



# Annual Review

2022 to 2023

Keeping **Britain** moving, **safely** and **sustainably**

# Welcome from Loveday and Nick



**We're pleased and proud to present DVSA's Annual Review, which focuses on our work from April 2022 to March 2023.**

**You'll see in these pages that our colleagues have shone, showing huge dedication to achieving our goals.**



**Loveday Ryder**  
Chief Executive

**Nick Bitel**  
Non-Executive Chair

The last few years have been challenging. But, this year, we've managed to reduce waiting times for some of our services to pre-pandemic levels – for example, in the vocational driving test. And, through our 'Ready to Pass?' campaign, we're communicating with learner drivers about the consequences of taking a driving test too early. That's helping us to manage the huge volume of tests people could not take during lockdown.

We've achieved many successes in meeting the needs of society, industry, the economy and our colleagues. We've protected the public through our enforcement work and improved our customer service and digital services, collecting some prestigious awards along the way. And we've improved our colleagues' experience at work through new policies, staff network groups and development opportunities.

We're also very proud and excited to have published our Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2025 and our Vision to 2030. Our Vision explains how we aim to keep Britain moving, safely and sustainably.

We've started to make progress towards meeting some of the commitments and challenges we set out. And we're confident that our colleagues will continue to work together with purpose, professionalism and pride to help achieve our long-term goals.

# We helped learners with our ‘Ready to Pass?’ campaign



**Dane Wiig**  
Senior Campaign Manager

“ The success of Ready to Pass? is down to the team’s hard work and diverse range of skills. Everything we do is based on research, data, and evidence and we continually learn from what worked and what did not. ”

Lockdowns during the pandemic left us with a huge number of car driving tests still to be taken. And, when we were able to test again, we found more candidates than usual were cancelling tests or not attending – meaning they’d have to rebook, using another precious slot. The pass rate was 49%.

## Let’s do better

We had to support the government’s campaign to rebuild the economy. And we wanted to help candidates do better, to improve their access to education and employment. So, we began a 9-month research phase for a behavioural change campaign.

We gathered insight from learner drivers, their parents and approved driving instructors (ADIs) which told us about their attitudes, behaviours, and barriers to change. This, and existing driving test data, helped us to set objectives for the ‘Ready to Pass?’ campaign.

## It’s in the name

As the name suggests, our main objective was to encourage learners to consider their readiness before booking a driving test. We designed a website, giving learners and their ADIs bespoke tools to help them assess this readiness. For example, by taking a realistic mock driving test during a lesson. And we explained how to book a test if a learner is ready, or to delay it if not.

The campaign’s other aims were to show learners and their parents the costs of taking a driving test too soon. And how to avoid an avoidable cancellation.

## New Opportunities

We’re taking **Ready to Pass?** into 2023 to 2024, with new opportunities to change behaviour among learners, their parents and ADIs. For example, by:

- tailoring campaign emails based on number of test attempts
- making our content more accessible for harder to reach audiences
- working with 6th form colleges, schools, and road safety groups to reach parents and families
- running ADI and customer webinars

## Behaviour change is the aim of any campaign

We used established behavioural change techniques to craft our campaign content and messages. For example, social norming – that is, showing what everyone else does, making a behaviour typical, acceptable, and desirable. We also used cost aversion – where an individual perceives a real or potential financial loss in a certain behaviour.

## It’s starting to work!

Since its launch in July 2022, we’ve been promoting **Ready to Pass?** using messages, graphics and video on social media, in customer emails and at driving test centre open days.

### The campaign is starting to show results. For example:

- 1 in 3 learners are visiting the Ready to Pass? website
- 21% of ADIs are receiving more requests for mock driving tests
- 91% of learners in May took full mock tests
- the ‘failure to attend’ figure dropped from 4.8% before the campaign to 3.1% in February 2023

### Research shows that the average pass rate is:

- 47% for learners who did not take a mock test
- 65% for learners who did take a mock test

So, more people are doing something that makes them more likely to pass their test - which is exactly what we wanted to see.

# We launched our new cultural aspirations

# Our 5 cultural aspirations



**We want colleagues to feel positive and proud about working at DVSA. And we understand that at the heart of how people feel is our culture - that is, our collective beliefs, ideas and behaviours.**

So, we ran over 670 focus group across the country and the organisation. Over 1,400 individuals shared their thoughts, hopes and observations about working at DVSA.

From that rich mix of ideas, we developed our 5 new cultural aspirations. They apply to everyone, regardless of grade or job title. And they run through everything we do, every day.

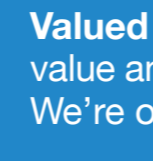
We've been looking at the (often small) things each of us can do to work better together.

**Zoe Terry**  
Apprenticeship and Early  
Talent Manager

“ We all have memories of the ‘good old days’. But what made them good? I chose to get involved with the focus group to analyse this question and find a way forward. The answer was simple: we all need to feel seen, heard, known and valued. ”



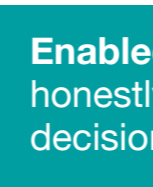
**Respectful** — We're helpful, considerate, inclusive and respectful with everyone. We're open, honest, transparent and fair. Everyone has something valuable to contribute.



**Valued** — We're engaged, motivated and valued for what we do. We value and appreciate each other and know everyone's view is important. We're open, we listen, and we feel trusted and involved.



**Together** — We're united, supportive, friendly and positive. We welcome challenge and feel safe to offer it. We work together, asking for others' expertise and freely sharing our own. We're proud of what we all do.



**Enabled** — We can all be leaders, who communicate openly and honestly. We're clear about our journey because we contribute to decisions. Our leaders inspire trust, and they involve and engage us.



**Ready for the future** — We're forward-thinking, professional and innovative. We support colleagues in supporting our customers. We build knowledge and expertise, develop ourselves and each other. We're proactive, efficient, effective and progressive.

# We showcased our first mobile inspection unit



**We inspect vehicles at fixed locations around the country. But we needed more flexibility and greater coverage. We also needed a way of targeting non-compliant operators who change their route to avoid us.**

So, in January, we showcased our first mobile inspection unit. Supported by Sussex Police, we took the unit to Tangmere Airport in West Sussex. We invited journalists and enforcement colleagues along to watch us use the unit's vehicle inspection facilities. They include a roller brake tester, under-vehicle inspection cameras, shaker plates, weigh pads and vehicle calibration.

