



Annual Review

2020 to 2021

Helping you stay safe on Britain's roads

Welcome from



Loveday Ryder

Chief Executive Officer

“
We call DVSA
**‘a great place
to work’**.
This year’s
Annual Review
will show you
just why this is
”

I joined DVSA as its new Chief Executive Officer in January 2021. We were just beginning our third national lockdown, but it was clear that my new colleagues were still doing amazing work to help everyone stay safe on Britain’s roads. So, this review is a celebration of what they have achieved in a terribly difficult year. First, I would like to reflect on what many of us have faced. Some of us have lost colleagues, family members and friends to coronavirus and we extend our deepest sympathy to those who miss and remember them.

I would also like to acknowledge the magnificent efforts of NHS and care workers, the police, armed forces, shop workers, professional drivers and other key workers who have kept the country going throughout the pandemic. These superlative efforts were supported and complemented by our DVSA colleagues, who worked tirelessly on the frontline and behind the scenes to keep drivers and vehicles safe on the road.

You’ll read in these pages about some of our road safety heroes. Like our traffic examiners, who worked throughout the pandemic to protect the public from unsafe drivers and vehicles. Our vehicle examiners who helped put new ambulances on the road and tested lorries to keep supply chains moving. Our volunteer driving examiners who helped critical workers to take their driving test. And our customer service centre colleagues, who moved to a home-working system and handled 8 times the usual volume of business.

We value our colleagues as individuals with opinions, ideas and feelings. And, collectively, they have shown huge commitment, resilience and pride in what they do. These qualities mean that DVSA will be at the heart of the nation’s recovery and I am sincerely grateful to them all.

We restarted our heavy vehicle testing service



Liz Warner
Network business manager

“ We restarted testing successfully by working closely with colleagues and customers. It was my role to make sure ATFs were ready to test vehicles again and keep everyone safe ”

We had to suspend most of our services in lockdown, March 2020. Although heavy vehicles were given an MOT exemption, we carried out tests for vehicles going back on the road again. But it was not until early July that we could fully restart our service.

Our network business managers (NBM) and vehicle experts used the experience of the vehicles we tested during lockdown to develop COVID-secure procedures. They wrote new ways of working to keep colleagues and customers safe in the testing environment.

Then our NBM worked with every authorised testing facility (ATF) across England, Scotland and Wales. They prepared the ATFs for the return of vehicle testing and helped them understand how to support our colleagues in staying safe during a test.

Although eager to return to work, some of our vehicle standards assessors were initially nervous. The first few tests were daunting, but it soon became clear that the ways of working covered every aspect of their safety. And customers were happy to co-operate.

Within the first 20 days, 495 ATFs passed their health and safety assessment. This meant that testing could restart as planned from July.

We reduced congestion at EU ports

“ Operation Brock proved, once again, that DVSA is one agency — diverse and adaptable. We should all be proud ”

Malcolm Martin
Traffic examiner



After Britain's transition from the EU, our frontline Enforcement colleagues supported Operation Brock on the strategic networks in Kent. Operation Brock was the government's traffic management system in Kent. It kept traffic moving, to prevent gridlock in and around the main strategic approaches to the Short Straits crossing and the Euro Tunnel.

DVSA teams, including our Automatic Number Plate Recognition and Search teams, worked to a tight deadline with the Cabinet Office and Highways England. Together, we developed a digital solution for checking heavy goods vehicles.

The new system linked all the Enforcement teams in checking whether hauliers had completed all their paperwork. This gave them a Kent Access Permit to enter Kent when travelling on an EU journey.

As a result of our work, we kept congestion to a minimum and discovered over 4,200 hauliers who had committed an Operation Brock offence.

We've volunteered throughout the pandemic



John Anderson
Driving examiner

“ I felt we needed to continue providing tests for critical workers and I was committed to volunteer my services. I'm delighted and honoured to receive this award ”

We're proud of our colleagues who responded to events over the last year by helping people and communities through the pandemic. They've volunteered as vaccine marshals, NHS responders and key worker driving test volunteers, as well as helping at foodbanks.

When we volunteer, we also contribute to DVSA's sustainability strategy, by positively contributing to people's lives in the areas that we work.

The selflessness of one colleague was recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours! Driving examiner (DE), John Anderson, has been awarded a British Empire Medal for his services to transport during the coronavirus pandemic.

John was one of our first DEs to volunteer to carry out driving tests for critical workers during the first lockdown. He carried out around 55 tests in Wales, 20 of them for category C1, which covers ambulance drivers.

Overall, 12,900 critical workers took their driving test during lockdown.

We designed a booking service for critical workers

“ Despite the disruption caused by coronavirus, we adapted quickly to changes in our services and working arrangements. We produced an excellent new service in record time ”

Paul Moran
Head of Service Design and User Research



Following government guidance on social distancing and essential journeys, we suspended driver and rider tests for the public in March 2020. But we needed to provide an emergency testing service for people crucial to the coronavirus response, like NHS workers.

Initially we set up a temporary email address for critical workers to apply for a test. Within a few days, we'd received more than 48,000 requests. The Customer Service Centre manually processed these emails, but it was not sustainable. So, we decided to automate the process for the GOV.UK website.

