



Traffic Commissioners
for Great Britain

Annual Report to the Secretary of State 2023-24



**Traffic Commissioners for Great Britain:
Annual Report to the Secretary of State
2023-2024**

(For the year ending 31 March 2024)

Annual report presented to the Secretary of State pursuant to Section 55 of the Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981.

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Foreword by the Senior Traffic Commissioner

As recorded elsewhere, this Annual Report seeks to provide an honest analysis of the challenges facing the Traffic Commissioner service. It draws on performance data but most importantly, offers an assessment of risks both practical and legal at the time of writing.

In July 2023 (and for the first time), Ministers issued statutory guidance to the STC under section 4D of the Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981¹. That letter acknowledged the essential work of traffic commissioners in championing safe, fair, and reliable passenger and goods transport. The Minister's letter provided useful confirmation that we are primarily a road safety tribunal. We have an important deterrent role around bus punctuality, but it falls to others to concentrate on the passenger experience.

The Minister's letter also offered a steer on Governance and how Commissioners might be deployed. However, the statutory position remains the same, with the jurisdiction made up of separate public bodies in the form of the individual Traffic Commissioners, requiring consensus. Nevertheless, in response to successive reviews and national challenges we have delivered short- and medium-term plans for the recovery and improvement of services. We are currently addressing the issues arising from the reorganisation of staff deployed to support us in our statutory functions.

As the DfT [figures on fatalities and injury](#) and the importance of transport to British business, shown [here on page 18](#) and [here](#), coupled with environmental targets, help to illustrate, this jurisdiction is too important to be allowed to fail. However, all too often, the requirements of the tribunal are an after-thought, even by those who support us. We have therefore reached a stage where there needs to be a long-term commitment to our future and a vision for its legal structure. I look forward to working with Departmental officials to map out the necessary steps and those which best allow for economic growth.

I take this opportunity to highlight the skills of my colleagues (both staff and Commissioners). It would be entirely wrong to overlook the combination of legal and practical knowledge, which is vital to the provision of licensing services and an effective regulatory tribunal. It is now 50 years since the introduction of safety protections² which require businesses to create, review and update their systems, based on what is reasonably practicable to control their own risks. As with effective safety management, good technology has to be combined with work systems based on a skilled workforce in well-designed jobs. The automation of processes must always be within established legal parameters. Increasingly, Commissioners must be expert in understanding the human factors involved in safety management, with the aim of fair and effective decision making. This will be integral to the training to be delivered to new colleagues in the coming year.

In the meantime, we can continue to publish manifestos for modernisation, although many efforts, such as simplified guides to operator licensing, are already well progressed. Guidance on decision-making will follow but the Statutory Documents represent the only current legal text in circulation. There is no scope to degrade them, particularly where there is not even a set of tribunal rules to replace them. They are the comprehensive means by which Traffic Commissioners ensure consistency of approach and transparent decision making. The work involved should be acknowledged in the support given to the STC post.

¹ [Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

² Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

Our purpose

The Traffic Commissioners for Great Britain (TCs) are independent regulators for the goods vehicle and public service vehicle (PSV) industries and their professional drivers.

Collectively, we act as a non-departmental tribunal and licensing authority, sponsored by the Department for Transport (DfT). Our mission is to promote safe, fair, efficient and reliable passenger and goods transport through effective licensing and regulation of the commercial vehicle industries.

Our shared vision is for traffic commissioners to be recognised by our stakeholders as providing proportionate, accountable, consistent and transparent decision-making - a model of independent regulation.

What we do

We work to keep Great Britain's roads safe by licensing and regulating the commercial vehicle industries. With DfT, its agencies, the police and industry stakeholders we support the compliant, licensed operation of goods vehicles and PSVs. We do this by:

- publishing guidance and directions regarding the operator licensing regime and tribunal activities
- holding regulatory hearings to examine evidence and take proportionate action to maintain safety standards and promote fair competition in the industry
- holding conduct hearings to examine evidence and take proportionate action to ensure professional driving standards are upheld
- targeting tribunal resources so that the most serious cases are dealt with quickly and fairly
- delivering efficient, digital licensing services to responsible new applicants and compliant operators
- liaising with other regulatory bodies to identify and share knowledge around non-compliance
- educating and communicating with industry about the value of compliance and the licensing regime

Traffic commissioners seek to reduce regulatory burdens and support compliant businesses. The following statistics are unable to record the instances where the advice or assistance provided by individual traffic commissioners has resulted in improved compliance and road safety.

Overview: regulation & industry

Domestic freight (UK registered vehicles)

- c81% of domestic freight moved by road³
- 175 billion tonne-kilometres moved³

International freight (UK registered vehicles)

- 4 billion tonne-kilometres moved⁴



Local bus services

- 3.7 billion local bus service passenger journeys⁵
- 1.2 billion miles operated by local buses⁵



Employment

- 1.62 million people employed in Transport and Storage⁶

Our licensing work⁷

- 66,821 valid goods vehicle operator licences
- 373,318 goods vehicles authorised
- 5,451 valid PSV operator licences
- 88,664 passenger vehicles authorised
- 11,383 operator licence applications and variations determined
- 11,332 local bus registrations processed



Our regulatory work⁷

- 1,283 public inquiries determined
- 156 preliminary hearings held
- 41 Senior Team Leader (STL) interviews held
- 15,584 vocational driver cases closed



³ Department for Transport, [Transport Statistics 2023](#)

⁴ Department for Transport, [International road freight activity](#) data for 2022

⁵ Department for Transport, [Annual bus statistics: year ending March 2023](#)

⁶ Office for National Statistics, [EMP13: Employment by industry](#), 14 May 2024

⁷ Figures represent the period 2023-24 as set out in the statistical section of this report.

Performance against our strategic objectives for 2023-25

At this stage of the Traffic Commissioner Strategic Objectives 2023-25⁸, progress has been made towards our key measures and overarching aims:

- To deliver a modern and effective operator licensing regime that ensures operators are fit to hold a licence whilst minimising the regulatory burden on the compliant.
- To promote and develop a safe road transport industry, which delivers compliance, fair competition and protects the environment.

This Annual Report draws heavily on the National Audit Office ‘principles of a good Annual Report’⁹ and seeks to provide a frank and honest analysis of the challenges facing the jurisdiction whilst drawing on data, performance measures and a qualified assessment of legal risk. The development of the content and format of these Annual Reports is evidence of our published commitment to transparency, as set out in the Traffic Commissioners’ Publication Scheme¹⁰.

We are in a position to report on what has been achieved against our priorities and how we sought to influence them, as follows:

Delivering a better service

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

What was achieved:

DVSA Service Level Agreement (SLA) and Target Operating Model

The Traffic Commissioners continue to work with the DVSA, as the agency tasked with resourcing the Office of the Traffic Commissioner (OTC) in support of our statutory duties. There is an SLA¹¹ with DVSA which sets out the standards for the services to be delivered in our names. That is mainly through staff deployed to the OTC, and who have earned delegated functions. For the sake of transparency, we would like to see DVSA adopt external reporting measures which encompass all the services provided to us, particularly in relation to the listing of safety critical cases within the 12 weeks identified.

The Traffic Commissioners set a service standard to determine goods and standard public service vehicle applications within an average of 35 working days. The figures for the 2023/24 reporting year are at 32 days for both goods and PSV respectively.

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/traffic-commissioners-strategic-objectives-for-2023-to-2025>

⁹ <https://www.nao.org.uk/insights/good-practice-in-annual-reports>

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/traffic-commissioners/about/publication-scheme>

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/traffic-commissioners-service-level-agreement-sla-with-dvsa>

Last year we reported¹² on DVSA's plans to restructure the OTC by implementing its Target Operating Model. In the absence of project management and the type of role-mapping and other sequencing identified in its previous internal reviews, its proposed timeline proved to be overly ambitious. As at the date of writing this report, the new operating model has still not been fully implemented. The main contributing factor cited is a difficulty in the retention and recruitment of OTC staff. An important element in the retention of Commissioners and OTC staff is to recognise their value and expertise.

Digital Improvements

Continuing support has also been provided on the future developments to the Vehicle Operator Licensing system. The service is now recognised by the Central Digital and Data Office as in the top 75 services across Government¹³. As the service continues to be developed, the needs of both external and internal users must be considered so that it continues to deliver on the priorities of all users and the statutory requirements set by Parliament.

In the next 12 months we will be digitalising the process operators need to follow every five years to legally continue their licence. We want as many operators as possible to enjoy the benefits of faster processing times, reducing the burden and providing more security. All operators have been sent an email setting out those intentions to prepare them for a wholly digital service for licence continuations and we look forward to progressing this during 2024.

We are increasingly using new technologies to shape modern practices. There are a number of changes and challenges within the regulatory system which need to be overcome so that industry can continue to deliver a safe and reliable service which benefits the public. In developing the jurisdiction, it is important that those decisions are evidence based and call on available legal expertise.

Commissioners have used their experience and judge craft to advise on the procurement of an off the shelf digital bundling facility. That project began towards the end of 2022. Trials have now progressed to a position where represented parties can start to trial accessing and uploading documents via the digital platform. The overriding objective continues to be one of fairness. The management of cases is a judicial function.

A number of challenges remain to enable any user to access a copy of the digital papers on the day of a hearing and upload their own evidence to the digital platform. We will continue to monitor the implementation to ensure that it delivers benefits to both tribunal users and a more efficient use of limited tribunal resources. It has to be acknowledged that the new system is not integrated with the existing Vehicle Operator Licensing system.

Resources had to be redeployed to implement the digital bundle facility and to cover core business functions. This has delayed the delivery of key tasks, such as combined staff Operating Instructions. Those should have been in place prior to the new OTC structure, to allow compliance teams to function. Traffic Commissioners are concerned that any continued delay does not impact on the service to users and road safety. We will continue to advise DVSA on the delivery of the model so that the OTC is equipped to realise key targets suggested by Government.

¹² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/traffic-commissioners-annual-report-2022-to-2023>

¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/roadmap-for-digital-and-data-2022-to-2025>

Fees

The fee structure is outside of the control of Traffic Commissioners. As per Treasury Guidance, it is essential to accurately calculate the cost of providing individual services, so that fees for those services are charged at cost. That will require the level of accounting promised through the Service Level Agreement. It is widely recognised by industry representatives that the service can only be maintained and improved through a review of fees which covers the cost for all services provided. The Commissioners believe it is important that costs should be proportionate and reflect the size of the business and the level of demand put on the service. This was raised again in the Department for Transport's Function Review¹⁴ and the DVSA and DfT have carried out some work to move this forward. We hope to see a clear timeline for change by the end of the reporting period in March 2025.

Transparency

As part of our commitment to transparency and service delivery the Traffic Commissioners recently authorised an updated protocol for the handling of all complaints involving Commissioners below the threshold where Schedule 2 of the Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981 might be engaged. Creation of meaningful arrangements which resemble the processes available to the Judicial Office requires much effort and time to replicate, often without the equivalent resource.