Our vehicle examiners took full advantage of the unit's tech and tested several vehicles. They found a major fault with the braking system of one vehicle and issued a fine – something they probably would not have picked up from one of our fixed locations.

We continue to trial and improve the mobile inspection unit, to see if we can operate in other locations. The more places in which we can test vehicles, advise operators, and take action in serious cases, the better we can protect road users.

**Noel Witney**  
Vehicle examiner

“ I enjoy the challenge a new piece of equipment brings to my work. I was impressed with the tech and what we managed to achieve on the day. This could be a major step forward. ”

# We supported Ukrainian refugees



**The war in Ukraine caused thousands to flee the country without their belongings. Many of them came to the UK as refugees. To support them, we devised a solution to help Ukrainian refugees import their cars without significant modification.**

To be able to drive an imported car under 10 years old in the UK, you need an individual vehicle approval (IVA). Based on how a vehicle is built and its features, the IVA confirms that it's safe to drive on Britain's roads.

It was the case that, to gain IVA, the headlamps on a Ukrainian visa holders' car would have to be completely replaced. So, we created a 'deviation' to this rule which would make the import process quicker and easier, while keeping our roads safe.

DVSA's Stephen Womack, Steve Kendall and team collaborated across government. The Department for Transport, Vehicle Certification Agency, Department for Levelling Up and Housing and Communities were all involved in creating the new policy. It was a complicated and lengthy process. But, based on available data, customer insights and experience, they agreed on the deviation.

Now, when Ukrainian visa holders' vehicles are examined for IVA, they no longer need to replace the headlamps. Instead, they can alter the headlamps with a simple and safe masking device. We've also made allowances for these refugees around requirements for electric propulsion.

Since January, we've made it easier and cheaper for over 70 Ukrainian refugees to import their vehicles, helping them to rebuild their lives in the UK.

**Steve Womack**  
Product specialist, Vehicle Testing Services

“ This humanitarian crisis was an urgent opportunity to use my experience and stretch myself. Our work has hugely benefited this group of refugees. ”

# We launched 3 new staff network groups!



Ben Thomas, Carole Stagg and Nick Wust from the 3 new staff network groups

DVSA now has 8 staff network groups (SNGs). Last year, we reviewed our 5 existing SNGs and found there were new ways we could support our colleagues. So we were very proud and excited to create 3 new groups:

Faith and Belief, Multi-generational and Social Mobility.

Our 8 groups are run by colleagues who understand the issues staff with certain characteristics face. They support DVSA in becoming a safer and more inclusive employer where our people can be themselves and thrive. And they put us in the best place to serve the UK's diverse communities.

The SNGs are made up of a small group of core members who share the protected characteristics of the group. And they have associate members and allies across DVSA who support and promote their work.

**This is what they do, and a flavour of what they've achieved this year.**



## Faith and Belief

**Raises awareness and understanding of different faiths and beliefs – including non-belief.**

It's their goal to achieve greater tolerance and understanding of faith and belief, and their impact on colleagues. They want to see faith become an active part of colleagues' workplace experience.



## Multi-generational

**Represents the 5 different generations in our workforce and raises awareness of each generation's needs.**

They're supporting DVSA's targets to help 'future proof' itself by recruiting more 16 to 24 year olds.



## Social Mobility

**Supports colleagues with being the best they can be, whatever their background, whilst promoting fair treatment and equal opportunities.**

They aim to help colleagues understand how social mobility applies to them, so that nothing can hold them back.

# We launched 3 new staff network groups!

## Time2Care

**Supports colleagues with caring and parental responsibilities.**

They set up a network of care buddies, who are there to support colleagues experiencing caring challenges and to lend an experienced listening ear.

## Pride

**Supports LGBT+ colleagues to create an environment where everyone can bring their whole selves to work.**

They proudly represented DVSA at Newcastle's Northern Pride, showcasing the fantastic work we do.

## Enabled

**Supports colleagues with visible and non-visible disabilities and raises awareness of disability issues.**

They supported DVSA's efforts in achieving Disability Confident Leader status (see page 39).

## Women's Integrated Network

**Supports women working in DVSA to promote gender equality and equal opportunities in the workplace.**

They wanted everyone who menstruates to feel welcome and safe in our buildings. So, they worked with other colleagues to make DVSA one of the first government departments to provide free emergency period products to colleagues and customers.

## EmbRACE

**Promotes understanding of ethnic minority representation, and diversity and inclusion across DVSA.**

Core members have trained in creating diverse interview panels for recruitment. They've also started to embed a 'buddy system' to support all new starters from ethnic minorities.



**Matthew Galtress**  
Public liaison  
administrator



# We removed 600 illegal trailers from the roads



**Emily Bywater**  
Acting Senior Prosecution  
and Legal Services  
Manager

Through our Market Surveillance Unit (MSU), we make sure vehicles, vehicle parts and vehicle accessories are safe for people to buy. So, when the MSU found a company in Northern Ireland supplying trailers which were not approved for use on UK roads, we took them to court.

In 2014, 3-year-old Freddie Hussey was killed by a runaway trailer in Bristol. The investigation found that '50% of trailers were faulty' and people did not understand the law around using a trailer. This failure to meet essential safety standards in the manufacture and use of trailers put people at risk. So, we began to focus our surveillance in this area.

This was a landmark case for our prosecution and legal services team. It was the first time we'd prosecuted in a Northern Irish court, where the system differs from the courts in England and Wales. But we successfully prosecuted the company. They admitted to supplying almost 600 illegal trailers for road use over 7 years. As a result, they got a criminal conviction and had to pay fines and costs totalling £9000.

“ We've built a great working relationship with our colleagues in the Market Surveillance Unit. Together, we make sure these types of companies are not able to continue operating illegally or to compromise road safety. ”



# We continue to make our colleagues' wellbeing a priority



**Wellbeing will always remain one of DVSA's highest priorities. This year, we've focused on insight and learning and development about wellbeing, putting it at the heart of our culture.**

## Leadership and director training

External facilitators visited DVSA to train the directors and corporate senior leaders on the subject of 'positive wellbeing'. Centred around the **PERMA** model, the training helped leaders explore their leadership style and learn how to put empathy at the centre of that leadership.