The in-house team included service designers, developers, content designers, performance analysts and user researchers. They worked closely with customer services, theory test team and operations managers to design and launch the new service.

Normally it takes around 6 months to develop this kind of service from scratch. Our team did it in just 5 weeks and they were 'highly commended' in the Brilliant Civil Service Awards.



We kept heavy vehicles moving

“ In the midst of a pandemic and difficult times for everyone, our colleagues and suppliers came together virtually. We learnt new processes and dealt with a huge volume of work ”

Paul Cowan
Head of Service Design and Transition



In March 2020, we had to keep heavy vehicles on the road as they were essential in the UK's response to the pandemic. Taking them out of operation would have had a severe impact on services and people's livelihoods.

Many vehicles were due their MOT, without which they could not continue operating. So we extended test certificates and allowed vehicles to stay on the road for a further 3 months – the legal maximum at the time. Then, with August's change in legislation, we were able to grant 12-month MOT exemptions for lower-risk vehicles, like those in our earned recognition scheme.

We needed a team to deal with the huge volumes of enquiries about exemption. Our driving examiners were not able to test because of lockdown, so a group of them moved over to help. We also introduced a new online report through which vehicle operators could check their MOT test date.

Colleagues handled over 20,000 emails from operators at this time. And we exempted over 800,000 heavy vehicles from their MOT, keeping them on the road at a time when people needed them most.

We improved our Civil Service People Survey score



Leighton Burman
Testing Network Manager

“ The People Survey is a fantastic resource that my team uses to gauge colleagues’ feelings. It gives us a basis for improvement plans and helps make our working environment better ”

Every year we invite colleagues to take part in the People Survey. It’s held across the Civil Service and asks how people feel about their work.

In October 2020, 88% of DVSA colleagues took part in the survey. That’s the highest response rate we’ve ever had and one of the best across the whole Civil Service.

One of the things we measure is colleagues’ engagement rate. That means finding out how proud they feel about being part of DVSA, and of the work they do. It also measures people’s connection to DVSA’s goals and values.

In 2019 the engagement score was 57% and, last year, we increased by 5 percentage points to 62%. People told us that their greater engagement is down to things we’ve worked to improve – like inclusion and fair treatment, and more learning and development opportunities.

We’re not resting on our laurels, as we need to build on this result. But, in a year when colleagues have struggled with so much, it’s encouraging to see an improvement in engagement.

We continued to check unsafe vehicles

“ Everybody in the country needed to play their part in those uncertain times. We in Enforcement played our part by keeping unsafe vehicles off the road ”

Peter Forshaw
Vehicle examiner



When the pandemic struck in spring 2020, we were told to stay at home. But our Enforcement team had to find a way to keep unsafe drivers and vehicles off our roads. Staying safe from COVID could not mean being less effective.

We saw from social media that there were still defective vehicles on the road. And there was a risk that serially non-compliant operators would assume we would not be checking vehicles during lockdown. That could have had a major impact on key workers’ road safety and efficiency – like the blue light services and delivery drivers.

So we developed a new way of working which included COVID safety measures. Social distancing quickly became the norm – among colleagues and the drivers we spoke to.

We also had to account for colleagues who were shielding. So we regrouped and worked closely with the Automatic Number Plate Recognition and Search teams to target non-compliant vehicles.

Helping you through a lifetime of safe driving

1 million

visits to Safe Driving for Life website in 1st month

175,735

candidates rebooked test after 1st lockdown

12,900

critical worker driving tests during lockdown

4,000

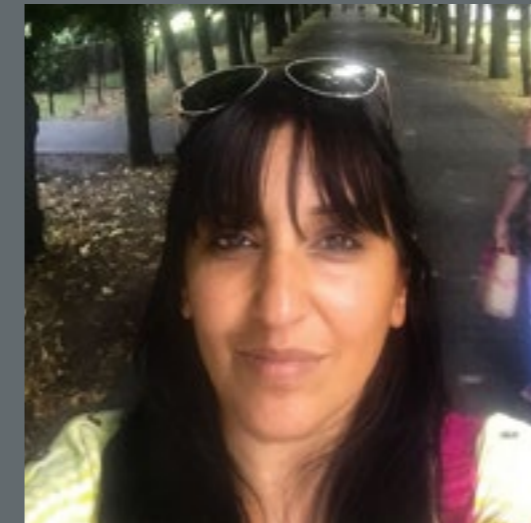
riders completed Ridefree motorcycle training



We developed a mobile emergency working service

“ Offering theory tests to emergency service workers was an important part of the agency’s response to the pandemic. I’m proud to have played a part in making it happen ”

Jenny Mayor
Theory Test Service Delivery Specialist



In early 2021 England and Wales went into lockdown again. But workers from the NHS, health and social care, emergency services and local councils needed to drive as part of their job – often responding to ‘threats to life’.

