



Traffic Commissioner Objectives 2023 – 2025

Our vision is to deliver a licensing and regulatory system which champions safe, fair, and reliable transport.

Our objectives

To deliver a modern and effective operator licensing regime that ensures operators are fit to hold a licence whilst minimising the regulatory burden on the compliant.

To promote and develop a safe road transport industry, which delivers compliance, fair competition and protects the environment.



Our priorities

Delivering a better service

- 1. To continue our work with DVSA to deliver a licensing service, which is properly resourced and delivers the agreed service to our users.**
- 2. To work with stakeholders to better understand the service required by the communities of Great Britain.**

How we will deliver this:

- Determine goods and standard public service vehicle applications within an average of 35 working days.
- Setting a target for all public inquiry cases to be listed for hearing within 12 weeks.
- Supporting the DVSA to restructure the Office of the Traffic Commissioner to deliver a better service to stakeholders.
- Identify opportunities for the improved use of IT to streamline quality processes and working with DVSA in support of a modern tribunal function.



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- To press for a review of fees which cover the cost of the service with charges which are proportionate to the size of business and level of service received.

At the time of writing this report we await the implementation of the DVSA Target Operating Model for the Office of the Traffic Commissioner. This model seeks to improve the support provided to the commissioners and service users with a focus on creating a structured, flexible, and well-trained workforce. The implementation of these changes should enable us to realise the key targets set by the Government. As with any change, there is a potential for short-term upheaval, but we will attempt to work with DVSA to manage those risks in the interests of service users.

The Commissioners will work with DVSA on exploring the potential for further modernisation to maximise the benefits from the investment in the Vehicle and Operator Licensing system and the digitalisation of evidence bundles used for Public Inquiries. The introduction of digital bundles for Public Inquiries has the potential to benefit the process by allowing all parties to have easy and ready access to updated information. The Commissioners will draw on the experiences of other jurisdictions on the matter to ensure that the most appropriate model is developed, which meets the needs of this tribunal and its users.

A modern jurisdiction requires to be funded appropriately and by those who use the service. We cannot continue to provide services for free, but that requires legislative change. We will continue to pursue a reformed fee structure which covers the cost of providing the service and is also proportionate so that those who use the service most often contribute more.

Legislative Change

3. Seek legislative change for an improved operator licensing system.

How we will deliver this:

- Promote opportunities within the licensing system for reform which will contribute towards reducing the cost of entry to the transport industry.
- Working with stakeholders to manage the regulatory burden arising from changes to operator licensing legislation.
- Support innovation in the operator licensing system to prepare for future means of transport, such as autonomous and electric vehicles.

To remain relevant legislation needs to adapt to the changes in technology and society. We will work to promote changes in legislation where we believe it will lead to a greater understanding and compliance outcome, but also to support the growth of the UK economy.

One example where we believe that change is long overdue is in the approach to Operating Centres for Goods operators. That will benefit applicants and provide greater clarity for local residents over the role that Traffic Commissioners have in determining the suitability of an operating centre. The Department for Transport has previously accepted the case for exploring changes to the legislation that requires an operator to place an advert in a local newspaper and which invites owners/occupiers of land within



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the vicinity to oppose those applications. Advertising requirements impose significant costs on applicants and are inconsistent with on-line publishing. There is general confusion over the extent of a Commissioner's powers and how that intersects with the powers of the planning authorities. Experiences during and since the pandemic have shown that provisions requiring publication in hard copy and circulating within the locality, are now outdated, whilst the cost of advertising have risen significantly.

This type of decision, which impacts on the local community may be better made by local representatives. Local Authorities are already charged with considering planning applications and have developed the expertise to consider the impact on the relevant local community.

At present, the Commissioners believe there is an imbalance in the regulatory system where PSV operators do not have the opportunity to respond quickly to market opportunities. The Commissioners wish to see the benefit of interim licences extended into the PSV operating licence system as soon as is possible.

As technology changes, the Commissioners will work with government, for instance on regulations for longer semi-trailers, heavier vehicles, electric vehicles, and autonomous vehicles to ensure that regulatory burdens are not disproportionate and do not act as barrier to innovation.