Legislative Change

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

What was achieved:

Making the case for change

The Commissioners will continue to offer their specialist knowledge and expertise to assist the Department for Transport in the development of policies and legislation. A Policy Forum has been convened to meet annually in response to a suggestion in the Function Review, but if we are to optimise the efficiency of the jurisdiction and realise the benefits of the previous reviews, it is important that recommendations for change are now taken forward.

An example of this is the need to reform legislation pertaining to the grant of new Operating Centres for goods operators, which was identified in the 2015 Triennial Review¹⁵. The Department agreed that there was a case to improve the efficiency of the current process in relation to advertising requirements, removing significant costs to industry and supporting growth. The Review also recommended that a set of formal tribunal rules be introduced to formalise the processes leading to and at Public Inquiry. The Department recognised that tribunal rules were in place for most judicial processes. There was also the potential to impose costs, similar to those in other civil proceedings, and that this would help to regulate the approach to hearings which unnecessarily wastes resource. The Department also committed to examining interim licences so that new bus and coach business could realise commercial opportunities sooner, to the benefit of passengers and to help meet commitments to the environment. It was initially suggested that measures would be introduced in 2018.

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/review-of-traffic-commissioners-for-great-britain-function>

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/triennial-review-of-traffic-commissioners-implementation-plan>

Consultations on tribunal rules and PSV interims eventually concluded in 2020¹⁶, to be referenced again in last year's Function Review, without any progress having been made. We would like to see this work progressed and a lessening of the burden on the responsible operators.

It is important that the existing licensing regime is on a firmer footing. The establishment of the forum has not prevented last minute calls on the limited resources of the jurisdiction. We repeat the request that officials recognise the need to engage with our small policy team far earlier whenever the knowledge and experience of Traffic Commissioners is required.

Autonomous Vehicles

Traffic Commissioners contributed to the consultations undertaken by the Law Commission, working with the Department for Transport and industry around the regulation required for these new vehicles.

Autonomous vehicle trials continue to be successful, and the powers are now in place for a potential future role for Traffic Commissioners in regulating such vehicles. This was confirmed by the Minister in the House of Lords during the debate on [the Automated Vehicles Bill](#). This legislation will implement the recommendations of the four-year review carried out by the Law Commissions of England & Wales and Scotland to set the legal framework for the safe deployment of self-driving vehicles across Great Britain. The Commissioners will continue to monitor developments from the Department for Transport to see how autonomous vehicle will be regulated.

Electric Vehicles

The introduction of electric vehicles into the fleets of both PSV and goods vehicle operators continues. The Traffic Commissioners note with interest a recent study from the RAC Foundation in which a randomly selected sample of Type 2 public chargers across Britain were analysed. The study indicated that the majority of these chargers do not have an adequate level of coverage from all four mobile phone network providers to guarantee they can be activated all of the time. In Britain, outside of London, just a third (33.4%) of the Type 2 chargers analysed were in locations where there is acceptable all-network 4G coverage. The road haulage industry has been identified as having a critical role to play in reaching Net Zero across the UK by 2050. All new heavy goods vehicles in the UK will be zero-emission by 2040 and the Department for Transport has announced investment across 4 projects to deliver some of these vehicles and new charging infrastructure. We await the detail of those proposals and will attempt to accommodate any relevant changes within the licensing and tribunal regime.

Connecting Communities

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

What was achieved:

Changes to Local Bus Services

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/public-service-vehicle-operator-licensing-and-tribunal-rules-legislative-changes>

The Traffic Commissioners responded at speed following the introduction of the National Bus Strategy¹⁷. This has involved working with operators, local authorities and the Department for Transport on the implementation of enhanced partnership schemes and franchising with the aim of improving local bus services across Great Britain.

Inevitably, following the changes set out below, our statistics on local bus service registrations no longer represents the complete picture across England, as more local authorities look to take on the responsibility for registering routes in their areas. At present, three local authorities have assumed responsibility for the registration of services from the Traffic Commissioners under enhanced partnership schemes.

The transition to franchising in Greater Manchester has continued to progress with the second of three tranches completed towards the end of this financial year. Two more authorities have now published their intention to implement a franchising scheme, with Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and West Yorkshire Combined Authority looking to start in 2026 and 2027 respectively. We look forward to working with those authorities to ensure a smooth transition. We have also had contact with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority who is considering which future model for the provision of bus services might be taken forward.

We have continued to engage with Scottish Government on legislative changes arising from the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019¹⁸. Some secondary legislation was recently laid, additional substantive regulations and guidance is expected throughout this calendar year to give full effect to the powers. The Welsh Government has also recently published a roadmap¹⁹ for bus reform allowing franchising arrangements to be brought forward across Wales. We look forward to working with the devolved administrations to progress their visions for improved bus services.

Improving Our Guidance

To assist operators in their understanding of the new registration framework, we have updated the guidance available for England and Wales²⁰. A draft for updated guidance applicable to Scottish operators has been completed and will likely be published and then reviewed as the legal position changes. In response to the reorganisation of OTC, we have taken action to support the administrative arrangements for the processing of bus registrations for Scotland to ensure that there is improved resilience and that applications are dealt with under the relevant legislation. We intend to move forward with the review of bus punctuality but recognise that external factors might further delay the completion of this work.

Bus Open Data

In the meantime, we have worked with DfT, KPMG and DVSA on moving operators towards compliance with the requirements of Bus Open Data. Part of this work has involved circulating advice to operators, sending targeted communications and holding regulatory interviews when further input is required. As more operators become compliant with the legal requirements, this will improve the transparency of services which will help support an increased use of public transport. It is still the case that reliable and accessible public transport will lead to carbon reduction, improving the lives of local residents and contributing to greater sustainability.

¹⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-back-better>

¹⁸ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/public-transport/buses/transport-scotland-act-2019-and-bus-services>

¹⁹ <https://www.gov.wales/bus-reform-wales-our-roadmap-franchising>

²⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/a-guide-to-registering-and-operating-local-bus-services-in-england-and-wales>

Targeted Regulation

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

What was achieved:

Statutory Guidance and Statutory Directions

The Senior Traffic Commissioner has continued to regularly review the Statutory Guidance and Statutory Directions to ensure that they remain relevant as the industry develops alongside case law from the Upper Tribunal. The Traffic Commissioners launched two public consultations last year and have already started engaging with stakeholders informally on future initiatives to ensure that they receive the necessary input and challenge at the appropriate time. When the Statutory Documents are updated, the changes are communicated to operators using a targeted messaging service to identify those changes most relevant with a view to improving compliance across the industry. Recent changes range from those required following a change in the law, such as rehabilitation periods and PSV accessibility, to codifying key judgments of the Upper Tribunal, including the implicit power to accept undertakings on matters outside of section 13C(2) to (6) of the Goods Vehicles (Licensing of Operators) Act 1995 and compliance of the Statutory Documents with the Regulators' Code.

Assisting Enforcement Agencies to Target Activity

The Traffic Commissioners continue to work closely with various enforcement agencies with the aim of improving the evidence made available to them by those investigating. For instance, we have worked with the Commercial Vehicle Units and have contributed to the Roads Policing Review, currently being undertaken by the DfT and Home Office. Whilst this work is progressed, we have listened to feedback from the police to assist them in lodging statutory objections against applications on conduct grounds. The form and associated guidance have been republished so that the police can more easily raise appropriate objections if there are concerns about criminality or non-compliance. This should better enable Traffic Commissioners to carry out their statutory gatekeeping role. Data sharing agreements have also been developed with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and other agencies. We sought to further expand the agreement for data sharing with the NPCC and are awaiting their proposals. We look forward to the improvements to road user safety from the Roads Policing Review being introduced across Great Britain and an increase in statutory objections from the police.

Traffic Commissioners have engaged with the Football Policing Unit in Great Britain. Through speaking at conferences and liaising with forces, a better understanding has been developed on the role of the Traffic Commissioners regarding PSV transport to and from matches. This has led to an improvement in the knowledge amongst Dedicated Football Officers which has helped make sure football fans are transported safely to and from matches.

Helping Businesses to be Compliant

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

What was achieved:

Communication Initiatives

New communication campaigns and educational resources have been developed and released to service users, particularly targeting those who do not have access to relevant information or compliance advice. A campaign has been launched to help operators identified as requiring assistance to improve their standards so that they can avoid public inquiry and the potential loss of their licence. Additionally, we utilised a new publishing format in order to provide industry with assistance on the importance of compliance with Periods of Grace following high-profile decisions.

Following the publication of updated guidance for goods operators last year²¹, the guidance for PSV operators has now been completed²². We would like to thank those stakeholders who assisted in the drafting to ensure that the guidance is suitable for the intended audience.

Transport Managers for Light Goods Vehicle Operators

Operators of light goods vehicles which currently rely upon a transport manager with Acquired Rights will soon need to appoint a suitability qualified transport manager when those Rights expire in law on 20 May 2025. As proposed in last year's Annual Report, we have now started a targeted messaging campaign to the small number of operators and transport managers impacted by this to provide them with as much notice to consider their options.

Improving Access to Relevant Compliance Information

To further assist industry to find the most relevant and up to date information, the Traffic Commissioners have published a document collection titled "Key Traffic Commissioner Resources"²³ which provides users with links to key resources that Traffic Commissioners regularly refer to, this is available on our GOV.UK homepage.

The Commissioners continue to balance regulatory work with education at national and regional levels. We have a continuing commitment to engagement with regulated businesses at speaking events, seeking new opportunities whilst delivering at those events with the most impact in improving compliance.

Future working

Working with Stakeholders

Each Traffic Commissioner is appointed by the Secretary of State as a non-departmental tribunal public body, sponsored by the DfT. We rely on a wide range of support to enable us to carry out our statutory functions. Responsibility for the provision of administrative support staff

²¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/goods-vehicle-operator-licensing-guide>

²² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/public-service-vehicle-operator-licensing-guide>

²³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/key-traffic-commissioner-resources>

to the Traffic Commissioners is delegated to the DVSA by the Secretary of State and undertaken by staff deployed to the Office of the Traffic Commissioner. As a result, the Traffic Commissioners are a major customer of the DVSA and we look forward to contributing to the DVSA review 2024 to ensure that the appropriate support is provided to the regulated industries.

Traffic Commissioners continue to support policy officials in central Government and the devolved administrations, but are highly reliant on the support provided by the sponsorship team in the Department for Transport and the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency. They are responsible for delivering services delivered to the Traffic Commissioners and indirectly for promoting judicial independence and maintaining confidence in the rule of law.

The risks arising from the administrative placement of OTC within DVSA's enforcement directorate is once again in the public domain following the publication of the Function Review. The position has not been assisted by the suggestion in the terms of reference for the review of DVSA, that it is responsible for the licensing of operators. It is important that there be clarity: Traffic Commissioners are independent, and they determine those members of staff to whom they might delegate limited statutory functions.