It was essential to continue to offer practical and theory tests for these emergency workers. So we introduced the mobile emergency worker (MEW) service. The MEW service was a collaborative effort across DVSA, the hard work and good will of many colleagues making it a success. They included:

- driving examiners, who volunteered to test emergency service workers
- customer service centre colleagues, who managed the booking process
- deployment team, who arranged the tests
- theory test colleagues who worked with our theory test supplier, Pearson VUE, to offer theory tests.

Between January and March, we conducted 1,024 practical driving tests and 626 theory tests through the MEW service. And the service continues to help emergency workers become the drivers we need.

We signed up to the Race at Work charter

“Our staff network group for ethnic minority colleagues, embRACE, promotes diversity within DVSA and achieving accreditation to the Race Charter was a priority”

Simon Lewis
embRACE Vice Chair, Vehicle Safety and Market Surveillance Engineer



DVSA wants to be a genuine advocate of race equality. So we made a public commitment to race equality and inclusion by signing up to the Business in the Community Race at Work Charter.

The first step was to take part in a self-assessment about our existing policies, recruitment processes, staff development and services. Then we committed to taking practical steps in tackling barriers that ethnic minority people face in the workplace and as service users. We're now using the Race at Work Charter to guide our work in understanding the experiences of ethnic minority colleagues and customers.

Our involvement in the Race at Work Charter is one of the steps on the road to improving the representation and involvement of ethnic minorities as employees and customers. Through this, we aim to become truly representative of the communities and customers we serve.





We celebrated our first Festival of Respect

“ It’s fantastic that so many colleagues engaged with our first event. The range of topics across the week really got people talking. As one of the organisers, I’m so proud ”

Laura Bevan
Senior Events Programme Manager



We designed our virtual Festival of Respect to raise awareness about inclusion. Senior leaders, staff network groups, Trade Union representatives, guest speakers and colleagues focused on being respectful in the workplace.

To enable everyone to join in – many of them home or remote-working – we created a SharePoint site. That allowed colleagues to access the festival content and recordings of the sessions.

Over the course of a week, we hosted 22 events. Highlights included a session with Nigel Owens, MBE. Nigel, a rugby referee in a traditionally Alpha male sport, shared his moving story about coming out as a gay man. And the Broxtowe Women’s Project hosted a session about domestic abuse, creating a safe place for people to talk. We also included practical sessions, like that designed for colleagues interested in improving their interview skills.

This was DVSA’s first Festival of Respect, but it will not be our last – because being inclusive is worth celebrating.

We adapted our vehicle approvals service



John Murphy
Specialist vehicles standards assessor

“ Making sure vehicles are safe to be used on the road is what my job is all about. I’m glad that it’s also helped in the fight against COVID-19 ”

We had to keep essential vehicles on the road, as well as staying safe from COVID during lockdown. So, we adapted our vehicle approvals service.

While regular testing was suspended, we introduced a priority vehicle approval test for critical workers’ vehicles. This included ambulances and goods vehicles. During the first lockdown we tested 50 vehicles used in supporting the pandemic response. And DfT named our colleagues John Murphy and Stephen Womack as Transport Heroes.

We also introduced a service where we conducted vehicle approvals by video. We developed the procedure and published guidance for our customers to GOV.UK. This new approach allowed us to approve many vehicles while the regular service was restricted by COVID.

Our adaptations meant that we could approve specialist vehicles as safe, helping to support the nation during the crisis. And we’ll continue to offer our video approvals service when all restrictions have lifted.

We launched Ridefree

“ The launch of Ridefree has been a great success and it’s been exceptionally well received by the industry. We’ve had lots of positive feedback from trainers and learners ”

Allie Patel
Motorcycle Registers Manager



We officially launched Ridefree in July 2020, having won a Prince Michael International Road Safety Award for its trial in 2019.

Ridefree is an enhancement to the compulsory basic training (CBT) course for motorcyclists. It’s a combination of pre-course eLearning modules and an enhanced version of the CBT syllabus. We designed it, based on evidence of real learners’ needs, tailoring the training to help them get the best out of CBT.

Ridefree has helped trainees become better and more confident riders by:

- increasing their knowledge of riding skills and behaviour
- giving them more time to focus on the practical skills
- linking the eLearning to the practical skills

Despite COVID restrictions, which limited practical motorcycle training, the Ridefree eLearning has been hugely successful. Since its launch, over 4,000 riders have completed the course. And there are currently around 2,000 working through it. We’re confident that Ridefree helps to put skilful, courteous and safe riders on the road.

We found a new way to help our customers



Mark Thomas
Customer Service Quality
Improvement Coach

“ The values that really stood out during this time were the commitment, professionalism, and resilience of our sta ”

In March 2020 we shut our customer service centres (CSC) because of the pandemic. And, because our agents were working from home, we also had to close the phone lines and remove the numbers from our website. Instead, we responded to customers by email and social media.

The effects of COVID on our services meant that colleagues were dealing with an unprecedented number of emails and social media posts. Around this time – when many were isolating or looking after children – they received nearly 70,000 emails.

By April, we'd developed an innovative software system that allowed calls to be routed to agents' laptops at home. We trained CSC staff in using the new technology and opened the telephone lines to our customers. Now, colleagues can offer a multi-channel service from the safety of their own homes.