“ Making sure colleagues are healthy, safe and happy is a priority for DVSA. I'm proud of my team's work in improving colleagues' wellbeing and creating a better work environment. ”

**Louise Sanders**  
Wellbeing specialist



Positive emotion  
Engagement  
Relationships  
Meaning  
Accomplishment

## Mental health awareness training pilot

We wanted to help colleagues gain a better understanding of mental health conditions and how they could support each other. So we rolled out a training pilot on mental health awareness to a group across all Directorates. The training also aimed to help break down the stigma attached to mental health issues.

## Burnout

Our executive committee was concerned about colleagues potentially suffering from chronic workplace stress (or 'burnout'). They commissioned an in-depth analysis, the findings of which were presented to DVSA's People Committee. Its recommendations were to better understand the early signs of burnout, and to enhance our existing stress prevention measures.



# We moved compulsory basic training certificates online



As part of our work to digitise services, the motorcycle register team made the switch so orders for compulsory basic training (CBT) certificates can only be made online.

The move improved the security of payment details and allowed us to process and track orders more efficiently. And motorcycle trainers can order certificates at any time of day or at weekends. That's a huge help to trainers who are often busy running training courses during office hours.

We made the certificates available through the existing testing and registration system (TARS), so motorcycle trainers were already familiar with its navigation.

Over 70% of all certificates sold in the previous 12 months were ordered online anyway so we knew that motorcycle trainers preferred ordering certificates online. Now they can order what they need when it's convenient for them.

**Meriç Inan**  
Motorcycle register  
team leader

“ Moving the ordering of CBT certificates online was a win-win for the agency and motorcycle trainers. It makes payments much more secure and allows people to order certificates out of office hours. ”

# Our communications improved MOT tester training and assessment



It's essential that MOT testers have the most up to date skills and knowledge to check everyone's vehicles are safe. So they must complete annual training and an assessment.

Most do their training and assessment before 30 March every year, as they should. But many still were still leaving everything until the last minute or missing the deadline.

In past years, we've sent weekly emails encouraging testers to complete their assessment on time. But, realising it would be frustrating for all testers to receive these messages, we decided on a more personalised approach.

We monitored the results of all MOT testers' assessments and sent prompts only to those who had not completed theirs. Using behavioural change techniques, we personalised the emails. That way we increased the likelihood of testers reading our messages and acting on them.

For those who had yet to complete the training and assessment, we also arranged a prompt to appear whenever they logged into the MOT testing system (MTS). And we involved MOT tester managers, allowing them to see on MTS who in their team had not completed the assessment.

Finally, we issued a press release to the trade, encouraging MOT testers to do their assessment.

**Our combined communications resulted in 98% of MOT testers completing their assessment on time this year!**

**Olivia Roe**  
Senior strategic  
communications manager

“ MOT training and assessment is really important to help keep our roads safe. I'm proud to have helped testers complete their assessment on time, by using different communications techniques. ”

# People and Culture

8 staff network groups

100%  
carbon  
neutral  
electricity use

80% of frontline  
leaders completed  
leadership  
development training

66 new apprentices

## We launched our domestic abuse policy



**Amelia Snelson**  
External customer  
insights officer

“ I’ve been raising awareness of domestic abuse since I joined WIN 5 years ago. Nothing feels better than knowing colleagues feel safe to make contact and tell their life stories - either looking for help or just someone to listen. ”

**We want colleagues to be safe, both in and outside of work. Supporting those affected by domestic abuse is an essential part of this, so we launched our DVSA domestic abuse policy.**

The domestic abuse working group developed the policy to support survivors and their colleagues. Managing someone experiencing abuse at home can feel daunting, so we also wanted to help managers understand their responsibilities in supporting a colleague.

The policy explains how to deal with important factors around domestic abuse. For example, confidentiality, or how to put in place a reasonable adjustment to support someone going through a challenging time.

We acknowledge that a colleague may be the abuser. DVSA does not condone violence, so we’ll involve the police if there’s a risk to life or someone’s committed a crime. But the policy also covers how to support people in changing their behaviour, if that’s appropriate. For example, by providing access to specialist support services.

The group worked with our women’s staff network group, **Women’s Integrated Network (WIN)**. Together, they’ve raised awareness of domestic abuse within DVSA and the wider communities we serve.

We’re very proud of Amelia Snelson from WIN, who won a cross-government community award for her efforts in developing our domestic abuse policy.

# We improved the MOT reminder service



**More than 1 in 4 vehicles had a late MOT in 2022. That meant they were more likely to fail, the owner would have to pay more for repairs, and there were unsafe vehicles on our roads.**

To improve people's chances of getting their MOT done in plenty of time, we introduced our free MOT reminder service in 2017. Four million people have signed up and they receive a text or email 4 weeks before the MOT is due, reminding them to book the test. But, based on customer feedback, we realised we could provide an even better service.

People told us they wanted to view and manage their reminders more easily. So we allowed users to see and amend their reminders online. They can now delete old MOT reminders for vehicles that have been sold or scrapped, or they can add a new vehicle.

We also improved the GOV.UK pages for our MOT history service. With around 2 million visits a month, the content now meets the accessibility needs of all users. It's easier than ever to view all MOT certificates for cars, vans and motorcycles issued after 2018, using the vehicle's V5C number.

**Helen Joy**  
Lead user researcher

“ We wanted to make life easier for our customers. Now they can get their MOT done on time, by easily checking which vehicles they have signed up to our MOT reminders service. ”



# We tackled fraud, dishonesty and negligence in MOT



**Over 30 million vehicles are put through an MOT every year. That contributes to Britain having some of the safest roads in the world. But, unfortunately, we sometimes have to investigate fraudulent MOT activity which often leads to prosecution.**

We're immensely proud of our colleagues who investigate wrongdoing in MOT and help to keep you safe on the road. This year, 2 cases have really stood out.

In Bristol, we found a tester having recorded 800 MOTs for cars he had not even seen! We found that he'd recorded having tested 1,300 cars over 5 months, when the average is 284. And car owners' details did not make sense, with some showing addresses nearly 300 miles from the garage.