After years of review and feedback on Traffic Commissioners, there is now a need for the sponsorship and support functions to also mature²⁴. Individual operators and other parties to proceedings are entitled to a professional decision-making process, which is fair and meets the expectations of the common law. The lessons to be learned from the High Court in *R (on the application of Brooke and another) v Parole Board and another*; *R (on the application of Murphy) v Parole Board and another* [2008] EWCA Civ 29²⁵, continue to be highly relevant.

Traffic Commissioner Recruitment and Induction

A significant amount of time has had to be redeployed to the recruitment and induction of salaried Traffic Commissioners, three fee-paid and two (fixed-term) Deputy Traffic Commissioners. National stakeholders have expressed concern at the early departure of respected colleagues and whether the requirements of the role are being downplayed. The Senior President of Tribunals has referred to the "One Judiciary"²⁶ strategy to improve equality, diversity, and inclusion. Recruitment for Traffic Commissioners competes with exercises run by the Judicial Appointments Commission and Board in the respective nations.

It is correct to stress the skills and legal knowledge required to be an effective tribunal. Those competencies inform the delivery and management of the Appraisal Scheme, based on an established induction programme, annual training, and regular circulars to the Bench. Consistency in approach requires adherence to the STC's Statutory Guidance and Statutory Directions²⁷. The impact of what is in effect the only comprehensive textbook for this jurisdiction is often overlooked by the uninitiated.

When modernising the service provided to the Traffic Commissioners, officials must remember the purpose of the regulatory system established under statute. It is important that they take on board the legal expertise and experience of the Traffic Commissioners. The Traffic Commissioners hope that the DVSA will acknowledge the pressures on the OTC teams

²⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/arms-length-body-sponsorship-code-of-good-practice>

²⁵ <https://www.bailii.org/cgi-bin/format.cgi?doc=/ew/cases/EWCA/Civ/2008/29.html>

²⁶ <https://www.judiciary.uk/pursuing-one-judiciary-by-the-lord-chancellor-the-lord-chief-justice-of-england-and-wales-and-the-senior-president-of-tribunals>

²⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/senior-traffic-commissioners-statutory-guidance-and-statutory-directions>

providing support. The impact of its reorganisation of the OTC is becoming increasingly evident in the extended time taken for listing hearings and in the processing of driver conduct cases. Those concerns have been raised directly with the Department.

Costs

Across the regulatory world it is normally a given that the user pays a fair amount for the service they receive. As the DfT continues to look at fee structures around the goods vehicle and PSV licencing regime, the Traffic Commissioners would like to stress that this should be the case in their jurisdiction as well (especially with the changes noted above). We have committed as part of our Strategic Objectives to continue to press for this change and obtain a clear timeline for change by the end of the objective period.

Summaries from England, Scotland and Wales

As in previous years we have collated the collective observations of the Traffic Commissioners into defined narrative sections. Adopting this format, the following sections again combine those themes and observations of the Commissioners.

Traffic Commissioners for England

Sarah Bell, Tim Blackmore, Miles Dorrington, Kevin Rooney, Richard Turfitt

Year-in-Review

This year has seen a return to what could be considered ‘normal’ after the Covid-19 pandemic period. Economic factors and changes in skills requirements continue to challenge operators as they look to secure their place in the industry. The Commissioners have again attempted to identify common themes arising at hearings from which other operators might learn from in order to avoid regulatory action.

Driver and Transport Manager CPCs

The CPC exams for both drivers and transport managers were already a point of interest for the Traffic Commissioners, as can be seen in our report from last year, but this year has brought them more sharply into focus following the consultation undertaken by DfT on Driver CPC changes. The Commissioners have been in discussions with stakeholders regarding the content of the courses and are lending their expertise wherever they can.

In the case of transport managers, it is becoming increasingly evident that, with new technology and differing ways of working, the role has changed. It is important for transport managers, particularly those who have been in the role for some time, to receive up-to-date training on managing the responsibilities they now have. Traffic Commissioners have seen a number that have failed in their duties despite holding a CPC qualification, such as in [this case](#) and a case of [home to school transport](#) which came before the Traffic Commissioner in the West of England.

Transport managers now need to be able to understand the implications of the technical readout they receive from tachographs and preventative maintenance inspections, as well as the employment status of their drivers. Traffic Commissioners continue to highlight that there is a difference between obtaining a paper qualification and the ability to actually exercise effective and continuous management of a transport operation, which is the statutory requirement of a transport manager. The Commissioners would like to see the transport manager CPC reviewed in the same way as drivers to ensure that it is fit for managing the modernisation of vehicles.

Drivers and continuous control

During this reporting period, the Traffic Commissioners have continued to encounter operators who are unable to properly control their drivers due to the way they chose to engage them. The Upper Tribunal decided the leading case of [T/2019/054 Bridgestep Ltd](#) on the use of “self-employed” drivers under contract for services; whether such contracts were consistent with the operator’s responsibilities under the operator’s licence and whether the transport manager had continuous and effective management of transport operations without the right to direct and control its drivers back in 2020.

[This notable public inquiry](#) considered a sham driver agency arrangement. In his decision, the Traffic Commissioner noted that some operators still wrongly believe that anti-avoidance legislation does not apply and that HMRC cannot pursue workers, agents, and the operator. Whilst the Traffic Commissioners cannot rule on tax arrangements, operators and transport managers need to be able to demonstrate that they have sufficient arrangements in place to enable them to control their drivers.

Traffic Commissioners will also be concerned as a matter of fair competition that workers are being treated in compliance with the law. For example, whether the correct level of National Living Wage is being paid and that any agency workers who have completed the 12-week qualifying period are given equal treatment as those employed directly.

Maintenance

Last year, the Commissioners commented that the availability of timely and good maintenance was in short supply. Many maintenance providers were struggling to find qualified mechanics and fitters. This problem has not abated and [recent cases](#) serve to highlight this. Operators should be aware of the changes to the DVSA Guide to Maintaining Roadworthiness from April 2025 in that a laden roller brake test or electronic braking performance monitoring system (EBPMS) will be the only accepted methods to assess brake performance.

Drivers' hours

The Commissioners have seen an increasing number of cases regarding drivers' hours this year. They have included cases of driving without using tachograph cards, altering tachograph records and using the card of another driver to avoid resting. An extreme example can be found [here](#), which the Traffic Commissioner for the West Midlands described as the worst case he had ever presided over concerning a person who was both the director, transport manager and driver.

Non-compliance with drivers' hours is normally the tip of the iceberg and can demonstrate that there are systemic issues with systems as the Traffic Commissioner for the South East and Metropolitan traffic area found out in [this case](#). One of the operator's drivers was found to be using two cards and avoiding rest breaks, further compliance checks then uncovered that an unauthorised operating centre was being used and a breach of trust by using vehicles registered to another company which had since been dissolved. The operator's licence was revoked.

It has almost been 25 years since the then Transport Tribunal ruled that adherence to the rules relating to drivers' hours is fundamental to road safety. Industry should be in no doubt that the commercial advantage gained by engaging in such practices and the threat to road safety from tiredness cannot be tolerated.

Periods of Grace

A recurring theme this year has involved Periods of Grace and the misunderstandings that many operators have about what they are and how to use them. There have been numerous cases of operators failing to understand the consequences of not taking the appropriate actions following the grant of a Period of Grace. A case which illustrates the problem is this [example](#), where a fleet of recycling lorries was taken off the road because their licence had to be revoked after a Period of Grace expired.

The Senior Traffic Commissioner issued [advice](#) shortly after to prevent others falling into this situation. In this guidance he laid out the nature of Periods of Grace, how they are obtained and the need to effectively manage dates. We would like all operators to consider this guidance so that they are aware of the facilities available which will enable them to take control of managing their operator's licence. Operators must be in no doubt when seeking a Period of Grace as to the risks if they do not adhere to the time limits.

We have seen a continuing trend of transport managers leaving businesses with little to no notice, putting operators in a position where they need to apply for a Period of Grace. Operators should be mindful when agreeing contracts with transport managers to build in a notice period which enables them to notify the Traffic Commissioner in good time. This will help operators ensure there is contingency whilst they source an alternative and allow for the situation to be addressed before the need for a Period of Grace arising.

Dishonesty

The Commissioners hear a relatively small number of cases each year which involve fraudulent activity or dishonesty. The Transport Tribunal explained: *“trust is one of the foundation stones of operator licensing”*. In those few cases where the issues arise, the public can expect us to take robust deterrent action and to send a message to others that we will not tolerate operators who undermine the level playing field. In [one such case](#), the Traffic Commissioner for the West of England disqualified both the operator and transport manager after it was found records had been fraudulently created. The Upper Tribunal upheld the [decision of the Traffic Commissioner for the East of England](#) to revoke and disqualify an operator and transport manager after an operator sought to mislead him. He found that the transport manager's signature had been copied onto a response to DVSA to make it look as though the transport manager was actively engaged.

Equally serious are cases where an operator lends their licence authority to another person, sometimes called fronting. An operator's licence authorises the holder to legally operate vehicles and trailers, this document clearly states that it is “Not Transferable”. Despite this there have been a number of recent cases where operators have ignored this and given an unfair commercial advantage to an unlicensed entity. The Traffic Commissioner for the West Midlands saw in [this case](#) an operator lend their licence to another company and the Deputy Traffic Commissioner for the East of England heard [this case](#) where the operator had allowed a revoked operator to continue running a vehicle using their licence, in both cases the licences were revoked.

Public Transport

The Traffic Commissioners continue to recognise the important role that buses play in taking children to school, commuters to work and the public to the shops and leisure activities. Availability of public transport is important, particularly for the 22% of households without a car²⁸. We are encouraged to see the continued upward trend of bus passenger journeys which according to DfT figures show an increase by 19.3% in the year to March 2023²⁹.

Throughout 2023-24, local authorities across the country have been assessing whether they will be moving forward with plans for either bus franchising or enhanced partnerships, with some taking over the registration of buses in their areas from the Traffic Commissioners. The OTC has had engagement with 70 out of the 75 relevant authorities and several have made

²⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-travel-survey-2022>

²⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-bus-statistics-year-ending-march-2023>

significant moves. The Combined Authority in the West Midlands fully transferred to their Enhanced Partnerships at the beginning of the reporting year with the West of England Combined Authority close behind in May 2023. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority has recently become the first operational franchise and both Liverpool and West Yorkshire have indicated that they will be pursuing this course.

The Commissioners note that some of the activities resulting from the Bus Services Act 2017 are starting to come to fruition. It is important that operators and local authorities continue good partnership arrangements and lines of communication so that the benefits identified in the Bus Service Improvement Plans can be delivered to bus users. We would also like to see operators making the best use of the numerous communication channels now available to them with their customers. In some cases, road closures and utility works are known far in advance and so those using buses should be given as much notice as possible so that they can plan their journey.