Developing this solution took teamwork and commitment. It's allowed us to communicate effectively with customers throughout the fluctuations in DVSA services. And our Head of Customer Contact, Andrew Lustig, was named 'outstanding leader' at the Customer Contact Association awards.

We launched 'Beat the Rush'

“ Beat the Rush was DVSA's first joint campaign with the MOT industry. By working with garages, we helped to address the demand peak by encouraging drivers to get an early MOT ”

Ian Marsh
MOT Product Specialist



In the first lockdown, we granted motorists a 6-month exemption if they needed an MOT. We understood that people needed to make essential journeys without worrying about missing an MOT.

Exemptions ended on 31 July 2020, meaning there would be double the usual demand for MOTs in the autumn – traditionally the busiest time. That could have made it difficult for motorists to get an appointment when their MOT was due. We also knew that some vehicles had not had an MOT for 18 months, so it was essential to test them as quickly as possible.

Working with the motor trade, we designed the Beat the Rush campaign. Its aims were to help MOT garages manage demand, and to support the trade during this unprecedented time. Together, we promoted the message: get your MOT done early so your vehicle is safe to drive.

We also provided MOT garages with a 'toolkit' to promote their services and the importance of beating the rush.

Beat the Rush raised awareness of the MOT and resulted in 700,000 MOTs done 2 or more months early in August 2020.

Protecting you from unsafe drivers

2.8 million
tachographs checked

126,328
roadside encounters

30,333
vehicles prohibited

5,016
MOT site reviews



We prepared hauliers to get the right EU permits

“ Supporting UK hauliers in readiness for the end of the transition period was a fantastic collaboration between DVSA, DfT and suppliers. We can achieve excellence in difficult circumstances when we pull together ”

Steve Fox
(former) International Road Haulage Permits Service Owner



As we approached the end of EU transition on 31 December, our Road Haulage Permits Team worked tirelessly to prepare for a no-deal scenario. In that case, hauliers would have needed European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) permits to transport goods to the EU.

Until this point, the ECMT application system was paper-based as few hauliers had needed a permit. So, we had to develop a digital system that could cope with high volumes of applications. It also needed to be flexible enough to respond to any variation of a deal or no-deal – and fast.

Our work meant that hauliers were prepared, and they applied for the permits they needed to travel – whatever the outcome. Fortunately, the Trade and Cooperation Agreement allowed most haulier journeys to go ahead without needing extra permits. But, for journeys that do need them, hauliers can apply through the new system, which is quick, easy, and adaptable for future application needs.

We focused on wellbeing

Given the year we've had, as a nation and an organisation, our colleagues' wellbeing has been one of our top priorities



Claire Skuse
Head of Portfolio Management Office

“ I've suffered from stress so it's great that DVSA's investing in staff wellbeing. Work's a safe environment where I feel comfortable talking about stress and asking for help if I need it ”

Surveys

We needed to monitor how people were coping with the crisis and with working from home in many cases. So, we ran 3 wellbeing surveys between late March and October. We asked how colleagues felt and how connected they were to their teams. We also asked how comfortable they were with the safety measures we were developing to restart our services. And we invited ideas about how to support colleagues through this time.

From the first to the last survey, many people reported improvements in how they felt. But colleagues also gave feedback about feeling lonely and isolated.

Wellbeing Week

The survey results gave us ideas about how to improve colleagues' wellbeing. This helped us to plan our annual Wellbeing Week, which offered events to improve everyone's mental and physical health. Wellbeing Week took place when we'd suspended driving tests again in January, so our driving examiners were able to take part.

We hosted 20 sessions during the week. They included events around mindfulness, yoga, improving sleep,

coping with stress and using alcohol responsibly. We also held a laughter workshop! And we invited guests from the Samaritans and the Civil Service Sports and Social to explain the support they offer.

Over 3,000 people attended the events. They gave an average feedback score of 4.5 out of 5, with some great, positive comments.

Wellbeing portal

We gave digital support in the form of our new **Revitalised!** portal. Available on a website or a mobile app, we introduced this confidential digital portal to help colleagues make positive changes to improve health and happiness.

Revitalised! features include:

- a wellbeing assessment, which gives colleagues a score based on medical expertise
- inspiration, which shares a range of health and wellbeing resources – like articles, videos, podcasts, interactive content, news, awareness days and recipes
- quick wins, giving colleagues suggestions for small steps that can lead to big changes.

“ I found the yoga extremely helpful to destress ”



“ Great to have the support and care during these worrying times. Thank you ”

Wellbeing Week feedback



We launched a new eLearning website

“ We’re very excited about Safe Driving for Life, and it seems our customers are too. We’re getting some amazing feedback on the new features ”

Sarah Scott
Deputy Head of Publishing



After 3 years of research and development, we launched Safe Driving for Life in partnership with our official publishers, The Stationery Office.

We kept all the best bits of the existing website, like the advice centre, blog, shop and practice theory tests. Then we brought in online learning experts, Sponge, to enhance our existing digital learning content and bring it onto the new platform.


Using learning science and listening to driver and rider trainers and learners, we developed exciting new features. As well as having access to DVSA’s best-selling content, learners can now share their progress with friends, family and their instructor.