He was given an 8-month suspended sentence, ordered to do 150 hours of unpaid work, 10 rehabilitation days and to pay £2250 towards prosecution costs. We also gave him the maximum ban of 5 years from MOT testing.

We successfully prosecuted a sales manager who was knowingly providing forged solicitors letters to secure MOT garage applications. A solicitor's letter is proof a business has all the rights it needs to operate.

This was our first ever prosecution for providing fraudulent solicitors' letters used as part of MOT garage applications. The salesman received an 18-month suspended sentence. He was also ordered to carry out 220 hours of unpaid work and pay our costs of £4,736.20.

**Janet Matthews**  
MOT Approvals Team Leader

“ MOT testers hold a position of trust. Some abuse that trust through fraud and by allowing potentially dangerous vehicles to remain on the road. DVSA will always act against those who abuse the MOT testing scheme for their own gain. ”

**Aliaslam Khan**  
Vehicle standards  
assessor



# We put self-driving cars in The Highway Code



**Heather Taylor-Price**  
Content designer

“ It feels amazing to help drivers with something this momentous. You learn so much in this job and you know you’re making an important difference. ”

It was a historical moment when we put guidance on self-driving cars in The Highway Code, almost a century after it was first published. Working with organisations like the Department for Transport and our publishers, The Stationery Office (TSO), we helped the Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles get the advice just right. We made this tricky subject clear and simple to follow.

The new guidance went live in July 2022. Self-driving vehicles are expected to appear within the driving careers of most people. So, we wanted The Highway Code and our other publications to reflect this. Learners will need to understand the automated assistance features they might come across, and how to use them safely.

Drivers need to know the difference between assistance and self-driving. They should understand when to use these features and that they need to stay alert enough to take back control. They’re designed to keep us safe, not to distract us or give us an extra thing to think about.

It’s a complex subject! But our Clearly DVSA plain English standard really came into its own, making this new Highway Code advice easy to understand and follow.

# We're serious about sustainability



**Ian Godley**  
Local driving test manager,  
Burton-upon-Trent

“ We're delighted to be one of the first test centres to go green. We're now using solar panels to generate electricity. We're also using only electricity for all hot water and heating. ”

The Greening Government Commitments (GGC) set out what the government and its partner organisations will do to reduce their environmental impacts from 2021 to 2025. The GGC includes 7 climate-focused pledges we must work towards.

## Decarbonising our estate

Last year, we began the process of decarbonising our multi-purpose test centres, with a pilot project at our Burton-upon-Trent centre.

Heating is one of DVSA's biggest contributors to carbon emissions, so we switched to an efficient electric system to heat the centre. We've also installed 27 kilowatt peak (kWp) roof mounted solar panels.

**We've seen the overall energy efficiency of the building improve by 30%. We achieved this by:**

- installing additional in-roof insulation
- replacing the gas boiler with an air source heat pump, giving a 200% energy efficiency improvement
- replacing existing lighting with LED units



**One of our commitments is to work towards producing net zero carbon emissions.**

That means we're reducing our emissions of greenhouse gases that cause climate change.

We've made the building brighter, airier and a more pleasant place to be, whilst reducing energy demand and impact to the environment and climate change.

## Reducing our emissions

We've also significantly reduced our environmental impact by cutting our vehicle emissions. In December 2022, we met the initial government target to make 25% of our vehicles ultra-low emissions. But this is just the start – we aim to have zero emission vehicles across our entire fleet of vehicles by 2027.

Our carbon emissions from travel were also much lower than we forecast. We had a 5% reduction target, but actually reduced emissions by 14%. This was due to things like reducing our travel miles and using more electric vehicles.

Everything we do to reduce environmental impact is better for us and better for the communities we work with.



# We've reinforced our policy for laden weight brake testing



**Russell Hall**  
Policy Manager for Vehicle Testing and Roadworthiness

**It's essential that the brakes on any vehicle work effectively, and it's especially important on a heavy goods vehicle (HGV). We've seen too many tragic accidents caused by ineffective brakes, where they could not cope with the vehicle's weight while carrying cargo (that is, its 'laden weight'). So operators must present HGVs for their annual test appropriately laden.**

In most circumstances a vehicle must be loaded during the test to at least 65% of its design axle weights. This can either be with its regular cargo or with ballast provided by the authorised testing facility. Then a DVSA vehicle standards assessor can accurately carry out the test, as it's a true reflection of the vehicle's braking capacity.

Since January, a VSA will refuse to test a vehicle which is not appropriately laden. The operator will lose their original test fee and have to present the vehicle or trailer again, correctly laden, and pay for a new test.

“ Reinforcing the message that vehicles should be appropriately laden during annual tests is significant in ensuring road safety. ”

**Zak Hubbard**  
Contact centre team leader



# We published our strategic plan for 2022 to 2025 and we set our Vision to 2030



**DVSA's previous 5-year strategy ended in 2022. So, it was time to evaluate what we'd achieved and to focus on what should come next.**

The world has moved on since we published our 2017 to 2022 strategy. Technological, social, and environmental changes at home and globally mean that we must evolve and do things differently. And our contribution to society is much more than road safety.

**We'll continue to organise our work into 3 themes that cover DVSA's services:**

- helping you through a lifetime of safe and sustainable journeys
- helping you keep your vehicle safe to drive
- protecting you from unsafe drivers and vehicles

**We've also committed to:**

- giving our customers simple, clear and fair services
- giving our DVSA colleagues purpose, professionalism and pride in what we do
- collaborating and having constructive conversations with our partners

**We've always done this to some degree, but the coming years will see DVSA focus on 3 types of work:**

- set standards, test and assess
- licence and accredit, regulate and enforce
- inform, educate and advise

**The country faces 5 important challenges. By the end of this decade, we need to have made progress against these challenges.**

**We need to:**

- make roads safer
- improve services for our customers
- make transport greener, cleaner and healthier
- harness the potential of technology and data
- grow and level up the economy

We must do things differently, more efficiently and better to make road transport safer, greener and healthier.

**So DVSA's new strapline is:  
Keeping Britain moving, safely and sustainably.**

We'll do this by making sure our services address those challenges. They should make a significant difference to society by being more efficient and simpler to use.