Traffic Commissioner for Scotland

Claire Gilmore

By the time this report is published, I will have left my role as Traffic Commissioner for Scotland after five extremely busy and rewarding years in post. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to serve as Commissioner, leading the regulation of industries which contribute so much to the UK and Scottish economies.

During my tenure, the team here in Scotland achieved much. The pandemic gave rise to considerable challenges for operators, and we worked tirelessly to support them, ensuring vital services were sustained and road safety protected. We adapted quickly and made best use of our resources, from successfully piloting the very first 'online' driver conduct hearings dealing with high-risk drivers, to designing a streamlined, yet legally robust, process for bus registration which ensured lifeline services could continue to run.

As businesses returned to normal, I continued to collaborate with Commissioner colleagues and other stakeholders across GB seeking to ensure that our regulatory regime remained agile and fit for purpose. We were delighted to welcome a new Deputy Traffic Commissioner, Kenneth Young, to the team in Scotland this year which will further support the progression of cases dealing with seriously and serially non-complaint operators.

I have been fortunate during my tenure to have enjoyed the support of many from across our industries. My thanks go firstly to colleagues in DVSA, DfT, Transport Scotland, CPT, RHA, Logistics UK, ATCO for their assistance. I am also extremely grateful to Commissioner colleagues, and to my long serving deputy Hugh Olson. Their help and assistance over the years has been invaluable. The biggest thanks must however go to OTC staff, in Edinburgh, Leeds and the Traffic Commissioner's corporate office, who have been unstinting in their support of me. Without them, much of my work would simply not have been possible.

Traffic Commissioner for Wales

Victoria Davies

In my contribution last year, I was very pleased to report on the staffing and support arrangements that were finally in place, and which had improved service delivery and the accessibility of justice for all communities in Wales, with bilingual staff based in both my offices in Wales - North (Caernarfon) and South (Pontypridd).

Regrettably, a re-structure of OTC during this reporting year (referred to elsewhere in this report) has left me with no dedicated bilingual staff supporting me in Wales. The Secretary of State and the Welsh Ministers have long agreed the importance of providing locally based staff who are fluent in both English and Welsh to support me in the exercise of my functions. The risk of losing that support in the GB wide re-structure was evident to me and a concern that I raised with DVSA and Welsh Government officials.

As at the end of March 2024, transitional arrangements are in place with Welsh Hearing centre cases being managed and clerked by staff from the OTC Golborne office in the Northwest of England. That is clearly far from ideal, but I am promised four bilingual staff members who will be based in Wales, and a recruitment campaign has been launched. I have previously referred to difficulties DVSA experienced in recruiting bilingual staff and I am pleased that OTC officials have reached out to the Welsh Government and the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office to assist with this latest campaign.

I am committed to improving the services offered to Welsh language speakers when they engage with me and my office and have encouraged OTC officials to engage with the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office in that regard. I have asked OTC officials to draft a voluntary Welsh Language Scheme, based on the guidelines issued by the Welsh Language Commissioner, which will sit alongside and supplement the DVSA Scheme. Work on that Scheme will continue over the coming months.

I have continued to liaise with DVSA enforcement managers this year and to raise my concern about the reduction in the number of compliance cases being reported to me in Wales which has, inevitably, resulted in a reduction in hearing numbers. DVSA enforcement action is critical to both road safety and fair competition and the importance of the work carried out by DVSA examiners in Wales cannot be overstated.

Engagement and cooperation with other transport stakeholders in Wales, including the DVSA, the police, the Welsh Government, trade associations and operators is a key feature of my work. An important multi agency forum which I am pleased to be part of is the Wales Road Transport Advisory Group. This year we have met and discussed various road safety concerns, including the introduction of the new 20mph default speed limit in Wales and the impact it has had on operators here. I have also met separately with Welsh Government officials, the Director of CPT Cymru and the Chair of CaBAC to discuss their concerns about that change, specifically its impact on operators of local bus services and timetables. I also participated in a roundtable meeting with the Deputy Minister for Climate Change in Wales and transport stakeholders to discuss the Welsh Government Freight Strategy.

As the lead Traffic Commissioner on driver issues, it was a pleasure to be invited to sit on the Microlise Driver of the Year Judging Panel in February. My role as Traffic Commissioner regularly brings me into contact with vocational drivers who appear before me at driver conduct hearings, but not usually with drivers who excel at what they do. It was an honour and privilege

to judge the shortlisted drivers who demonstrate outstanding levels of professionalism and dedication. Those drivers thoroughly deserve to be recognised and rewarded as unsung heroes of the transport industry.

The Traffic Commissioner Function Review report published earlier this year recommended improved engagement between DfT and the Welsh Government, specifically in the context of my functions. I am pleased that this is now being progressed by the DfT sponsorship team and welcome the opportunity to enhance that shared understanding in the coming months. I have continued to work closely with the Welsh Government this year. Their proposals for legislative reform in relation to bus franchising and registrations in Wales will, inevitably, impact on my statutory functions and I anticipate further engagement with officials as work on the Bill progresses.

I am looking forward to the year ahead and to working with all industry stakeholders in Wales to promote road safety and fair competition.

Acknowledgements

Last year we recognised the hard work and expertise demonstrated by individual members of staff in licensing, compliance, training, information access, policy, and management teams across the service. We are sad to have lost 26 staff since April 2023.

We again take this opportunity to recognise their valuable contribution. Their loss places many of the gains in average processing times at risk, and during DVSA's reorganisation of our offices. It is appropriate that we record that the caseworker role is one which takes time to learn, but the public benefits directly from skilled gatekeepers who are able to process applications. In that way transport businesses can meet the needs of passengers and consumers, whilst we ensure that dangerous and criminal elements are excluded. The swift and thorough preparation of tribunal cases protects responsible operators and goes to the safety of our communities.

In that context, the loss of two salaried Traffic Commissioners, has been keenly felt. After years of experience as a Crown Prosecutor we were lucky to be joined by Gerallt Evans, just before the pandemic. He adapted quickly, making sage contributions to the new processes put in place during lock down and in our subsequent recovery. He subsequently led on improvements in quality assurance. Whilst we are delighted that he stayed as a Deputy Traffic Commissioner, it is sad that his full-time tenure only lasted 4 years.

Claire Gilmore brought that rare combination to the jurisdiction, a qualified solicitor and engineer. It is primarily her legal skills which attracted plaudits from across Scotland and on news of her resignation. As with, Gerallt, Claire was instrumental in our response to and recovery from the Covid restrictions. In her 5 years in post, she transformed the tribunal in Scotland.

Both are exceptional lawyers, whose skill and previous experience proved vital not only to their tribunal duties but to the development of the jurisdiction. By way of example, Gerallt used his experience to assist DVSA on how it might implement assurance processes as a foundation for prosecution authority. Claire used her experiences in the Office of the Ethical Standards Commissioner in Scotland to modernise our complaints and grievance policies, and to introduce robust data oversight. We thank them for their substantial contribution to this jurisdiction and by it, road safety in Great Britain. We have also said goodbye to Simon Evans who was appointed some 16 years ago as a Deputy Traffic Commissioner. We were very grateful when he opted to stay in that position after stepping down as Traffic Commissioner in the North West and wish him well for a very happy retirement.

They will be missed as colleagues on the TC Board and will be hard acts to follow. It is vital that we have the right people with the right judicial skills in the role. It is equally important that we retain qualified decision makers. Their departure has resulted in considerable pressure on those remaining. We are therefore pleased to welcome two additional Deputy Traffic Commissioners: Kenneth Young, who takes up his new appointment, in Scotland, and Mark Hinchliffe who returns after a period away.

Risk Assurance Statement

Transparency Data: Information relating to the salaries, spending, gifts and hospitality of traffic commissioners is published on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

This Risk Assurance Statement reflects the maturity of our governance arrangements, pending any future restructuring of the tribunal Chamber. A differently constituted Audit and Risk sub-committee previously identified the need for more formal reporting processes whereby higher-level risks are communicated to the sponsoring Department and that facility has now also been utilised.

The Audit & Risk sub-committee is not currently quorate due to issues with recruitment and retention. This was one of the risks escalated to DfT in December 2023. The Public Accounts Committee³⁰ recently reported that the average time to hire civil servants across all departments in 2022 was 99 calendar days, with security clearance taking up to an additional 171 calendar days. Those statistics use advertisement as the start date. In the case of this jurisdiction, departing Traffic Commissioners often give in excess of three months of notice. Despite the warning in last year's report (of the need to better understand the barriers to recruitment including the time taken to appointment and the disparity with other tribunals), in each of the three last recruitment rounds for salaried Commissioners, the recruitment process has not commenced before the previous incumbent has ceased work.

The absence of a full-time Traffic Commissioner presents a real risk to the listing of safety-related cases and to the efficient determination of applications. A key question is why the Department has been unable to retain Traffic Commissioners beyond 4 or 5 years. Why might a highly competent lawyer be more attracted by another post?

The Minister's letter of July 2023 recognised the very heavy workloads. The Traffic Commissioner Board has issued advice to support existing Commissioners on how to address excessive hours, but control measures lie with the Department. The promised judicial development has yet to arrive. The amount of time taken to train new Commissioners needs to be appreciated. That must also be based on a far better understanding of what the role entails and the skills required. Attendance by a senior sponsor to shadow a Traffic Commissioner is essential to understanding the role.

The Minister also touched on the need for Traffic Commissioners and Deputies to feel safe in conducting official duties. That extends to the staff who are deployed to the Office of the Traffic Commissioner. The abuse of public-facing workers has attracted a higher profile recently. We regret that those concerns extend to both Commissioners and OTC staff with physical incidents and on-line abuse during the reporting period. Risk assessments and control measures need to be updated far quicker if the Minister's commitment is to be met.

Overall oversight of operational risk continues to be exercised by the Traffic Commissioner Board, with designated Traffic Commissioner leads in areas such as Quality Assurance and Data. As before, the Traffic Commissioners' risk culture is defined, communicated, and promoted through the Governance Policy Guidance and is subject to periodic assessment by the Board's Audit and Risk subcommittee, utilising established audit and reporting methods.

³⁰ [Civil service workforce: Recruitment, pay and performance management - Committee of Public Accounts \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk)

Service levels are intended to dictate the delivery of functions on our behalf. The assurance processes are intended to ensure that the quality of service is also maintained. DVSA's Target Operating Model for the Office of the Traffic Commissioner was first proposed to Traffic Commissioners in September 2022 as a means of increasing resilience. The reorganisation has realised some of the Traffic Commissioners' concerns, most notably in areas of driver conduct, hearing centre resilience, and bus registrations in Scotland. As was recorded in the statement last year, change of this nature inevitably presents a risk to the short-term delivery of the service, but it has directly impacted on staff retention and the quality of case work. It has been particularly difficult for the tribunal. The metrics on the listing of cases against the service levels speak for themselves. Whilst the exercise has still not been completed, there are lessons to be learned by DVSA.