And the new system tells them when they can take their test with total confidence. More first-time passes should really help the theory test service to recover.

DVSA through COVID-19

Lockdown


All tests suspended



Motorcycle and vocational practical tests restart*



Theory and car practical* tests restart





Car practical tests restart*






Lockdown
 Practical and theory tests suspended


11 level 4 lockdown areas
 Practical and theory tests suspended


Practical and theory tests resume




Lockdown
 Practical and theory tests suspended


Home (tractor) and bus tests restart




March

April

May

June

July

August

September

October

November


December


January

February

March

Vehicle testing restarts


Motorcycle and vocational practical tests restart*



Car practical tests restart*



Theory tests restart





17 day 'circuit breaker'
 Practical and theory tests suspended





Vehicle testing temporary restrictions
 Assessors work locally


Lockdown
 Practical and theory tests suspended


Tier system
 Practical and theory tests restarted, but later suspended in Tier 4 areas




Vehicle testing temporary restrictions removed


Note

Roadside and remote heavy vehicle enforcement continued throughout the year. MOT testing continued but between 31 March and 31 July 2020, 9.58 million MOTs were extended.

* Practical testing was at less than normal capacity

Helping keep your vehicle safe to drive

800,000

MOT exemptions, keeping vehicles on the road

200,000

MOTs in August prompted by 'Beat the Rush'

495

ATFs passed Health and Safety assessment in first 20 days

50+

garages used the SAFE toolkit



We launched the SAFE campaign

“ We had positive feedback from the trade about the SAFE campaign because it responded to industry challenges as a result of the pandemic. It showed that we’re being proactive and supporting MOT garages ”

Julia Jacyno
DVSA Media officer



As lockdown eased and travel increased, we launched the SAFE campaign. Its aim was to persuade drivers and riders to carry out basic safety checks and get a professional service or health check at their MOT garage.

The strapline of the campaign was ‘whatever your essential journey, make it safe’. It focused on four basic checks:

- Service or health check if necessary
- Air in tyres
- Fill up screenwash
- Examine lights and tyre tread

We developed a SAFE ‘toolkit’ to help garages reach customers and manage the reduction in MOT work caused by the exemptions (see page 21). The toolkit encouraged garages to:

- offer a service or health check to give peace of mind
- emphasise the importance of SAFE checks and show how to carry them out
- ask customers to consider going back to their original MOT date.

We partnered with more than 50 garages across the country in the SAFE campaign, making more vehicles safe to drive.

We suspended... and restarted driving test services

Our driving test services were hit hard by the pandemic. And thousands of candidates' tests were cancelled and rebooked



Andrew Frisby
Media manager

“ We focused on communicating with customers about changes to our services and COVID restrictions. We also quickly responded to questions from the press and social media ”

First lockdown

We suspended our driving and theory test services for the first time in March 2020. But we understood that workers whose jobs were critical in helping tackle COVID-19 needed to be able to drive. So, we set up a critical worker testing service (read more about this on page 7).

As restrictions began to lift in summer 2020, we co-ordinated the phased restart of services in England, Scotland, and Wales (see the timeline for this on pages 28 and 29).

Reopening our booking services after 4 months' suspension was a challenge. We offered people whose original test date was affected by COVID-19 the chance to choose a new date, before any fresh bookings.

We saw a huge volume of driving test requests at first, putting strain on our online booking service. But we soon brought things under control, releasing hundreds of thousands of tests slots onto the system for candidates.

Second lockdown

The next national lockdown lasted from 5 November until 2 December. Again, we had to suspend driver and rider training and tests in line with local restrictions – including the theory test for each category.

We contacted affected candidates who had a test booked during this period, explaining what they needed to do.

Our driving examiners (DEs) were unable to carry out normal testing during lockdown, but many continued to test critical workers. And nearly 1,300 DEs did virtual training to refresh their knowledge of car, large goods vehicle and motorcycle testing.

Third lockdown

After just a month, the nation entered a third lockdown. We suspended our services again, up to and beyond the end of our financial year. We restarted all of our driver and rider testing across Great Britain by 6 May 2021.

During this lockdown, we used our experience of the previous year to plan testing in the safest possible way.

The demand for tests was even higher now, so we also urged learners to prepare thoroughly for their test. We shared the message that they'd face a long wait to get another test. And we stressed the importance of being good enough to pass first time.

Of course, the number of car driving tests we conducted between April 2020 and March 2021 was much less than in 2019 to 2020.

Despite the disruptions, we conducted:



437,352
car tests and



891,279
theory tests

We've helped the army with COVID-19 testing



Kerry Watson
Senior Business Change Manager

“ It was a privilege to be involved in such a fantastic and successful piece of work, which we pulled together very quickly. I've never been prouder to work for DVSA ”

DVSA supported the nation's pandemic response by lending 39 Enforcement vans to the Army for mobile testing.

Over a weekend, from Perth to Redruth, Norwich to Liverpool and everywhere in between, 70 colleagues worked on stripping the vans of their DVSA kit. Then we repurposed them so they could be used for COVID-19 testing. We checked the vans over thoroughly before driving them to the Prince William of Gloucester barracks in Grantham.