Connecting Communities

4. Support the delivery of improved local bus services and better journeys.

How we will deliver this:



- Working with stakeholders on the implementation of enhanced partnership schemes and the franchising of bus services.
- Review how performance of local bus services is measured by engaging with the industry and other stakeholders and promoting updated Statutory Guidance.
- Encouraging the take-up of the Bus Open Data service to improve the transparency of services and support increased use of public transport.

Following the upheaval of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Commissioners look forward to a period of stability, which can only benefit licensing and tribunal users. We will commence our work in reviewing our expectations in relation to punctuality and reliability of services and will work with operators and local authorities to implement the enhanced partnerships schemes and franchising.

As the Bus Open Data Service is developed, commissioners will work to encourage operators to comply with the requirements. Reliable and accessible public transport leads to carbon reduction, improving the lives of local residents and contributing to greater sustainability.

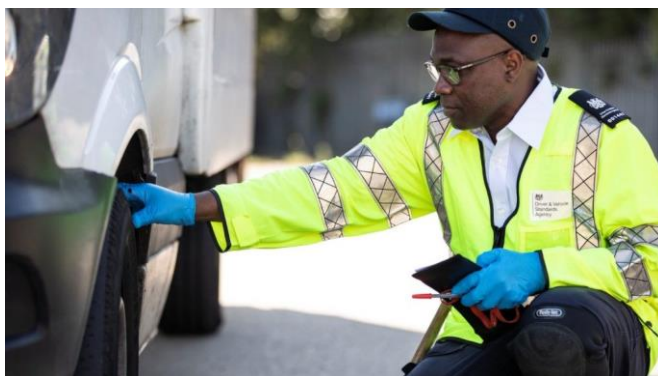
Targeted Regulation

5. Ensuring the efficient use of resources to deliver compliance across all sectors.

How we will deliver this:

- Reviewing how we determine a driver's suitability.
- Working with partners to identify opportunities to coordinate activities to improve compliance, and on the sharing of information to improve targeted enforcement.
- Helping to shape the future of enforcement activity and improving the evidence available to Traffic Commissioners, in particular through working with the police and DVSA to achieve greater integration of roadside interventions.

The Commissioners will undertake a review of their approach to determining a driver's suitability to drive large goods vehicles or passenger carrying vehicles. The current process has been largely unchanged for several years, and it is an appropriate time to consider whether our approach remains effective and fit for purpose in the current century.



Departmental officials are currently reviewing the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence requirements. The Traffic Commissioners will continue to use their expertise to assist this review.

Commissioners are already actively engaged with the enforcement bodies, specifically the DVSA and police, on pilot schemes which are aimed at improving collaborative working. We want to ensure that information on non-compliant operators is lawfully available to the relevant agencies. The commissioners will continue to develop relationships with other partners such as HMRC and Border Force.

Helping Businesses to be Compliant

6. We will support those we regulate, to comply and grow; making engagement accessible so that operators and drivers are provided with the information they require to manage their licences and meet safety standards.

How we will deliver this:

- Continuing to improve our communication and educational resources for service users, particularly targeting those who do not have access to relevant information or compliance advice.
- Identify opportunities for the improved use of IT to assist operators to manage their operator's licence.
- Balancing regulatory work with education at national and regional level.
- Provision of advice and support to LGV operators in meeting the professional competence requirements prior to the expiry of Acquired Rights status in May 2025





- Supporting any development of means by which operators can assess the competence and capability of their service providers, particularly in relation to vehicle maintenance standards.

We will further develop the suite of information and guidance available to service users; making sure that it is clear and accessible. We will continue to contribute to educating operators to be compliant, focussing attendance at national and local level to maximise the impact.

We will provide targeted information, for instance those LGV operator licences who need to appoint a suitably qualified transport manager by the May 2025 deadline when Acquired Rights granted in 2022 will expire. We want to help responsible operators to avoid interference with their businesses.

Inter-dependencies

Legislation dictates how Traffic Commissioners regulate the lorry and bus industries. Their approach is restricted to what the law allows, and any changes may impact on our ability to deliver those functions.

Judicial independence is a prerequisite to the rule of law and a fundamental guarantee of a fair trial.

Traffic Commissioners work closely with policy officials in central Government, the devolved administrations and are highly reliant on the support provided by the sponsorship team in the Department for Transport and the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency. They are accountable for the services delivered in the name of Traffic Commissioners and for their support thereby promoting judicial independence and maintaining confidence in the rule of law.