**For example, by 2030 we will:**

**Set standards, assess and test**

- adapt driving standards for vehicles with self-driving features
- make sure vehicle approval tests allow for new vehicle technology
- use data and technology to improve standards of MOT testing and driving instruction

**License and accredit, regulate and enforce**

- build trust - if we approve, accredit or regulate something, people will feel they can rely on it
- identify best-in-class businesses - for example, with Earned Recognition - and check them less often, freeing our resources
- benefit industry by using data and intelligence to target unfair competitors

**Inform, educate and advise**

- apply professional standards of behaviour change, communication and campaigning techniques
- expand our use of clear, plain language and helpful design, to support diverse people and businesses
- develop relationships with experts and organisations who can enhance our safe, clean and responsible road transport messages or reach wider audiences

**Liz Maddocks**

Business Strategy, Planning and Performance Manager

**“ Having a stated vision and strategy gives us confidence. We know that everything we plan takes us in the right direction, stems from customer need and has the backing of our partners. ”**



# Keeping your vehicle safe to drive

41,480,000  
MOT tests  
overseen

690,000 HGV  
tests carried out

93%  
of ATFs  
satisfied  
with our  
service

770,000 vehicle tests  
on the digital app

**Tracey Taylor**  
Digital, Data Technology  
and Security Hub Manager



# We launched the Accredited Trailer Training Scheme



**Jess Williams**  
Head of Vocational Policy

“ The industry-led scheme teaches motorists all they need to know to tow safely. We encourage all drivers to get training to keep themselves and others safe on the road. ”

A lack of driving tests during COVID-19 lockdowns contributed to a shortage in heavy goods vehicle (HGV) drivers. DVSA helped to address this by stopping the car trailer test. We still care deeply about towing safety, and it was not an easy decision. But it eased some of the pressure and allowed more examiners to do HGV testing.

We developed the Accredited Trailer Training Scheme with the National Register of LGV Instructors, Safe Towing Scheme and Skills for Logistics. These 3 bodies took on the responsibility of approving training organisations to become accredited training providers.

Launched to the industry through a series of webinars, it's a voluntary scheme for drivers, providing basic training and specific modules for different kinds of towing. To oversee it, DVSA, the Department for Transport and industry stakeholders formed the National Council for Accredited Trailer Training.

#### Over 4 webinars, we:

- explained the role of the National Council
- introduced the 3 accrediting bodies
- explained how trailer trainers can become accredited
- invited industry stakeholders to ask questions

Over 260 stakeholders joined us and 87% said they found the content useful, giving us great feedback.

We launched the scheme to drivers shortly afterwards, encouraging them to learn how to tow safely with an accredited trainer. There are now 88 accredited training providers, and they've trained around 300 drivers.

# Our new service for ATF customers received a 'flawless' rating



**Michala Reith**  
Digital product manager

We developed a new digital service to help authorised testing facility (ATF) customers manage their accounts. ATFs are commercial businesses where our vehicle standards assessors conduct MOT tests on large vehicles, like lorries and buses.

We named the service **Manage Your Vehicle Testing** (MyVT) and it replaced a laborious paper-based system. MyVT gives ATFs access to information through a single portal and allows them to monitor their account balance, top up their account and review past transactions.

Because we made MyVT available through GOV.UK (the official government website), it had to pass an assessment. Government Digital Service (GDS) looked at things like the service's levels of accessibility and functionality and found it to be 'flawless'!

This ringing endorsement gave us confidence that our work would make a significant difference to our customer service and satisfaction. And we'll continue to improve MyVT to meet with customer expectations.

“ The GDS assessment was critical as we could not launch nationally on GOV.UK without passing it. The glowing report is testimony to the work of many colleagues, including product managers and product specialists. ”

**Liz Wilford**  
Senior strategic  
communications  
manager

# Helping you through a lifetime of safe driving

**2,780,000**  
theory tests  
carried out

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16% more  
than in any  
previous year

**1,970,000** driving  
tests carried out

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10% more than in  
any previous year

**1,960,000**  
driver tests  
on the digital app

**96%** of theory test candidates  
happy with our service

# Our apprentices triumphed again!



We're committed to giving our people opportunities to keep learning. So we're enormously proud of Paul Denham, who's not only DVSA 'Apprentice of the Year'. but also the Department for Transport 'Apprentice of the Year'. It's the third year in a row that a DVSA colleague has held both titles!

Paul, a regional intelligence officer, found the perfect apprenticeship in intelligence analysis. He completed the apprenticeship with the excellent support of his line manager, Marianne Hyde. We formally recognised Marianne's leadership skills when we awarded her the title of 'Line Manager of the Year'.

Last year, 209 of our colleagues were studying for or completed an apprenticeship. We were able to offer bespoke apprenticeships that meet the unique needs and interests of our team members. The topics ranged from leadership and management to heavy vehicle maintenance.

**Paul Denham**  
Regional intelligence officer  
and DVSA Apprentice of  
the Year

“ Winning 'Apprentice of the Year' was a shock – especially as many previous winners have been much younger! I loved the course and I've since supported other colleagues in completing their own apprenticeships. ”

# We focused on diverse recruitment



Having a workforce that reflects the diversity of our customers and the public enables us to serve them more effectively and sympathetically. So we're working on our ability to attract and recruit people from diverse backgrounds.

## Disability Confident

We care deeply about making the most of the talents people with disabilities can bring to our workplace. Disability Confident is a Department for Work and Pensions accreditation, encouraging employers to think differently about disability. It challenges us to improve how we recruit, retain and develop people with disabilities. So we were extremely proud to achieve the highest status for this gold-standard award: 'Disability Confident Leader'.

## Diversity leads

We've introduced 10 diversity leads across every DVSA directorate. They work with our staff network groups and recruitment and inclusion specialists in our 'diversity forum' to improve the diversity of our workforce.

Having specific and detailed knowledge about their area of the business and its workforce, the diversity leads manage their directorate's actions to increase diversity. For example, our lead in finance, Ritah Alim, supported the team's outreach work in Wales to recruit more young people and people from ethnic minorities.