The vans arrived at a scene of calm, order and efficiency. We handed over the keys to our Army colleagues and the DVSA vans joined the neat rows of other vehicles ready for mobile testing.

The mobile units were an important resource in testing for COVID-19. And DVSA's support meant that more frontline workers could be tested and continue their essential work.

Our Staff Network Groups supported colleagues

“ Fast with a Friend inspired people to experience fasting during the month of Ramadan. embRACE was overwhelmed with the support from colleagues, management and directors ”

Rehana Kauser
Driving examiner, member of embRACE



The pandemic and new, virtual ways of working meant it was more important than ever that our SNGs supported colleagues.

embRACE, for ethnic minority colleagues, celebrated Black History Month – including a live cookery demonstration! They were also involved in Islamophobia Awareness month. And those observing Ramadan invited colleagues to share their experience through 'Fast with a Friend'.

Enabled, for disabled colleagues, supported those needing adjustments for home working. Enabled promoted workplace adjustment passports – making it easier for disabled colleagues to request adjustments.

Pride, for LGBT+ colleagues, held regular support sessions. They also hosted engagement events throughout LGBT+ History Month, presenting to the business on subjects like gender identity and the use of pronouns.

Time2Care, for colleagues with caring responsibilities, launched a Carers' Survey to help DVSA understand their needs. And they hosted two digital Carers' Weeks, stimulating discussion and understanding about colleagues' responsibilities.

Women's Integrated Network, for women at DVSA, shared guidance on how to seek help if you're experiencing domestic abuse. And their 'Twelve Days of Christmas' campaign raised money to buy presents for families affected by domestic abuse.



We marked White Ribbon Day

“ The problem is real and saw a surge during lockdown. I believe that if we at DVSA raise awareness and show we care, it will help break the silence ”

Amelia Snelson
Driving examiner, Women's Integrated Network staff group member



November 25 marked White Ribbon Day, heralding 16 days of national action against domestic abuse. DVSA made clear its support for the campaign.

Some of our people wrote blog posts about their personal experiences of domestic abuse, which had a powerful effect on colleagues. And our staff network groups talked about abuse from their own perspective.

We also joined up with Broxtowe Women's Project to signpost information and resources. And we shared a hard-hitting video about men affected by domestic abuse.

We used the campaign to launch new guidance for colleagues who are experiencing or reliving past experiences of domestic abuse. It also gives guidance to colleagues concerned about their own behaviour, and those supporting them.

The Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse (EIDA) is a network of help and resources for tackling domestic abuse. DVSA joined EIDA and promoted their work among colleagues on White Ribbon Day.

A great place to work

4,000 people

took part in the People survey

3,300 colleagues

did 'Continuing the Conversation' training

3,000 people

involved in Wellbeing Week

156 colleagues

completed management training



We launched new menopause guidance

“ DVSA has taken a taboo subject and made it feel safe to have an open conversation. I’m now confident and relaxed about discussing the menopause ”

Anne McKenzie
Human Resources Business Partner



Women are a minority of less than 30% at DVSA. But we understand the importance of explaining to everyone what the menopause is and how it can affect women as they go through this change.

We also acknowledge that, whatever your gender, you’re likely to work with people who’ll be dealing with menopause symptoms. So we launched the new guidance to help people understand what their colleagues may be going through. It sets out the impact menopause may have on them in the workplace and how colleagues can support them.

The guidance was the work of our Menopause Focus Group. Made up of people with experience of menopause, and interested colleagues, they also created 2 Yammer groups:

‘Menopause Mates’: for anyone – from spouse, partner, friend, colleague, menopausal person or those who want to raise awareness of menopause at DVSA.

‘Menopause Support’: a private space to share menopause experiences. This includes transgender people undergoing hormone replacement therapy, who may also experience symptoms like those of the menopause.

We improved access to vehicle testing information



Darrone Johnson
Head of Account Management and Scheduling

“ During the pandemic, we worked with ATFs and operators to help them understand our testing recovery plans. We also gave them the information they needed to get their vehicles tested on time ”

We supported our heavy vehicle testing partners and customers by improving their access to test information. Our ‘Find an MOT test centre’ service now allows authorised testing facilities (ATFs) to show they have test slots available. And we’ve introduced a way for vehicle operators to tell us if they cannot book a test. Now, around 60% of ATFs are regularly updating their booking information, making it easier for operators to find ATFs with test slots.

We also introduced new online reports for vehicle operators. Through the Transport Operator Portal Service, our customers can find information about the test expiry dates for their vehicles and trailers in one place.

Hosted by Operations Director (South, Rich Hennessy, and DVSA experts, we held 4 webinars for ATFs last summer. They explained our recovery of the heavy vehicle testing service and how we issued MOT exemptions. Guests also had the opportunity to ask questions throughout the webinars, which gave us valuable insight into the effect of the pandemic on our customers. We attracted 127 people and 82% told us they found the webinars useful.