The procurement of interpreters and transcription services also remains a challenge, too often leading to delays in hearings or resources being diverted from the tribunal function to check transcripts. The problem appears to emanate from a lack of controls in the DVSA contract. It is one example of where there is not sufficient accountability.

It remains the case that five of the nine tribunal centres do not currently meet the agreed tribunal specification, mostly due to accessibility. The responsibility currently lies with DVSA, but begs the question whether efficiencies first identified in the Leggatt review³¹ should be pursued at pace. That review of course concluded that "citizen versus state" tribunals were not sufficiently independent from the departments that sponsored them and recommended that the tribunals should be independent legal bodies. That in essence captures the other risk, which was escalated to the Department. The Function Review correctly pointed to the administrative decision to place OTC within direct line management of the DVSA Enforcement Directorate. It makes authority to prosecute under the Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981, all the more sensitive. Whilst DVSA cannot lawfully dictate the delegation of Traffic Commissioner functions either directly or indirectly, there is no equivalent of the Courts Act 2003 which protects delegated functions. The Function Review report emphasises the need to address the perception of this tribunal.

We continue to benefit from established data management processes, with a highly effective Data Protection Manager now in place. The arrangements to support the independent data controllers are frequently reviewed. The robustness of the data arrangements was demonstrated through the formal responses to requests for an internal review of data decisions. Through our contact with the Information Commissioner's Office, we have identified further actions to support the effective conduct of the Traffic Commissioner functions and which mirror the arrangements with other public bodies sponsored by DfT. It is important that the DfT provide support through the continued provision of a Data Protection Officer (DPO). It remains a legal requirement to have a nominated DPO and the current arrangement is effective and cost efficient.

³¹ Andrew Peter Leggatt, *Tribunals for Users: One System, One Service : Report of the Review of Tribunals*, (Stationery Office, 2001)

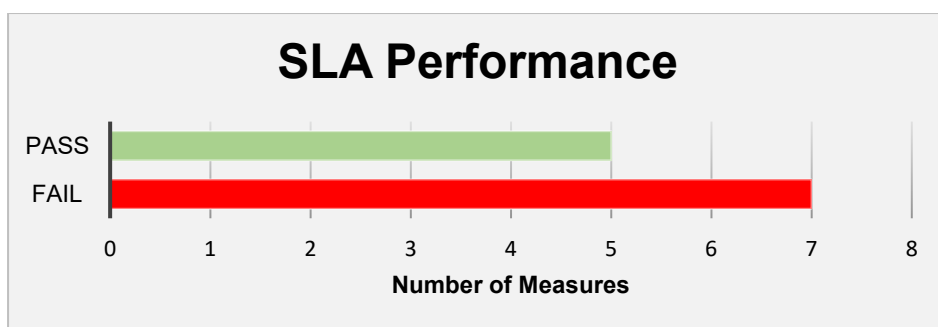
Provision of Support Services to the Traffic Commissioners

Paragraph 7 of Schedule 2 of the Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981 provides that: “Subject to the approval of the Treasury, the Secretary of State may appoint such persons to act as officers and servants of a traffic commissioner as he considers appropriate”. This support is necessary in order to carry out our functions and is provided by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and those DVSA staff who are deployed to the Office of the Traffic Commissioner.

It is important that the services the Traffic Commissioners may reasonably expect is set out and agreed by the relevant parties. The agreed level of services that the DVSA provide to the Traffic Commissioners, and by extension the regulated industries, is contained in a Service Level Agreement (SLA) that is regularly reviewed.

Performance Measures

The SLA sets out 12 separate measures covering all aspects of our functions that the OTC will record and report on to the Traffic Commissioner Board. The table below shows the performance over the reporting year.



We report quarterly performance on three of these measures due to their importance to those that we regulate.

Measure	Target	Performance
Public Inquiries to be listed to a date that is within 12 weeks of the decision to call the PI	95%	78%
Average processing time to determine applications for goods vehicle operator licences (or to provide interim authority) where a PI or Preliminary Hearing is not held	35 days	32 days
Average processing time to determine applications for PSV operator licences where a PI or Preliminary Hearing is not held	35 days	32 days

The SLA also covers a number of other important commitments to ensure the effective running of the support services. These include:

- ensuring that the legal requirement for the Traffic Commissioners' independence is recognised and respected;

- defining service level standards to the Traffic Commissioners and their corresponding agreed service levels, in order to deliver a service to operators and applicants that can be relied upon as part of their business planning;
- assisting OTC staff by clearly defining their roles and responsibilities and avoiding a conflict of interest due to their employment by DVSA;
- setting out how data is handled and stored providing sufficient data assurance to Traffic Commissioners;
- assisting in the management of resources across the Office of the Traffic Commissioner;
- providing clearly defined targets that will deliver improved budget setting and Traffic Commissioner Strategic Objectives.

In addition to the administrative support provided by the OTC staff the SLA details the support functions that are provided by the wider DVSA. These include the provision of IT, data handling, audit, risk and performance reporting and Estates and Facilities.

As part of the commitment to Estates and Facilities, DVSA should carry out regular risk assessments of all accommodation for TCs and review them not more than every two years and in line with its statutory duties. Suitability of the accommodation, in particular with regard to the tribunal functions of the Traffic Commissioners, is to be taken into account. This includes a requirement for business continuity plans for each location, to be reviewed every six months.

The SLA recognises that operator fees pay for the services provided, and in exchange DVSA will ensure that OTC has a workforce of the right size and shape, with the right skills to provide the following services now and in the future.

The DfT Accounting Officer is responsible for agreeing the budget required to fund the Traffic Commissioners' regulatory activity with DVSA in January of each year. It is also essential for Traffic Commissioners to be provided with an accurate record of not only expenditure by DVSA but also the actual cost of the services provided to Traffic Commissioners, where this is not clear from the expenditure alone. A report containing this information for all schemes relevant to the income from the licensing fees and expenditure on the work of the Traffic Commissioners should be provided by DVSA at each Traffic Commissioner Board. A representative of DfT will sit on the quarterly OTC fees group and provide assurances to the Traffic Commissioner Board that appropriate financial processes are being followed.

The Head of the OTC is to provide a report each year to the Traffic Commissioners detailing the full year performance against each of the support functions identified above *and* delivery against the specific performance measures. The report is to detail relevant information on remedial work as required.

All the services that are detailed in the Service Level Agreement should be delivered to allow effective support to be provided to the Traffic Commissioners. We would advise the Department for Transport to monitor delivery against the agreed Service Level Agreement.

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Please note that some of the statistics set out in the tables are compiled manually by OTC staff. This can result in the potential for minor inaccuracies occurring within the statistics. To minimise the potential for inaccuracies the figures have been subject to a validation exercise undertaken by OTC managers who have provided the Traffic Commissioners with their assurance that the figures are accurate to the best of their knowledge.

The statistics are a record of work undertaken in the 2023-24 reporting year, care should be taken when trying to compare data across reporting years. For example, an application may have been received in the last reporting year and then determined in this reporting year. Similarly, tables reporting the number of public inquiries held may not equal the sum of the columns which set out the regulatory action taken, this is because more than one action may be taken against an operator. In some cases, it is not possible to use the figures contained in some of the tables as a direct comparison to previous years due to a number of factors.

In particular, we draw attention to the following explanatory notes:

- Table 1: Goods vehicle operators – Licences continued and in issue. From the 2022-23 annual report the figures include Standard International licences issued to operators of Light Goods Vehicles.
- Table 2: Goods vehicle operators – Numbers of specified vehicles on licences. From the 2022-23 annual report the figures include Standard International licences issued to operators of Light Goods Vehicles.

UK Licence for the Community replaced Community Licences in December 2020. Operators are also issued with an office copy and certified copies which have to be carried in vehicles on international journeys.

- Tables 3 and 4: Goods vehicle operators. The headings for columns C and D on Table 3 alongside columns E and F on Table 4 have been amended from “number of applications processed” to “number of applications determined” to make it clearer that an application is counted once it has been decided.
- Table 6: Goods vehicle operators – Action taken at public inquiry for non-compliance.

The number of public inquiries held may not equal the sum of the columns which set out the regulatory action taken, this is because more than one action may be taken against an operator.

- Table 7: Goods vehicle operators – Results of unopposed new and variation applications heard at public inquiry. This table only shows applications that were heard at public inquiry. Some applications are heard at preliminary hearings, but these are not included in the figures in this table. Table 3 shows the total number of applications determined.
- Table 10: Public service vehicle operators – Applications for new licences and to vary existing licences. The figures for withdrawn applications included those treated as withdrawn because the fee had not been paid.

The heading for columns C and D have been amended from “number of applications processed” to “number of applications determined” to make it clearer that an application is counted once it has been decided.

- Table 11: Public service vehicle operators – Results of applications heard at public inquiry. This table only shows applications heard at public inquiry. Some applications are heard at preliminary hearings, but these are not included in the figures in this tables. Table 10 shows the total number of applications determined.
- Table 13 and 14: Local Bus Service Registrations It is not possible to draw direct comparisons across different reporting years for the following reasons.

Prior to 2019-20 the total number of live local bus service registrations included an element of double-counting as services running in multiple local authority areas were recorded multiple times, e.g. a service running between the West Midlands and Staffordshire was presented as two services when it should have been counted as a single service. This has now been rectified.

The implementation of the Bus Open Data requirements has identified a number of services that, although registered with a Traffic Commissioner, have not operated for some time. The OTC has carried out a data cleansing exercise to remove these services. This exercise has also identified services across Great Britain that were registered to entities that no longer held the correct licences.

In addition, the Bus Services Act 2017 enables local authorities to take on the responsibility for registering local bus service registrations under an Enhanced Partnership Scheme or franchising scheme. The registration data for services operated wholly within an applicable scheme are now held by the local authority and have been removed from these data tables.

- Table 15: Number of standard, large and community bus permits issued – this table relates to permits issued under section 19 and section 22 of the Transport Act 1985.

The numbers of permits issued by local authorities or designated bodies cannot be verified. A small number of permit issuing bodies have been unable to provide returns, or have provided incomplete returns to the Traffic Commissioners. The figures provided for permits issued by the Traffic Commissioners are correct.

Data is also available on all valid, refused and revoked permits issued by the Traffic Commissioners within the last 5 years, this publication is updated on a weekly basis and is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/section-19-section-19-large-and-section-22-permits-issued-under-the-transport-act-1985>

- Table 16: Public service vehicle operators – Action taken at public inquiry for non-compliance (Under the Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981). The number of public inquiries held may not equal the sum of the columns which set out the regulatory action taken, this is because more than one action may be taken against an operator.
- Table 17: Local bus services – Action taken against operators (under the Transport Act 1985 and 2000). The figures include all cases heard under section 26 of the Transport Act 1985 and section 155 of the Transport Act 2000. In addition to bus reliability this also includes cases related to The Public Service Vehicles (Open Data) (England) Regulations 2020.