Alongside colleagues in the forum, our leads are contributing to the achievement of DVSA's diversity targets.



**Elisa Stanley**  
Inclusion manager;  
disability specialist

“ Having Disability Confident status means we can support our own disabled colleagues and attract the best talent. DVSA is now recognised as a great place to work, where everyone is treated equally and fairly. ”



# Our theory test service project won an IT award!



**Back in 2017 we asked ourselves the question: “can we set up our own in-house theory test service?” At the time we relied on a single supplier to run our service, but they did not provide the flexibility we needed.**

The answer to the question was “yes, but it won’t be easy”. So we set up the Future Theory Test Service (FTTS) project. Over 5 years, in partnership with Kainos and other suppliers, FTTS carried out user research, developed, built and tested the technology for a new integrated service. The scale and complexity of the project were immense, but in September 2022 we launched the new theory test service.

**Rob Davies, Alex Fiddes and Elizabeth Smith**  
FTTS project

**Our hard work paid off as we won the prestigious UK IT Industry Awards award for the ‘Best Public Sector IT project’ - beating 9 other finalists in this category!**

The awards celebrate and promote the organisations, projects, technologies and individuals who help shape the future of IT and digital society across all sectors. So this was a huge deal for DVSA, putting us on the map for the IT industry and making us an attractive employer.



**Rob Davies**, Theory Test Digital Orchestration Service Owner said:  
**“It was a privilege to win such a prestigious award on behalf of the team. Setting up a new theory test service was a major collaborative achievement, and now the project has the recognition it deserves”**

# Our leaders co-mentored with vehicle experts



**Nobody knows better than our customer-facing colleagues the type of day to day challenges our people are facing. And they, in turn, can improve their services and feelings about working for DVSA by connecting more across the business. So we developed a co-mentoring pilot, involving some of our vehicle standards assessors (VSAs) and corporate senior leaders (CSLs).**

The talent management team and Amanda Lewis-Miller, Head of Transformation for Vehicle Services, brought together 16 VSAs and 16 CSLs to share their experiences. The right people were paired, according to their area of the business and what they wanted to learn from a co-mentoring partner.

Over 3 sessions on Teams, the 8 pairs worked in a safe, non-judgemental environment. VSAs were able to give honest feedback, despite being several grades below their CSL. All the co-mentors shared stories about themselves and their work, creating trust and understanding across the business and developing policy ideas.

We ran a survey after the 3 sessions. It told us that 86% of the VSAs feel more connected to the wider agency or leadership team, compared with 40% at the beginning of the process. With such positive feedback, we're now looking to arrange more co-mentoring across DVSA.

**Russell Higgins**  
Talent specialist

“ This mentoring opportunity allowed colleagues to share knowledge, skills and experience. It helped them to grow, improve connections and broaden their understanding of other DVSA roles. ”

# We introduced a new Earned Recognition module



**Earned Recognition (ER) is a free, voluntary scheme for organisations that have held an operator licence for at least 2 years.**

Through ER, lorry and bus operators can prove their organisation meets all the necessary driver and vehicle standards. They regularly share performance data with us. And, because we monitor their activities, we rarely stop these operators' vehicles for inspection or visit their businesses – saving them time and money.

Adding to several commercial modules in the scheme, this year we introduced the Transport for London (TfL) module. It allows operators to bid for TfL contracts and similar contracts across the country – for things like construction, logistics, freight and passenger transport.

We set up the new module to break an industry monopoly and give more operators an opportunity to bid for contracts. They achieve this by passing an additional ER audit which examines their compliance.

Around 10% of the UK's heavy vehicle fleet now has ER accreditation. Over half of our members have 100 or fewer vehicles – some having only 1! So, we're helping operators of all sizes to reap the benefits of ER membership, while improving the safety of their drivers and vehicles.

**Phil Breen**  
Earned Recognition  
National Account Manager

“ This module means the safest and most compliant will win contracts. By stopping a monopoly, we've made being safe and compliant cost effective to an operator's business. ”

# We completed our IT systems' move in-house

**Emmanuel Edeoghon**  
Finance officer, and  
**Zhanna Kostoeva**  
Project support officer  
(apprentice)



For almost 20 years we'd held a contract with an external IT provider and many outdated systems needed to be transformed. So, 3 years ago, we decided to move all our systems in-house. We set up the ICE (IS2003 contract exit) programme to make this happen, and to provide modern solutions for all our colleague and customer needs.

This year, we completed the programme! We've transformed or migrated all the old systems with virtually no disruption to users.

**Behind the scenes, the technical complexity was enormous. For example:**

- we migrated i2, the intelligence analysis platform and automatic number plate recognition (ANPR: a police system set up for monitoring traffic)
- we developed an enterprise data hub, centralising our data and allowing us to focus on its quality and management
- commercial vehicle services (CVS) transformed the digital services used by our colleagues and provided new services for our customers

The ICE programme brought a huge number of systems under DVSA control. We've built in-house digital capability, while significantly reducing our costs. And our new capability will allow us to make future transformations and service improvements more easily.

**Mark Burlinson**  
Senior responsible owner  
of the ICE programme

“ We pulled together across the business to develop greatly improved digital services for our customers and our people. And now our IT is in-house, we can make future changes more quickly and efficiently. ”



# Protecting you from unsafe drivers and vehicles

4.6 million users of the MOT reminder service

76,000 licenced vehicle operators

60,739 operators with Earned Recognition

146,000 vehicle and driver checks

## We're protecting colleagues from abuse



**Cat Hobbs**  
Operations manager

“ Sadly, colleagues often face verbal abuse in the Customer Service Centre. But we feel better supported now we have the call recording tool. It provides solid evidence of abuse when we report a case to the police. ”

**Reports of colleague abuse had almost doubled since the pandemic. And it was particularly bad for colleagues working in the contact centre, driving examiners, vehicle standards assessors and on social media.**

So we set up a working group to explore how, why and when this abuse happened, and what to do about it. We've now introduced new ways to protect our people.

### Body-worn cameras

Enforcement colleagues have worn cameras since 2020, deterring abuse. Now 1,600 of our driving examiners wear a camera. We ask them to switch it on if they feel threatened, or to capture inappropriate behaviour. And we'll use this footage to prosecute offenders if necessary.

