



House of Commons
Transport Committee

**Government motoring
agencies – the user
perspective:
Government Response
to the Committee's
Sixth Report of Session
2014–15**

**Tenth Special Report of Session
2014–15**

*Ordered by the House of Commons
to be printed 15 December 2014*

HC 884
Published on 19 December 2014
by authority of the House of Commons
London: The Stationery Office Limited
£5.00

The Transport Committee

The Transport Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Department for Transport and its Associate Public Bodies.

Current membership

Mrs Louise Ellman (*Labour/Co-operative, Liverpool Riverside*) (*Chair*)
Sarah Champion (*Labour, Rotherham*)
Jim Fitzpatrick (*Labour, Poplar and Limehouse*)
Mr Tom Harris (*Labour, Glasgow South*)
Karen Lumley (*Conservative, Redditch*)
Jason M^cCartney (*Conservative, Colne Valley*)
Karl M^cCartney (*Conservative, Lincoln*)
Mr Adrian Sanders (*Liberal Democrat, Torbay*)
Chloe Smith (*Conservative, Norwich North*)
Graham Stringer (*Labour, Blackley and Broughton*)
Martin Vickers (*Conservative, Cleethorpes*)

Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 152. These are available on the internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publication

The Reports of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including press notices) are on the internet at <http://www.parliament.uk/transcom>. A list of Reports of the Committee in the present Parliament is at the back of this volume.

The Reports of the Committee and the formal minutes relating to that report are available in a printed volume. Written evidence is published on the internet only.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Gordon Clarke (Clerk), Nick Beech (Second Clerk), Alexandra Meakin (Committee Specialist), Adrian Hitchins (Senior Committee Assistant), Stewart McIlvenna (Committee Assistant), and Hannah Pearce (Media Officer)

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Transport Committee, House of Commons, 14 Tothill Street, London SW1H 9NB, The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 6263; the Committee's email address is transcom@parliament.uk

Tenth Special Report

On 8 December 2014 we received a response from the Government to the Transport Committee's Sixth Report of 2014–15, Government motoring agencies – the user perspective, which we publish with this Special Report.¹

Introduction

1. We welcome the Committee's interest in the motoring agencies and the important work they do to keep people safe on our roads. Our vision is for motoring services that put the consumer and business at the heart of what they do.

2. The Department for Transport published its response to the Motoring Services Strategy in 2013 which set out our strategic direction and aims. Since then we have achieved a considerable amount:

- We merged the Driving Standards Agency and the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency into one agency, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA). This enabled us to set out a clear vision for driver and vehicle testing and provide a more efficient and improved delivery of motoring services to users and business.
- We invited tenders for a new commercial model for the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA)
- The Reilly Review of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) made recommendations for a future business strategy which will enable digital service transformation and a step change in efficiency for the Agency.

3. We have made good progress in achieving our aims, but agree with the Committee that the time is right to consider how the motoring agencies might operate in the future – building on their successes and focusing on how we can utilise digital capacity more widely and reduce costs and burdens on business.

Government Response

Effect of structural reorganisation on service users

Recommendation 1: It is important that the Government monitors the outcomes of reform of the motoring agencies to ensure the expected benefits are realised. (Paragraph 11)

Recommendation 2: We recommend that the Government make clear its long term agenda for change by setting out clearly its overall strategy for provision of motoring services. This should cover all its motoring agencies, demonstrate how the strategy will make services more unified and deliver efficiencies and cost savings, and set out a timeline for the further changes needed to bring about a more unified approach. It should also justify the different approaches it is promoting for the three agencies and explain the impact the Department's work on shared services will have on the agencies. The Department should consider whether it needs three separate agencies to achieve the streamlined, largely electronic services it provides. We would like the Government to expand on its plans for private sector involvement in the provision of motoring services and how it sees the long term future for its agencies as monopoly public service providers. The Government should also make clear the extent to which efficiency savings will benefit both the users of services through reduced costs and fees, and the general taxpayer in the form of savings to the Exchequer. (Paragraph 11)

4. As these two recommendations are linked, we are responding to them together.
5. The Department thanks the Committee for its continued interest in the important work of the motoring services agencies, and will keep it informed of our plans and future strategies. We have, however, made considerable progress over the last few years. The Motoring Services Strategy response, published in 2013, set out our intention to merge the Driving Standards Agency and the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency into one agency, the DVSA, which was formally launched in April 2014. We also stated our intention to seek a Joint Venture partner for the VCA.
6. DVLA will have delivered a sustainable reduction of £100m in its operating expenditure (including the impact of inflation) by March 2015. The combined impact of the sustained cost reductions in the period April 2010 to March 2015 is a saving of around £250m and DVLA has also committed to an operating cost reduction by March 2017 of 30%, net of relevant non-statutory fee income, against an April 2014 baseline.
7. As a result of these efficiencies, drivers are set to save £150 million over the next 10 years from reduced fees following the DVLA's review into driver licensing. The introduction of digital services has also allowed DVLA to reduce its fees for driving licences, as it reduces overall costs by helping DVLA to be more efficient.
8. Following a public consultation, from 1 October fees for HGV and PSV tests fell for more than 80% of customers. Fees for tests conducted at Authorised Testing Facilities (ATFs) were reduced by an average of around 3.5%. Fees for tests conducted at DVSA sites increased by an average of around 18.5%, meaning that customers who do not use DVSA facilities no longer contribute to their running costs.