In Scotland a penalty is imposed under Section 39 of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001.

- Table 19: Appeals to the Upper Tribunal - the number of appeals heard cannot be directly compared to the number of appeals made in the year, as some of the appeals heard will have been made in the previous year, and some may still be pending.
- Table 20: Large Goods Vehicle and Passenger Carrying Vehicle driver conduct cases – Action against drivers. The figures for military drivers were first reported for the reporting year 2019-20.
- Table 21: Applications for the return of impounded vehicles - the number of applications received and determined may be greater than the number of vehicles impounded as more than one application may be made for the return of a vehicle where there is a dispute regarding the ownership of a vehicle.

TABLE 1: GOODS VEHICLE OPERATORS - LICENCES CONTINUED AND IN ISSUE

	Type of Licence			Total number of licences in issue	Total continuations sought	Continuations not sought	
	Year	Restricted	Standard National				Standard International
Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	5984	4405	2372	12761	1877	372
	2022-23	6212	4537	2451	13200	1758	418
North Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	4771	3820	1422	10013	1682	302
	2022-23	4940	3983	1425	10348	1533	347
North Western Traffic Area	2023-24	4678	3173	1104	8955	1397	304
	2022-23	4853	3295	1100	9248	1392	347
South Eastern and Metropolitan Traffic Area	2023-24	4065	2407	1235	7707	1239	289
	2022-23	4253	2490	1279	8022	1099	314
West Midlands Traffic Area	2023-24	3786	2784	1131	7701	1170	230
	2022-23	3909	2897	1134	7940	1111	252
Western Traffic Area	2023-24	5078	3345	1372	9795	1524	328
	2022-23	5314	3452	1396	10162	1462	353
Scotland	2023-24	2489	2306	594	5389	893	154
	2022-23	2545	2354	591	5490	855	176
Wales	2023-24	2452	1624	424	4500	690	180
	2022-23	2514	1670	428	4612	713	185
Total	2023-24	33303	23864	9654	66821	10472	2159
	2022-23	34540	24678	9804	69022	9923	2392

See explanatory notes at the introduction of the statistics section at page 28 onwards of the Annual Report

TABLE 2: GOODS VEHICLE OPERATORS - NUMBERS OF SPECIFIED VEHICLES ON LICENCES

	Specified vehicles by type of licence			Total number of specified vehicles	Certified copies of UK Licence for the Community	
	Year	Restricted	Standard National			Standard International
Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	16722	36465	21056	74243	8414
	2022-23	17310	37548	20765	75623	8111
North Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	13341	31014	14161	58516	5805
	2022-23	13777	31454	14638	59869	5765
North Western Traffic Area	2023-24	13128	26309	12258	51695	4543
	2022-23	13319	26904	12204	52427	4528
South Eastern and Metropolitan Traffic Area	2023-24	12269	20286	10154	42709	5115
	2022-23	12534	20542	10050	43126	5190
West Midlands Traffic Area	2023-24	9636	21056	10196	40888	3517
	2022-23	9979	21534	10247	41760	3570
Western Traffic Area	2023-24	13303	28440	11753	53496	4887
	2022-23	13617	28569	11773	53959	4920
Scotland	2023-24	6230	19966	5707	31903	2415
	2022-23	6344	20174	5593	32111	2491
Wales	2023-24	5564	11095	3209	19868	1567
	2022-23	5641	11205	3360	20206	1527
Total	2023-24	90193	194631	88494	373318	36263
	2022-23	92521	197930	88630	379081	36102

See explanatory notes at the introduction of the statistics section at page 28 onwards of the Annual Report

TABLE 3: GOODS VEHICLE OPERATORS - APPLICATIONS FOR NEW LICENCES AND TO VARY EXISTING LICENCES

	Year	Number of applications determined		Number of licences issued in full		Number of applications refused		Number of applications withdrawn		Number of licences issued with environmental restrictions	
		New licences	Publishable variations	New licences	Publishable variations	New licences	Publishable variations	New licences	Publishable variations	New licences	Publishable variations
Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	952	1511	785	1460	142	44	85	64	21	19
	2022-23	1395	1626	1188	1554	192	72	128	85	17	15
North Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	611	933	535	910	61	19	47	34	10	10
	2022-23	770	1088	666	1056	100	32	53	65	0	3
North Western Traffic Area	2023-24	596	715	515	690	63	20	49	36	7	8
	2022-23	686	949	586	906	93	43	53	56	10	7
South Eastern and Metropolitan Traffic Area	2023-24	594	863	502	827	77	28	61	45	27	25
	2022-23	774	913	659	873	107	40	78	55	21	10
West Midlands Traffic Area	2023-24	572	743	483	714	74	22	41	32	8	14
	2022-23	739	819	645	799	88	20	42	37	3	4
Western Traffic Area	2023-24	601	994	534	955	54	30	47	53	22	34
	2022-23	835	1088	736	1064	98	24	74	65	15	17
Scotland	2023-24	334	456	295	442	34	13	26	8	2	3
	2022-23	336	490	296	473	39	17	26	23	3	2
Wales	2023-24	244	334	222	318	16	13	20	18	1	2
	2022-23	338	375	295	358	37	17	18	15	2	1
Total	2023-24	4504	6549	3871	6316	521	189	376	290	98	115
	2022-23	5873	7348	5071	7083	754	265	472	401	71	59

See explanatory notes at the introduction of the statistics section at page 28 onwards of the Annual Report

TABLE 4: GOODS VEHICLE OPERATORS - RESULTS OF OPPOSED APPLICATIONS FOR NEW LICENCES AND FOR PUBLISHABLE VARIATIONS TO LICENCES

	Year	Number of applications received		Number of applications determined		Number of applications opposed		Opposed applications issued in full		Opposed applications issued with restrictions	
		New licences	Publishable variations	New licences	Publishable variations	New licences	Publishable variations	New licences	Publishable variations	New licences	Publishable variations
Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	1043	1580	952	1511	9	13	0	3	3	6
	2022-23	1338	1614	1395	1626	23	13	2	5	8	5
North Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	700	958	611	933	4	2	0	2	1	0
	2022-23	716	1133	770	1088	6	7	4	4	0	1
North Western Traffic Area	2023-24	676	748	596	715	5	5	1	2	1	1
	2022-23	692	935	686	949	7	5	2	1	2	2
South Eastern and Metropolitan Traffic Area	2023-24	675	922	594	863	25	20	2	3	12	8
	2022-23	779	938	774	913	26	21	5	5	9	4
West Midlands Traffic Area	2023-24	637	770	572	743	3	8	1	3	0	2
	2022-23	711	818	739	819	3	7	1	5	2	2
Western Traffic Area	2023-24	633	1036	601	994	8	20	1	7	4	5
	2022-23	854	1122	835	1088	25	21	6	5	8	8
Scotland	2023-24	371	455	334	456	4	2	2	0	1	1
	2022-23	342	494	336	490	7	4	2	2	3	0
Wales	2023-24	276	362	244	334	0	3	0	1	0	1
	2022-23	326	360	338	375	3	3	0	2	2	0
Total	2023-24	5011	6831	4504	6549	58	73	7	21	22	24
	2022-23	5758	7414	5873	7348	100	81	22	29	34	22

TABLE 4 (CONTINUED)							
	Opposed applications refused			Opposed applications withdrawn		Number of applications heard at Public Inquiry	
	Year	New licences	Publishable variations	New licences	Publishable variations	New licences	Publishable variations
Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	2	2	2	2	0	1
	2022-23	3	0	9	0	0	4
North Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	2	0	1	0	0	0
	2022-23	1	1	1	1	0	0
North Western Traffic Area	2023-24	0	1	3	0	0	1
	2022-23	0	1	2	1	0	1
South Eastern and Metropolitan Traffic Area	2023-24	3	1	8	7	1	2
	2022-23	9	4	4	7	1	1
West Midlands Traffic Area	2023-24	0	1	2	2	0	0
	2022-23	0	0	0	1	0	0
Western Traffic Area	2023-24	1	5	2	2	0	3
	2022-23	9	1	2	4	2	0
Scotland	2023-24	1	0	0	0	0	0
	2022-23	0	0	3	0	0	0
Wales	2023-24	0	0	0	1	0	0
	2022-23	0	0	0	2	0	0
Total	2023-24	9	10	18	14	1	7
	2022-23	22	7	21	16	3	6

See explanatory notes at the introduction of the statistics section at page 28 onwards of the Annual Report

TABLE 5: GOODS VEHICLE OPERATORS - COMPLAINTS AGAINST EXISTING OPERATING CENTRES

	Year	Total licences reviewed where complaints received	Number called to public inquiry	Continued without change	Continued with new restrictions	Removal of operating centre
Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	3	1	3	0	0
	2022-23	8	2	3	5	1
North Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	0	0	0	0	0
	2022-23	2	0	2	0	0
North Western Traffic Area	2023-24	3	0	0	2	1
	2022-23	4	0	2	2	0
South Eastern and Metropolitan Traffic Area	2023-24	1	0	0	1	0
	2022-23	3	0	1	2	0
West Midlands Traffic Area	2023-24	1	0	0	0	0
	2022-23	2	0	0	2	0
Western Traffic Area	2023-24	4	0	0	3	1
	2022-23	11	0	2	9	0
Scotland	2023-24	0	0	0	0	0
	2022-23	1	0	0	1	0
Wales	2023-24	0	0	0	0	0
	2022-23	0	0	0	0	0
Total	2023-24	12	1	3	6	2
	2022-23	31	2	10	21	1

TABLE 6: GOODS VEHICLE OPERATORS - ACTION TAKEN AT PUBLIC INQUIRY FOR NON-COMPLIANCE

	Year	Number of public inquiries completed	Licence revocations	Licence suspensions	Curtailed or conditions imposed	Notification of formal warning	Disqualification of licence holder under Section 28	Disqualification of transport manager	No action taken
Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	161	64	16	46	35	27	29	7
	2022-23	127	58	19	33	55	18	22	13
North Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	118	35	5	45	21	10	18	8
	2022-23	135	32	8	50	37	7	15	11
North Western Traffic Area	2023-24	70	14	2	19	38	3	1	0
	2022-23	113	27	9	31	64	10	7	8
South Eastern and Metropolitan Traffic Area	2023-24	132	45	20	46	16	12	13	7
	2022-23	159	60	32	37	24	10	14	12
West Midlands Traffic Area	2023-24	150	52	21	50	31	12	22	5
	2022-23	103	39	19	22	26	8	18	7
Western Traffic Area	2023-24	127	32	4	28	48	3	14	15
	2022-23	123	35	11	22	64	0	16	3
Scotland	2023-24	46	9	4	12	17	3	5	4
	2022-23	58	19	0	12	28	3	3	4
Wales	2023-24	38	10	7	13	8	0	6	0
	2022-23	43	10	10	9	12	1	4	2
Total	2023-24	842	261	79	259	214	70	108	46
	2022-23	861	280	108	216	310	57	99	60

