

Name of the function, policy or strategy:	Proposed removal of the Minicom service in Customer Support						Current or proposed:	Proposed
Person completing the assessment:	SHAUN MILNE						Date of assessment:	17.03.14
Purpose of the function, policy or strategy Proposed removal of the minicom service for the deaf within the Customer Support Centre Newcastle. This is to assist in the Digital By Default transition. Customers wishing to book tests or need to contact us can use other effective channels such as Internet Booking Service, Email, Twitter or by using a 3 rd party service such as Text Relay. The Minicom service has been manned by staff within the CSC but no calls have actually been taken. Calls do come through to this service but stats suggest that it is customers dialling the number thinking it will get them through quicker to a Customer Service Representative. Stats and a recommendation from the British Deaf Association suggest few deaf people actually use Minicomms.								
Questions: indicate yes / no / not known for each group	Age	Gender	Disability	Gender re-assignment	Pregnancy and Maternity	Race	Religion or belief	Sexual orientation
Is there any indication or evidence that different groups have different needs, experiences, issues or priorities in relation to the particular function, policy or strategy?	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Is there potential for, or evidence that, this function, policy or strategy may adversely affect equality of opportunity for all and may harm good relations between different groups?	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Is there any potential for, or evidence that, any part of the proposed function, policy or strategy could discriminate, directly or indirectly?	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Is there an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity or better community relations by altering the policy/service or function or working with other government departments or the wider community?	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K
Is there any evidence or indication of higher or lower uptake by different groups?	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Are there any physical or social barriers to participation/access (eg, language, format, physical access/proximity)?	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K

Minicom Overview

The Minicom service within Customer Support is manned on a daily basis. Telephone lines including the minicom, are open for the general public between 8 am -12 noon, Monday to Friday. The main reason that the opening hours are as such, is to assist in the push for customers to use our online services, as part of the Digital by Default transition. Our Minicom system is only compatible when customers are using a landline.

Information provided by our Service Delivery Team has indicated that **no** actual bookings or enquiries have been made via this service since data collected from May 2013 to present. Calls have been received but the likelihood is that customers ring the number thinking it will get them through to a Customer Service Representative (CSR), a lot quicker than ringing the main National telephone number. See stats below.

Date	Calls Received	Total Calls %
May 2013	891	44.84
June 2013	0 (no data)	0
July 2013	894	37.96
Aug 2013	900	37.21
Sep 2013	284	44.52
Oct 2013	0 (no data)	0
Nov 2013	260	39.45
Dec 2013	199	42.34
Jan 2014	264	42.38
Feb 2014	208	41.11

It is clear to see that calls were initially high, but have dropped considerably. Total Calls % are from a landline.

Internet Bookings

Management Information has also confirmed that in the last 12 months to end of February 2014, there were 966 bookings made via Internet Booking Service (IBS) for candidates who are deaf. Of that total 786 were for candidates who are hard of hearing (*single slot) and 180 of them were for candidates who are profoundly slot (*double slot).

* Slot bookings on IBS are dependent on candidate's disability need.

The Office for Disability Issues (ODI) has stated that in its most recent survey done in 2011, 61% of disabled people do have internet access within their homes. This is compared to 86% of non-disabled people. The amount of deaf people within that percentage has not been indicated. It can only be assumed that the 61% has risen over the past few years as more people have access to digital services.

Alternative Communication Methods.

As well as our Internet Booking Service, DVSA also provides e-mail and Twitter, as an alternative communication method. Deaf customers can also use Text Relay services (previously known as Type Talk). Text Relay is a free national relay service using operators to connect someone with a text phone to someone using a phone. The text phone user would contact an operator, who would ring the hearing person on a business line and relays messages to and from them, by typing or talking.

The British Deaf Association.

Recent enquiries with the British Deaf Association on 11 February 2014, have indicated that as long as DVSA is providing an online service along with email and the availability for the Deaf to use Text Relay, then we are complying with legislation. (email attached in folder).