We communicated with hauliers about EU travel

“ Keeping our customers in mind, we played a crucial role in giving hauliers clear information they could act on ”

Samantha Coles
Senior Strategic Communications Manager



DVSA engages well with hauliers through our digital communications channels. We’ve also gained a lot of insight into this industry. So, government asked us to help hauliers understand how to minimise congestion and cross the EU border after the end of the Brexit transition period.

We spent the final few months of 2020 planning and preparing hauliers for different possible outcomes to the trade deal negotiations. We wrote, updated or withdrew 16 guides on GOV.UK. Then we worked long hours over Christmas and New Year, drafting and sending 20 email alerts and posting support messages on social media.

In January, our work intensified as France closed its border and introduced COVID testing requirements. Again, we had to support DfT in telling hauliers what to do – and quickly.

The vast majority complied with the new haulage rules and travelled through Kent and on to the EU with minimal disruption. So we were confident that the information we shared with hauliers was clear and effective.

We're more digitally enabled



Phil Allen
Senior Strategic Communications
Manager

“ At a time when sharing, collaborating and innovating has never been more important, we've helped colleagues to stay connected ”

During this last year, our ability to communicate digitally has never been more important. So we brought in more new ways of working with Microsoft 365.

Colleagues from Information Management, IT, Business Change and Communications worked together to introduce new business hubs and file-sharing sites. These OneDrive, SharePoint and Teams sites have helped colleagues to communicate effectively as we've worked remotely and from home.

The new technology allowed us to run Directors Live! events, where our directors have shared news with and taken questions from up to 4,000 colleagues. We've also been able to run webinars on using plain English, healthy eating and everything in between.

Being digitally enabled has meant that, despite our physical distance from colleagues, we've carried on connecting and sharing ideas. The new ways of working have improved collaboration and helped colleagues and the business through the pandemic.





We've won more awards!

“ It’s been a challenging year adapting to ongoing changes. I’m so pleased to have received the **Apprentice of the Year Award** – it shows my hard work has paid off! ”

Chloe Miles
Administrative assistant



Despite this difficult last year, DVSA has had huge success in winning awards.

DVSA’s Apprentice of the Year, administrative assistant Chloe Miles from the Customer Contact Centre in Swansea, also won the Department for Transport’s Apprentice of the Year award. And Swansea saw another winner in Helen Tapp, who was named as Gower College’s Apprentice of the Year.

Our Driver Examiner Services project is a multiple winner too. It won the UK IT Industry Award for the modernisation of the practical driving test and the ‘Paperless Award’ at the Smarter Working Live event.

Our Customer Contact Centre has been accredited with the Customer Contact Association’s Excellence Award. And Andrew Lustig, the head of the service, scooped the Outstanding Leader Award at the Customer Contact Association’s global awards event.

We've been tackling tyres



Dave Wood
Enforcement Policy Manager

“ We updated our MOT inspection manuals, categorisation of defects and the guide to maintaining roadworthiness. That's changed the way we inspect vehicles and follow up compliance problems with GB operators ”

A Department for Transport (DfT) investigation into ageing tyres concluded that corrosion can cause them to fail. This evidence, along with Frances Molloy's work, brought about a new law. Frances' son, Michael, tragically died in a crash caused by the blow-out of a 19-year-old tyre. This led her to campaign for old tyres to be banned.

Introduced in February 2021, the law bans the use of tyres over 10 years old. This applies to the front steered axles of lorries, buses, coaches and all single wheels fitted to a minibus.

In December, we shared information with those who'd be affected by the law. Through the press and in updated guidance, we explained the changes. And we encouraged operators to take responsibility by checking the age and condition of their tyres.

Now, our Enforcement team carries out roadside checks and can prevent vehicles being used until old tyres are replaced. And, at annual vehicle tests, our vehicle standards assessors check that each tyre displays a date of manufacture or re-treading.

Operators are now taking more care over their tyres, and we're protecting road users from unsafe vehicles and can prevent vehicles from being used until old tyres are replaced.

We've continued to build respect

“ ‘Building Respect’ and ‘Confident Manager’ were great foundations, but we need to keep up the impetus. So expect to see us doing more soon to tackle unwanted behaviour ”

Carlo Bortoloni
Training and Development Solutions Lead



DVSA made a commitment to getting rid of all forms of bullying, harassment and discrimination among colleagues and customers. But feedback from our staff surveys told us that people were still experiencing some inappropriate behaviour.

In response, we developed the 'Building Respect in the Workplace' and 'Confident Manager' training sessions to help people safely tackle unwanted behaviour.

The pandemic meant that we could no longer give colleagues this training in the classroom. So we completed the programme by redesigning the course for a virtual space over Microsoft Teams. We also developed a new online session. 'Continuing the Conversation' invited teams across DVSA to discuss their experiences and write their own charter to prevent inappropriate behaviour.

Now every person in DVSA has completed the Building Respect training, but we're not stopping there. We have more ideas and permission to continue our work in tackling bullying, harassment and discrimination.

We've received some great feedback!

We haven't always been able to give our customers what they've wanted this year. And we understand their frustration. So, when we've received good feedback like this, it's meant a lot to us. Thank you to our customers.

