/A
3	Test accuracy	> 98.5% of test outcomes to be confirmed on check testing	99.15%	99.54%	98.50%	99.20%	N/A
4	Telephone response times	> 90% of telephone calls answered within fifteen (15) seconds.	85.30%	93.91%	93.70%	95.25%	N/A
5	Customer Satisfaction rating	A score which is 83% or more achieved for customer satisfaction, as calculated using the Composite Customer Performance Index	85.31%	85.20%	86.01%	86.72%	N/A
6	Operational audit	90% or more achieved in that part of the Operational Audit relating to the Operations and Customer Service.	93.04%	94.30%	90.47%	96.34%	N/A
		90% or more achieved in that part of the Operational Audit relating to Facilities.	95.04%	91.23%	93.66%	94.00%	N/A
		90% or more achieved in that part of the Operational Audit relating to the Testing Arrangements.	98.86%	96.24%	96.43%	96.59%	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	40.70%	46.58%	45.27%	45.27%	N/A
		≥ 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	70.81%	70.17%	76.27%	77.77%	

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

As shown in the Table above:

- The contractor failed to meet the performance standards for notifications, booking lead time and compliance, and were given a derogation to delay the issue of notifications in Q3 2023.
- The test accuracy standard, at 99.11% for the year as a whole, exceeded the target.
- The Customer Performance Index (CPI) for 2023 was 85.83, above the target of 83.
- Operational audit performance for 2023 was above the target of 90%.

Service credits

In 2023 the Contractor failed to meet performance standards and as a result, incurred Service Credits as set out below.

Description	Total
Service credits applied	€2,778,985.64
Comment	Service credits applied for non-achievements of Service Levels related to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Booking Lead Time 2. Telephone Response Times 3. NCTS Compliance

7. Financial matters

The Contractors profit & loss account for 2023 is summarised below in **Table 7.1**. These amounts have been extracted from:

1. Audited AISIL financial statements for the year-ended 31 December 2023.
2. Audited AISIL financial statements for the year-ended 31 December 2022.

Table 7.1: Contractor 2023 Profit & Loss Statement

	2022 €	2023 €	Increase /(Decrease) €
Turnover	79,323,558	90,979,576	11,656,018
Cost of Sales	(67,362,423)	(75,810,335)	8,447,912
Gross profit	11,961,135	15,169,241	3,208,106
Administrative expenses	(12,501,078)	(14,494,843)	1,993,765
Net unrealised foreign exchange gain /loss realised	(1,834)	(2,758)	924
Net unrealised foreign exchange gain /loss un-realised	1,181	182	(999)
Operating profit	(540,596)	671,822	1,212,418
Finance income	187,291	932,044	744,753
Finance Costs	(627,705)	(573,932)	(53,773)
Profit/(loss) before taxation	(981,010)	1,029,934	2,010,944
Taxation	195,604	(191,029)	386,633
Profit/(loss) after taxation	(785,406)	838,905	1,624,311
Other comprehensive income	-	-	-
Comprehensive income /(loss) for the financial year	(785,406)	838,905	1,624,311

Comments

Total turnover for 2023 was €90,979,576 – this is an increase of 11,656,018 (14.69%) on the €79,323,558 recorded in 2022.

A comprehensive profit of €838,905 was recorded in 2023 – this is an increase of €1,624,311 (206.81%) on the comprehensive loss of €785,406 recorded in 2022.

The Contractors balance sheet as at 31 December 2023 is summarised below in **Table 7.3**. These amounts have been extracted from audited Contractors financial statements for the year-ended 31 December 2023.

Table 7.3: Contractor Balance sheet as at 31 December 2023

	2022 €	2023 €	Increase /(decrease) €	Increase /(decrease) %
Non-Current assets				
Property, plant, and equipment	12,641,910	11,654,198	(987,712)	(7.81%)
Intangible assets	1,631,381	1,439,485	(191,896)	(11.76%)
Right of Use Assets	19,990,383	18,023,670	(1,966,713)	(9.84%)
Deferred tax asset	-	-	-	-
Total non-current assets	34,263,674	31,117,353	(3,146,321)	(9.18%)
Current Assets				
Trade and other receivables	14,062,617	19,578,125	5,515,508	39.22%
Cash and cash equivalents	777,257	1,027,872	250,615	32.24%
Total current assets	14,839,874	20,605,997	5,766,123	38.86%
Total Assets	49,103,548	51,723,350	2,619,802	5.34%
Equity				
Called up share capital presented as equity	3,000,000	3,000,000	0	0.00%
Retained earnings	1,346,682	2,185,587	838,905	62.29%
Other reserve	783	9,101	8,318	1062.32%
Total Equity	4,347,465	5,194,688	847,223	19.49%
Non-Current Liabilities	17,775,970	15,863,440	(1,912,530)	(10.76%)
Current Liabilities				
Trade and other payables	23,991,689	27,574,134	3,582,445	14.93%
Lease Liabilities	2,988,424	3,091,088	102,664	3.44%
Total Current Liabilities	26,980,113	30,665,222	3,685,109	13.66%
Total Liabilities	44,756,083	46,528,662	1,772,579	3.96%
Total Equity and Liabilities	49,103,548	51,723,350	2,619,802	5.34%

Comments

Total assets increased by **€2,619,802** (5.34%) in the year to 31 December 2023. This is mainly made up of an increase of €5,515,508 (39.22%) in trade and other receivables, which was offset by a reduction of €1,966,713 (9.84%) in right of use assets.

Total liabilities increased by **€1,772,579** (3.96%) in the year to 31 December 2023. This is mainly made up of an increase of €3,582,445 (14.93%) in trade and other payables.

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.
			99% 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.