See explanatory notes at the introduction of the statistics section at page 28 onwards of the Annual Report

TABLE 7: GOODS VEHICLE OPERATORS - RESULTS OF UNOPPOSED NEW AND VARIATION APPLICATIONS HEARD AT PUBLIC INQUIRY

	Year	Number of applications determined at public inquiry		Applications granted as applied for		Applications granted in part		Applications granted with conditions		Applications refused		Applications withdrawn	
		New licences	Publishable variations	New licences	Publishable variations	New licences	Publishable variations	New licences	Publishable variations	New licences	Publishable variations	New licences	Publishable variations
Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	47	26	28	10	2	1	0	0	14	9	3	6
	2022-23	54	29	31	11	1	3	1	1	16	8	5	6
North Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	28	15	12	4	2	0	0	0	11	10	3	1
	2022-23	58	22	24	7	4	5	1	0	26	10	3	0
North Western Traffic Area	2023-24	26	11	15	5	3	2	0	0	6	2	2	2
	2022-23	16	22	10	11	0	5	0	0	6	4	0	2
South Eastern and Metropolitan Traffic Area	2023-24	30	21	14	4	2	1	0	0	13	14	1	2
	2022-23	55	28	31	13	3	2	2	0	14	10	5	3
West Midlands Traffic Area	2023-24	31	23	18	8	0	1	1	0	12	12	0	2
	2022-23	34	12	18	4	0	3	0	0	12	3	4	2
Western Traffic Area	2023-24	22	14	11	9	0	1	0	0	9	2	3	2
	2022-23	27	11	12	6	1	1	1	0	9	4	4	0
Scotland	2023-24	26	5	15	1	2	2	0	0	9	2	0	0
	2022-23	28	11	11	8	4	1	0	0	13	2	0	0
Wales	2023-24	5	7	4	3	1	1	0	0	0	3	0	0
	2022-23	15	10	7	6	1	1	0	0	5	2	2	0
Total	2023-24	215	122	117	44	12	9	1	0	74	54	12	15
	2022-23	287	145	144	66	14	21	5	1	101	43	23	13

See explanatory notes at the introduction of the statistics section at page 28 onwards of the Annual Report

TABLE 8: PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLE OPERATORS - LICENCES CONTINUED AND IN ISSUE						
	Year	Restrict ed	Standard National	Standard International	Total number of licences in issue	Total continuations sought
Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	161	303	267	731	139
	2022-23	198	312	267	777	107
North Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	250	341	238	829	138
	2022-23	303	348	255	906	142
North Western Traffic Area	2023-24	285	347	220	852	137
	2022-23	333	350	207	890	125
South Eastern and Metropolitan Traffic Area	2023-24	192	277	315	784	154
	2022-23	216	270	319	805	115
West Midlands Traffic Area	2023-24	127	201	161	489	92
	2022-23	155	210	169	534	76
Western Traffic Area	2023-24	182	260	220	662	102
	2022-23	207	272	229	708	126
Scotland	2023-24	157	332	128	617	94
	2022-23	188	339	124	651	109
Wales	2023-24	158	188	141	487	80
	2022-23	197	195	146	538	99
Total	2023-24	1512	2249	1690	5451	936
	2022-23	1797	2296	1716	5809	899

TABLE 9: PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLE OPERATORS - DISCS IN ISSUE

	Year	Restricted	Standard National	Standard International	Total discs
Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	251	5439	5142	10832
	2022-23	286	5336	4890	10512
North Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	439	6629	5377	12445
	2022-23	448	6472	5135	12055
North Western Traffic Area	2023-24	477	6521	4309	11307
	2022-23	476	6229	3778	10483
South Eastern and Metropolitan Traffic Area	2023-24	303	12457	5736	18496
	2022-23	330	12526	5540	18396
West Midlands Traffic Area	2023-24	219	3884	3416	7519
	2022-23	220	3821	3331	7372
Western Traffic Area	2023-24	291	6118	4960	11369
	2022-23	316	6043	4908	11267
Scotland	2023-24	223	6116	4560	10899
	2022-23	270	6078	4376	10724
Wales	2023-24	280	2486	3031	5797
	2022-23	302	2397	2863	5562
Total	2023-24	2483	49650	36531	88664
	2022-23	2648	48902	34821	86371

TABLE 10: PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLE OPERATORS - APPLICATIONS FOR NEW LICENCES AND TO VARY EXISTING LICENCES

	Year	Number of applications determined		Number of licences granted in full		Number of licences granted with less than applied for		Number of applications refused		Number of applications withdrawn	
		New licences	Major variations	New licences	Major variations	New licences	Major variations	New licences	Major variations	New licences	Major variations
Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	64	71	45	66	1	1	18	4	27	5
	2022-23	70	65	40	47	1	0	8	0	22	18
North Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	73	59	49	53	5	2	19	1	22	5
	2022-23	85	74	56	61	1	0	14	1	15	12
North Western Traffic Area	2023-24	83	58	64	53	4	5	15	1	37	5
	2022-23	73	75	40	67	2	0	18	3	15	5
South Eastern and Metropolitan Traffic Area	2023-24	97	82	66	81	0	0	31	1	22	2
	2022-23	87	63	45	56	1	0	19	0	23	7
West Midlands Traffic Area	2023-24	46	35	33	32	1	0	12	2	9	8
	2022-23	54	35	25	31	2	1	14	1	15	2
Western Traffic Area	2023-24	53	53	40	52	0	0	13	1	19	5
	2022-23	57	41	36	34	1	0	9	1	12	6
Scotland	2023-24	46	53	34	51	1	2	11	1	11	5
	2022-23	56	35	32	28	0	0	9	1	15	6
Wales	2023-24	32	46	25	42	0	1	7	4	8	3
	2022-23	51	40	27	26	1	1	8	4	16	9
Total	2023-24	494	457	356	430	12	11	126	15	155	38
	2022-23	533	428	301	350	9	2	99	11	133	65

See explanatory notes at the introduction of the statistics section at page 28 onwards of the Annual Report

TABLE 11: PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLE OPERATORS - RESULTS OF APPLICATIONS HEARD AT PUBLIC INQUIRY

	Number of applications determined at public inquiry		Applications granted as applied for		Applications granted in part		Applications granted with conditions		Applications refused		Applications withdrawn		
	Year	New licences	Major variations	New licences	Major variations	New licences	Major variations	New licences	Major variations	New licences	Major variations	New licences	Major variations
Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	6	2	5	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
	2022-23	6	1	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	5	1	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
	2022-23	7	2	3	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	1	0
North Western Traffic Area	2023-24	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0
	2022-23	3	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0
South Eastern and Metropolitan Traffic Area	2023-24	8	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0
	2022-23	5	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0
West Midlands Traffic Area	2023-24	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
	2022-23	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	0
Western Traffic Area	2023-24	10	4	4	2	1	1	0	0	4	1	1	0
	2022-23	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Scotland	2023-24	6	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
	2022-23	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0
Wales	2023-24	1	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0
	2022-23	3	3	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Total	2023-24	40	15	19	7	3	2	0	0	16	6	2	0
	2022-23	32	13	17	3	2	2	0	0	11	8	2	0

See explanatory notes at the introduction of the statistics section at page 28 onwards of the Annual Report

TABLE 12: PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLE OPERATORS - SPECIAL RESTRICTED PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLE OPERATOR LICENCES

	Year	Licence applications processed	Licences issued	Applications refused	Applications withdrawn and grants not taken up	Licences continued at five-year review date	Licences not continued at five-year review date	Total number of licences in issue
Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	3	0	0	3	1	0	5
	2022-23	1	0	0	1	0	1	6
North Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	2	0	0	2	0	0	7
	2022-23	2	1	0	1	1	3	7
North Western Traffic Area	2023-24	0	0	0	0	0	1	3
	2022-23	0	0	0	0	0	1	4
South Eastern and Metropolitan Traffic Area	2023-24	2	0	1	1	0	0	2
	2022-23	1	0	0	1	0	0	4
West Midlands Traffic Area	2023-24	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
	2022-23	3	0	0	3	0	0	1
Western Traffic Area	2023-24	3	0	0	3	0	0	2
	2022-23	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Scotland	2023-24	1	1	0	0	1	1	36
	2022-23	3	2	1	0	3	2	36
Wales	2023-24	0	0	0	0	0	1	8
	2022-23	1	1	0	0	0	0	9
Total	2023-24	12	1	1	10	2	4	63
	2022-23	12	4	1	7	4	7	69

TABLE 13: LOCAL BUS SERVICE REGISTRATIONS - LIVE, NEW, VARIATIONS AND CANCELLED

	Year	Live local bus registrations	Applications processed		Applications accepted		Refused	Withdrawn	Existing registrations cancelled
			New	Variations	New	Variations			
Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	1528	191	974	191	974	0	0	191
	2022-23	1597	268	1215	268	1215	0	0	279
North Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	1831	239	1556	239	1556	0	0	354
	2022-23	1967	429	1449	429	1449	0	0	550
North Western Traffic Area	2023-24	1665	541	1014	541	1014	0	0	752
	2022-23	2028	420	1569	420	1569	0	0	617
South Eastern and Metropolitan Traffic Area	2023-24	887	124	546	124	546	0	0	104
	2022-23	906	131	589	131	589	0	0	167
West Midlands Traffic Area	2023-24	633	84	364	84	364	0	0	84
	2022-23	702	175	738	175	738	0	0	336
Western Traffic Area	2023-24	1517	211	1180	211	1180	0	0	207
	2022-23	1581	225	1584	225	1584	0	0	401
Scotland	2023-24	1780	239	931	239	931	0	0	347
	2022-23	1970	271	1223	271	1223	0	0	340
Wales	2023-24	740	156	731	156	731	0	0	212
	2022-23	1020	94	513	94	513	0	0	164
Total	2023-24	9841	1785	7296	1785	7296	0	0	2251
	2022-23	11771	2013	8880	2013	8880	0	0	2854

See explanatory notes at the introduction of the statistics section at page 28 onwards of the Annual Report

TABLE 14: LOCAL BUS SERVICE REGISTRATIONS - FLEXIBLE BUS REGISTRATIONS

	Year	Received	Accepted	Refused	Withdrawn	Varied	Cancelled
Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	36	32	0	2	17	10
	2022-23	53	47	0	0	8	21
North Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	7	5	0	0	4	1
	2022-23	26	18	0	1	5	8
North Western Traffic Area	2023-24	14	14	0	0	2	7
	2022-23	10	11	0	2	5	5
South Eastern and Metropolitan Traffic Area	2023-24	2	1	0	1	0	0
	2022-23	2	2	0	1	1	0
West Midlands Traffic Area	2023-24	6	6	0	0	0	2
	2022-23	7	6	0	1	2	1
Western Traffic Area	2023-24	21	21	0	0	8	5
	2022-23	7	7	0	6	2	0
Scotland	2023-24	12	12	0	0	3	1
	2022-23	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wales	2023-24	14	13	0	1	3	5
	2022-23	16	11	0	6	2	0
Total	2023-24	112	104	0	4	37	31
	2022-23	121	102	0	17	25	35