Ridefree pre-CBT learning is an absolute gem. I've introduced it into my pre-CBT course information for all my customers

Motorcycle instructor

It was very kind of my examiner to take my driving test amidst the pandemic. Being a key worker employed by an NHS trust, I am very thankful

Practical test candidate

86%

of MOT garages were satisfied with the service they received from DVSA

89%

of operators rated DVSA's service as **good** or **very good**, compared with 73% in 2020

NASP, our association for approved driving instructors, was happy to be involved with the update of the Safe Driving for Life website. It's much better content that should help to improve knowledge, pre and post-test

Peter Harvey, former chair of NASP

Excellent service in this difficult time. When I'm forgetting everything, this service saved my day. I would like to heartily thank DVSA

MOT garage user

We've just delivered some fine-looking ambulances into @YorksAmbulance. Thanks to @DVSAgovuk for opening their site to register these critical vehicles for our #NHSheroes

WAS Ambulances (ambulance conversion company) via Twitter

DVSA have done the best they can. People got ready for their test and couldn't take it, but health comes before anything else

Driving instructor



We're listening

The Customer Service Centre saw a huge increase in contact with customers who needed our support. We answered 191,070 more emails and 29,377 more social media interactions than in the previous year.

We adapted our service to allow agents to handle calls from home (read more about this on page 20). Maintaining service throughout the lockdowns, we:



Answered 502,270 calls within 30 seconds



Replied to 323,364 emails within 5 working days



Answered 30,992 of social media questions within 1 hour

The Corporate Reputation Team beat our targets for answering correspondence by improving the way we handle complaints.

We replied to customers' letters and emails in clear language that's easy to understand. And Corporate Reputation managed driving test applications for those people essential to the COVID-19 response. We dealt with:



97.9% of 19,447 letters and emails within 10 working days



99.78% of 476 Freedom of Information requests in 20 working days

Helping you **stay safe** on **Britain's roads**



What's next?

COVID-19 has had a terrible effect on the country, on DVSA and the industries we support. But colleagues have remained committed to keeping you safe on Britain's roads.

Our focus during 2021 to 2022 will be on repairing the damage caused by the pandemic. We'll work towards the restart and recovery of our services and help our colleagues through that recovery.

We'll also develop new ideas to bring DVSA and the people we serve back even stronger.

These are some of our next steps:

DVSA: a great place to work

We will:

- develop hybrid working – a mixture of home and office working – based on what we learnt during the pandemic
- provide more training and support for colleagues in 'Building Respect'
- continue to support our staff network groups in promoting inclusion
- introduce a wellbeing tracker to help managers keep an informal eye on their team's wellbeing
- invest in new and emerging talent – for example, by increasing apprenticeship offers
- review our recruitment process to help us attract and recruit people from different backgrounds.

Helping you keep your vehicle safe to drive

We will:

- work with DfT and industry to carry out the recommendations of the heavy vehicle testing review
- grow the network of ATFs and improve our performance measures
- work on the next phase of our digital transformation project for heavy and specialist vehicle tests
- review our individual vehicle approval scheme and work with customers to make sure they get the service they need.

Protecting you from unsafe drivers and vehicles

We will:

- enable operators to improve the safety of their businesses by making information about compliance more accessible and easier to understand
- prevent non-compliance by using data and intelligence to target non-compliant operators
- respond to the threat to road safety from serious and serial offenders by introducing a national risk profile.

Lifetime of safe driving

We will safely bring the average driving test waiting time back to what it was before the pandemic by:

- increasing the number of driving test appointments – like making weekend and Bank Holiday tests available
- encouraging people to book and take a driving test only when they're ready
- recruiting more driving examiners
- inviting recently retired driving examiners to return to testing
- communicating with approved driving instructors about their workload, to help us forecast test demand.

 **At a special event in July 2021, we will remember our colleagues, family and friends who have died during the pandemic**



Our people

We have around 4,800 colleagues.

Over **3,500** of them work in frontline roles like driver and vehicle testing and enforcement.

It takes over **1,200** members of staff working behind the scenes to keep things running smoothly.

Between April 2020 and March 2021, we recruited **314** new colleagues.

Whether they're out on the road or based in one of our offices, everyone works hard to **keep you safe** on **Britain's roads**.



Our income and costs

In the financial year 2020 to 2021, our income was significantly below budget

This was mainly because of COVID-19 related suspensions on theory and practical driving tests and heavy vehicle testing. We were able to partially offset this by emergency grant funding from DfT, meaning that we could meet our spending commitments.

Our costs were also below budget, but to a lesser extent than income

This was mainly because of our reduced testing activity, underspend on salaries and not having to pay a dividend to DfT this year. We partially offset the underspend with additional property and software development costs.

Income: £305.1 million

- driver services **£74.2m**
- vehicle services **£83.6m**
- MOT services **£65.4m**
- licensing services **£13.0m**
- other services **£68.9m***

Costs: £359.3 million

- staff costs **£189.7m**
- other operating costs **£129.3m**
- property, vehicles and IT costs **£32.7m**
- payable interest costs **£7.6m**

* includes majority of DfT emergency grant funding

www.gov.uk/dvsa



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