### Customer contact centre call recording

We've updated our contact centre technology to record calls and provide evidence of a verbal assault - with 2 cases currently under police investigation. We're also developing a procedure for investigating these assaults.

### The reporting process

To tackle abuse, and to push for the harshest penalties against offenders, we need to know it's happening. So we broadened our reporting process, encouraging colleagues to report all verbal and physical assaults, no matter how big or small.

**No one should have to put up with abuse at work. We've made some great progress in protecting our colleagues and we'll continue to improve their safety.**





# We showcased our work on TV



**James Lindley**  
Chief Media Officer

“ Collaborating with TV producers is a lot of work. But it gives us a fantastic opportunity to showcase the work of frontline colleagues to a big audience and present a deterrent to would-be offenders. ”

**We want the public to know about our work in protecting them from non-compliant operators and traders. And those baddies need to know that our enforcement team will find them! TV appearances this year have helped us to spread these messages.**

We worked with BBC News to film an interview with Marian Kitson, our Director of Enforcement. She explained how people pay others to take their test for them, but that DVSA is getting better at catching them. The BBC also added a section about scammers taking people's money with promises of providing a driving licence without a test.

The piece was used on BBC 1 Breakfast TV, BBC Radio 4 and BBC News website. We showed a huge audience that this criminal activity results in prosecution.

**We also featured in BBC 1's 'Defenders', in which they told the story of a prosecution we brought about in 2018.**

Humberside Police asked DVSA to attend a crash involving a 44-tonne transporter carrying a static caravan. It had crossed the central reservation on the M62 and smashed into a car carrying 2 people. They both died from their injuries.

The transporter was found to have defective brakes and the operator was found guilty of 2 counts of manslaughter by gross negligence. They were jailed for 15 years. The driver pleaded guilty and served a 6-year sentence.

# We shared 'You've Got This' with Reed theory test candidates



Before the pandemic, we gave all theory and driving test candidates a copy of award-winning FirstCar magazine. Our partners at FirstCar promoted DVSA messages about safe and responsible driving in a way that engaged with the audience. Including prizes, offers and celebrity interviews, young people related to the content and responded positively to its messages.

As restrictions began to lift, we developed a digital version candidates could link to from their test appointment letter. But take up was so low it was clear they wanted something else. Based on FirstCar's magazine's reader surveys and evidence from the **Ready to Pass?** campaign, we developed the **'You've Got This'** pack.

#### It includes:

- a leaflet about passing your test first time - echoing, and supporting Ready to Pass?
- a copy of FirstCar magazine
- information about our learning materials
- promotions, offers and the chance to win up to £50,000 of prizes

Our young design team did an amazing job of creating graphics to grab the audience, and we kept the content chatty.

Since its launch in summer 2022, we've shared around 200,000 copies of the pack with candidates at Reed theory test centres. Its customer satisfaction rate is an average of 90% and the feedback is great: "Anything to make me ready to pass my driving test is good in my eyes!"



**Rachel Graham**  
Creative designer

“ Engaging a young audience can be tricky. We used our sub brand's bright colours and diverse vector graphics to create content that is light-hearted, but not cheesy. ”

# South Wales Police commended our vehicle enforcement manager!



In September 2020 one of our vehicle enforcement managers, Gareth Prismick, was carrying out safety checks on lorries, buses and coaches at the roadside.

Gareth received a call over a police radio about a serious accident in the Rhondda Valley, where a bus had careered down a very steep hill into a quiet street. The bus crashed into and damaged 8 cars, 2 lorries and several telegraph poles. Two people were seriously injured and others were walking wounded.

He worked quickly to establish the cause of the crash. Witnesses described black smoke pouring out of the back of the bus at the time of the incident. Over the next few weeks, the bus underwent various tests, including testing parts at a fuel component centre.

Gareth's investigation found the cause of the crash to be mechanical failure. The smoke was caused by the bus automatically over-revving, meaning the driver could not control its acceleration. There was also hidden damage to the bus's braking system.

In November 2022, Gareth, a South Wales Police Commercial Vehicle Unit Officer and 2 fuel component testing engineers received commendations from South Wales police. They were awarded for their impressive efforts at the scene of the crash and in dealing with its aftermath.

**Gareth Prismick**  
Vehicle enforcement manager

“ I was honoured to accept the award. It would not have been possible without my colleagues, and this is a tribute to our outstanding teamwork and dedication. ”

# We introduced 'Storm'!

**Kevin Johnson**  
Driving examiner



**Andrea Davies**  
Customer Service Centre  
administrative officer

“ Storm has been fantastic for our customers and our colleagues. From it, we've built a clear picture of customer journeys and experiences. So we can provide a streamlined and efficient service, no matter how customers contact us. ”

Last year, we introduced a new, state-of-the-art customer services system (or 'platform') to give our people the tools they need to be even more customer focused.

The platform is called **Storm** and it uses the latest technology to help us understand our customers better. So we can now offer an experience that's more tailored to their needs.

Through Storm we can capture data from across our customer service channels and bring it together in one place. It's also allowed us to introduce natural language processing and to analyse speech. This way, we know what our customer needs, no matter which channel they use or who they speak to.

We're able to record calls, which helps us train our people, resolve complaints quickly and deal with any abuse our customer service colleagues face (see page 47).

Storm also gives us the opportunity to create new ways for customers to contact DVSA, making it easier and more convenient than ever. We now have automatic call answering, remote listening and a new knowledge management system. All these features improve the efficiency and quality of our customer service.



# We shared data with operators to improve vehicle roadworthiness



**Operators and drivers are responsible for taking their lorries out in a roadworthy condition. Regular maintenance is vital to keep vehicles, their drivers and other road users safe.**

Analysis of our data revealed that there was a 25% increase in prohibition notices 3 months after a heavy goods vehicle's (HGV) MOT, compared to after the first month. (We issue prohibition notices at the roadside when we find a fault with the driver or the vehicle and stop them from driving until the fault is fixed).

We also saw that more than 60% of these HGV prohibition defects could have been reported or fixed before or during that journey. It was clear that drivers and transport managers needed more information about carrying out their daily 'walk around' checks. In our flagship industry blog 'Moving On' and through social media channels, we shared advice for operators. We set out how to make the checks more consistent and act on fault and dashboard warnings.