See explanatory notes at the introduction of the statistics section at page 28 onwards of the Annual Report

TABLE 15: PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLES - NUMBER OF STANDARD, LARGE AND COMMUNITY BUS PERMITS ISSUED

	Standard Bus Permits Issued by					Large Bus Permits	Community Bus Permits
	Year	Traffic Commissioners	Local authorities	Designated bodies	Total		
Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	352	248	497	1097	0	37
	2022-23	476	179	399	1054	0	24
North Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	337	239	371	947	5	45
	2022-23	507	423	356	1286	10	53
North Western Traffic Area	2023-24	179	64	349	592	0	10
	2022-23	530	138	243	911	0	13
South Eastern and Metropolitan Traffic Area	2023-24	486	26	599	1111	90	42
	2022-23	641	137	626	1404	6	10
West Midlands Traffic Area	2023-24	170	85	192	447	0	12
	2022-23	248	216	224	688	6	6
Western Traffic Area	2023-24	510	447	494	1451	28	78
	2022-23	739	277	609	1625	2	67
Scotland	2023-24	130	97	310	537	0	7
	2022-23	174	162	207	543	68	16
Wales	2023-24	171	45	150	366	0	4
	2022-23	147	92	137	376	25	29
Total	2023-24	2335	1251	2962	6548	123	235
	2022-23	3462	1624	2801	7887	117	218

See explanatory notes at the introduction of the statistics section at page 28 onwards of the Annual Report

TABLE 16: PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLE OPERATORS - ACTION TAKEN AT PUBLIC INQUIRY FOR NON COMPLIANCE (UNDER THE PUBLIC PASSENGER VEHICLES ACT 1981)

	Year	Number of public inquiries completed	Licence revocations	Licence suspensions	Reduction of vehicles authorised on licence	Other conditions imposed on licence	Formal warning given	Disqualification of licence holder under the 1985 Act	Disqualification of transport manager	No action taken
Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	24	7	2	8	0	6	2	3	2
	2022-23	9	2	0	2	0	4	0	2	1
North Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	22	5	1	8	0	4	1	4	5
	2022-23	16	5	0	7	0	4	2	1	1
North Western Traffic Area	2023-24	12	3	3	1	0	5	0	2	1
	2022-23	17	4	0	5	0	9	1	4	1
South Eastern and Metropolitan Traffic Area	2023-24	15	3	2	8	0	1	0	2	1
	2022-23	14	6	1	2	0	4	2	1	1
West Midlands Traffic Area	2023-24	17	4	1	8	0	3	0	2	2
	2022-23	11	3	2	3	0	3	1	8	0
Western Traffic Area	2023-24	19	11	0	2	0	5	1	4	1
	2022-23	7	3	0	0	0	3	0	2	1
Scotland	2023-24	11	2	0	2	0	4	2	2	3
	2022-23	12	3	0	3	0	6	0	2	3
Wales	2023-24	8	5	0	2	0	1	3	3	1
	2022-23	15	6	2	3	0	2	0	0	2
Total	2023-24	128	40	9	39	0	29	9	22	15
	2022-23	101	32	5	25	0	35	6	20	12

See explanatory notes at the introduction of the statistics section at page 28 onwards of the Annual Report

TABLE 17: LOCAL BUS SERVICES - ACTION TAKEN AGAINST OPERATORS (UNDER THE TRANSPORT ACTS 1985 AND 2000)

	Year	Number of public inquiries	Restrictions imposed on licences under Section 26 of the 1985 Act	Penalty imposed under Section 155 of the 2000 Act*	Formal warnings given	No action taken
Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	0	0	0	0	0
	2022-23	1	0	0	1	0
North Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	0	0	0	0	0
	2022-23	0	0	0	0	0
North Western Traffic Area	2023-24	0	0	0	0	0
	2022-23	0	0	0	0	0
South Eastern and Metropolitan Traffic Area	2023-24	0	0	0	0	0
	2022-23	0	0	0	0	0
West Midlands Traffic Area	2023-24	5	0	1	1	3
	2022-23	0	0	0	0	0
Western Traffic Area	2023-24	2	0	1	0	1
	2022-23	1	0	1	1	0
Scotland	2023-24	1	0	1	0	0
	2022-23	0	0	0	0	0
Wales	2023-24	0	0	0	0	0
	2022-23	1	0	1	0	0
Total	2023-24	8	0	3	1	4
	2022-23	3	0	2	2	0

See explanatory notes at the introduction of the statistics section at page 28 onwards of the Annual Report

TABLE 18: TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPLETED PUBLIC INQUIRIES

	Year	Traffic Commissioners	Deputy Traffic Commissioners	Total
Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	76	172	248
	2022-23	93	140	233
North Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	123	61	184
	2022-23	117	102	219
North Western Traffic Area	2023-24	46	65	111
	2022-23	66	86	152
South Eastern and Metropolitan Traffic Area	2023-24	147	51	198
	2022-23	162	75	237
West Midlands Traffic Area	2023-24	149	66	215
	2022-23	89	69	158
Western Traffic Area	2023-24	137	45	182
	2022-23	125	40	165
Scotland	2023-24	70	20	90
	2022-23	67	35	102
Wales	2023-24	55	0	55
	2022-23	61	20	81
Total	2023-24	803	480	1283
	2022-23	780	567	1347

TABLE 18A: TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPLETED PRELIMINARY HEARINGS AND SENIOR TEAM LEADER INTERVIEWS

	Year	Preliminary hearings	Senior Team Leader interviews	Total
Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	52	12	64
	2022-23	67	12	79
North Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	16	1	17
	2022-23	33	10	43
North Western Traffic Area	2023-24	23	6	29
	2022-23	28	3	31
South Eastern and Metropolitan Traffic Area	2023-24	35	0	35
	2022-23	50	0	50
West Midlands Traffic Area	2023-24	12	13	25
	2022-23	30	3	33
Western Traffic Area	2023-24	4	2	6
	2022-23	38	2	40
Scotland	2023-24	6	4	10
	2022-23	13	7	20
Wales	2023-24	8	3	11
	2022-23	10	5	15
Total	2023-24	156	41	197
	2022-23	269	42	311

TABLE 19: PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLE AND GOODS VEHICLE OPERATOR - APPEALS TO THE UPPER TRIBUNAL

	Year	Number of appeals made	Number of appeals heard	Number of appeals withdrawn	Number of appeals successful or partially successful
Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	13	3	5	0
	2022-23	10	15	2	5
North Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	2	0	1	0
	2022-23	3	5	0	0
North Western Traffic Area	2023-24	7	7	1	2
	2022-23	10	7	4	0
South Eastern and Metropolitan Traffic Area	2023-24	6	7	0	1
	2022-23	9	8	0	3
West Midlands Traffic Area	2023-24	4	1	3	0
	2022-23	7	5	0	3
Western Traffic Area	2023-24	0	1	0	0
	2022-23	2	3	0	1
Scotland	2023-24	7	2	2	0
	2022-23	3	3	0	0
Wales	2023-24	4	1	3	0
	2022-23	1	4	1	0
Total	2023-24	43	22	15	3
	2022-23	45	50	7	12

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TABLE 20: LARGE GOODS VEHICLE AND PASSENGER CARRYING VEHICLE DRIVER CONDUCT CASES - ACTION AGAINST DRIVERS

	Total	Total cases closed	Licences refused	Licences revoked	Licences suspended	Licences granted	Verbal warning	Routine warning letters		Refer on application	No action taken	Called to a hearing
								Endorsable	Non-endorsable			
Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	2077	656	24	56	127	138	382	0	164	546	429
	2022-23	2048	727	13	41	151	43	309	0	187	580	282
North Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	2566	660	15	78	14	14	867	56	81	749	261
	2022-23	2519	587	11	77	65	141	892	56	88	743	322
North Western Traffic Area	2023-24	2338	789	59	168	50	93	435	59	220	451	507
	2022-23	2189	777	49	96	250	78	255	75	168	467	668
South Eastern and Metropolitan Traffic Area	2023-24	2223	494	15	67	45	108	529	22	366	576	286
	2022-23	2374	611	40	57	40	104	570	23	271	612	293
West Midlands Traffic Area	2023-24	1553	490	40	107	72	121	153	35	93	438	430
	2022-23	1513	505	21	93	139	114	182	0	61	392	407
Western Traffic Area	2023-24	2049	463	11	27	66	51	503	11	337	580	188
	2022-23	1788	565	15	35	130	37	315	3	119	572	314
Scotland	2023-24	1157	310	6	74	47	99	134	0	99	382	303
	2022-23	1001	318	9	34	47	50	105	0	56	384	276
Wales	2023-24	849	224	5	19	289	12	147	20	12	116	103
	2022-23	875	253	4	13	274	19	155	26	8	118	138
Military	2023-24	772	226	0	1	10	3	300	0	89	139	0
	2022-23	860	211	0	1	11	3	336	0	12	186	2
Total	2023-24	15584	4312	175	597	720	639	3450	203	1461	3977	2507
	2022-23	15167	4554	162	447	1107	589	3119	183	970	4054	2702

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TABLE 21: APPLICATIONS FOR THE RETURN OF IMPOUNDED VEHICLES

	Year	Number of vehicles impounded	Number of applications received and processed	Granted		Refused		Appeals to Upper Tribunal			
				With hearing	Without hearing	With hearing	Without hearing	Made	Heard	Withdrawn	Successful
Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	6	6	1	0	5	0	1	1	1	0
	2022-23	6	5	0	0	4	1	2	1	0	1
North Eastern Traffic Area	2023-24	11	8	1	0	5	0	0	0	0	0
	2022-23	7	6	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
North Western Traffic Area	2023-24	4	4	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	2022-23	8	5	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0
South Eastern and Metropolitan Traffic Area	2023-24	7	6	0	0	4	2	0	0	1	0
	2022-23	3	2	0	0	2	0	2	0	2	0
West Midlands Traffic Area	2023-24	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
	2022-23	3	3	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Western Traffic Area	2023-24	8	6	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
	2022-23	2	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Scotland	2023-24	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
	2022-23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wales	2023-24	6	7	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0
	2022-23	10	9	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
Total	2023-24	45	40	5	0	19	2	2	2	2	0
	2022-23	39	32	3	1	15	3	5	1	2	1

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Contact Details

Further details about the commissioners and their other publications can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/traffic-commissioners>

Queries regarding Statistics - Email: tcco@otc.gov.uk

Address: Traffic Commissioners for Great Britain
Corporate Office
Eastbrook
Shaftesbury Road
Cambridge
CB2 8BF
United Kingdom

Media Enquiries - Email: pressoffice@otc.gov.uk

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/traffic-commissioners/about/media-enquiries>