That way, we explained, the vehicle would be safer, and the operator could avoid a time-wasting and potentially costly stoppage and prohibition notice. We also pointed operators towards the advice we publish about vehicle roadworthiness on GOV.UK.

**Kelly Hewitt**  
Head of Management Information and Data Science

“Analysing data helps us understand how lorry operators work. We can use the information we gather to share advice and put in place measures aimed at changing behaviour and attitudes.”

# We developed the frontline leadership programme



**In 2022 we gave all frontline leaders the opportunity to complete a bespoke leadership development programme.**

**Its aims were to:**

- build the level of high-quality leadership across DVSA
- support leaders to encourage a safe environment where we can speak freely
- give leaders the right skills and expertise to provide a positive environment for our customers

Qualified coaches and organisational psychologists delivered the programme virtually to 11 groups of DVSA colleagues. A total of 300 operational frontline leaders attended the programme.

**Wendy McQuillan**  
Local driving test manager

“I've used the programme's tools to lead change positively, as this is always a difficult area. And it was great to meet colleagues across the business, listening to different views on how to approach things.”

Over 7 months they completed 3 modules focusing on things like improving leadership skills, having difficult conversations and handling disputes. They also benefited from 2 peer learning groups and coaching sessions during the programme. Meeting in small groups, they explored challenges together and shared learning.

The programme gave everyone a wonderful opportunity to focus on their leadership skills and connect with peers from different teams across DVSA. The strong relationships they established and new ways of working have had a positive impact on our 300 frontline leaders.





**DVSA mental health  
first aiders**  
Adrian Jennings,  
Amelia Snelson,  
Emma Slevin,  
Julia Bennett



## We used high-res images to tackle driving test fraud



**Steve Holmes**  
Driver policy product owner

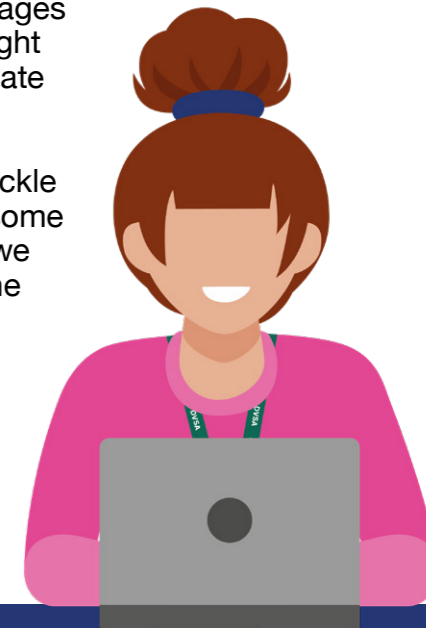
“ Working in partnership with DVLA, we’ve sent a powerful message to criminals. They understand that we’ll do all we can to stop them. ”

**Driving test fraud is a serious crime. It usually involves a candidate getting someone else to take their driving or theory test for them. This could be because they’re cutting corners and want to pass before they’re properly prepared for their test. If the fraudsters succeed, it puts someone who’s not ready to drive on our roads. We take this very seriously.**

Working with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), we introduced a new way to tackle driving test fraud. DVLA now sends us high resolution images of each candidate from when they applied for their provisional licence. Our driving examiners see the image on their tablet at the start of a test, allowing them to clearly identify the candidate and prevent any attempt at fraud.

Since we introduced high resolution images to the test in February 2023, we’ve caught over 90 people impersonating a candidate on a driving test.

We’re always looking at new ways to tackle fraud across the agency and we have some more initiatives to roll out in 2023. But we need to keep them secret for now so the fraudsters don’t know what our next steps will be!



# We're listening



We handled  
**1,002,049 calls**

We are handling **218,000 more calls** than we did in 21/22

We answered **548,545 calls in 30 seconds** (up from 187,955 in 21/22)



We answered  
**357,781 emails**

**263,845 were answered within 5 working days**

That means we answered an **additional 120,156 emails** within service level than we did in 21/22



We answered **20,162 social media enquiries**

**61% were answered within an hour**



We again achieved the standard for the **Customer Contact Association (CCA)** and **Customer Service Excellence (CSE)**

# What's next?



You've read on pages 30 and 31 that we recently published our new **Strategic Plan to 2025** and our **Vision to 2030**.

Over the coming months and years, we'll work on the plan's 192 commitments that will keep Britain moving safely and sustainably and move us towards our Vision. There are too many commitments to mention here, but the coming years will see us focus on 3 types of work. We will:

- **set standards, test and assess**
- **licence and accredit, regulate and enforce**
- **inform, educate and advise**

We'll achieve this through:



## Working together

Customers are at the centre of everything we do, and we'll work with our partners to bring expertise to every task and challenge. And importantly, we're proud to be an inclusive employer, valuing the range of perspectives a diverse and skilled workforce brings.

So we listened to customers, partners and colleagues to arrive at our cultural aspirations, and our customer and partner principles. In that spirit, 80 commitments in the plan set out how better service and working together will make sure everyone's efforts are a positive contribution.



## Supporting our work

In these economic times, our financial and efficiency plans and commercial strategy are crucial to meeting our 5 challenges. They are to:

- make roads safer
- improve services for our customers
- make transport greener, cleaner and healthier
- harness the potential of technology and data
- grow and level up the economy

We'll manage change to streamline processes and build in the flexibility to respond in fast-moving times. And we'll involve everyone who's impacted by a change in its management.



## Digital, data, technology and security

We want our service users to see regular, helpful changes based on their needs. And we want to make the needs for improvement clearer. Every element of each solution needs to be well built and fit seamlessly with the next one.


We'll attract digital talent and new skills. But we'll also grow our own talent and make DVSA somewhere that digital, data, technology and security professionals want to stay.



## Sustainability

We will not be in a position to promote positive environmental behaviour change if we do not live such values ourselves. So our plan includes commitments on:

- net zero
- travel
- buildings
- renewables
- waste
- procurement

**We face a lot of challenges, but we're excited for the future. And we're confident that colleagues will meet our commitments with the professionalism, pride and dedication you've read about in these pages.** 





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