9. In addition, the fee for car and motorcycle theory tests fell by £6 in October 2014, reducing the cost of a test from £31 to £25, with a further reduction of £2 due in October 2015. Theory test fees for other categories of vehicle will also be reduced.

10. The Government agrees that it should monitor the outcomes of its reforms, and set out the next stages of reform for these agencies, but does not agree that further rationalisation of the number of agencies will provide further efficiencies or better services at this time. While DVLA will continue to provide better and largely electronic services, that is not the case for DVSA which will continue to be responsible for the physical testing of vehicles and the practical and theoretical assessment of drivers' competence. There are no plans at present for the further involvement of the private sector in the delivery of those services but the Government will consider whether there are opportunities for such involvement.

11. DVSA and DVLA will continue to work together to maximise the opportunities for further efficiencies.

Recommendation 3: The DVSA should provide us with a reassurance that the wealth of experience built up by its vehicle inspectors, examiners and other staff is not being lost in the course of the merger and the changes it is making to Authorised Testing Facilities (ATF). Similarly, the DVLA should provide us with a reassurance that it is managing the risks around the loss of knowledge and experience as it closes local branches. (Paragraph 12)

12. DVSA is confident that the merger of DSA and VOSA has posed no risk to the business as usual activities of its operations. It was a stated objective of the merger that frontline services and customer service would not be adversely affected by the merger and DVSA is confident that this is still the case. VOSA had begun to implement the ATF strategy² before the merger was announced; the ATF strategy offers an improved service to customers by offering vehicle testing at the customer site. DVSA has also reduced fees for tests conducted at ATFs by 3.5%, further improving its service to customers. DVSA plans to continue to use experienced DVSA staff for testing and enforcement activity.

13. DVLA's network of 39 Local Offices closed to the public at the end of December 2013. DVLA ensured that staff at the headquarters in Swansea were fully trained to deliver the range of services previously carried out by Local Offices. It also ensured that skilled and knowledgeable staff were available to support commercial and trade customers. Application forms were simplified and specific postcodes set up to ensure the efficient administration of forms.

14. Where possible, previously complex transactions were simplified, processes redesigned and data sharing between different government departments and organisations, including DVLA and DVSA, improved. Some services are also being developed with the motor trade e.g. personalised registrations and electronic notification of acquisition and disposal of a vehicle. These enhancements recognise the desire by the motor trade to provide a better

2 Where DVSA examiners conduct annual vehicle tests for goods and passenger carrying at customer sites, rather than at goods vehicle testing stations

service to its customers, and have also reduced the need for DVLA to provide face-to-face services to customers.

Recommendation 4: We are concerned about the six-month delay in issuing the OJEU notice for the VCA's private sector partner and seek assurances from the Government that a partner will be announced on schedule in January 2015. If there are any further delays to plans to recruit a private sector partner for the VCA, we would expect the Government to write to us. (Paragraph 13)

15. In a Written Statement to the House on 15 August 2013, the then Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, Stephen Hammond MP, announced that the Department of Transport would undertake market engagement and a procurement competition to find a commercial partner to form a joint venture to grow the work of the VCA.

16. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport, Claire Perry MP, issued a Written Ministerial Statement on 8 December 2014³ to inform the House that the competition was not successful in identifying a suitable joint venture that would achieve the objectives of both partners. The VCA will continue to provide vehicle testing and certification services, as it does at present. The Department will consult with a wide range of stakeholders before considering any alternative proposals.

Support for Business

Recommendation 5: The DVLA and DVSA respond effectively to the needs of individuals, who usually undertake only two or three transactions each year but account for the bulk of the agencies' business. However, on the basis of the evidence we received they do not adequately meet the needs of businesses, some of whom undertake hundreds of vehicle or driver transactions in each year. The agencies need to develop a better understanding of the needs of their business users, particularly small fleet owners and operators who play an important part in economic prosperity. We recommend that DVLA and DVSA develop specific strategies for responding to the needs of business customers. In setting out a longer-term strategy for the future of its motoring agencies, the Government should consider the needs of business users as well as those of individual motorists. (Paragraph 16)

17. As it considers its longer-term strategy for the motoring agencies, the Government will further consider the needs of business users as well as those of individual motorists, and support the work DVLA and DVSA are already undertaking to improve their support for business – including sharing data between the agencies where possible.

18. DVLA works closely with business representatives through its Industry Liaison Group meetings and is taking significant steps to ensure that services are developed specifically for business users. One example is the development of the Insurance Industry Access to Driver Data service which, when finalised, will enable insurers to request accurate driving entitlement and motoring conviction data from DVLA. In addition, DVLA has introduced a dedicated Corporate Service Manager to work with industry stakeholders.

19. DVLA has delivered, or is about to deliver, a number of Red Tape Challenge initiatives, many of which are focussed on reducing costs and burden on business. These include abolishing the paper tax disc from 1 October 2014; abolishing the insurance check at vehicle licensing; introducing a facility for vehicle keepers to inform DVLA electronically of changes when they have bought or sold a vehicle; and sending vehicle registration certificates to fleet companies only when they need one, significantly reducing their burden as they will not have to retain libraries of registration certificates. These initiatives will deliver benefits to business of over £15 million each year. During November 2014 the DVLA won three digital awards for services provided to business customers. The DVLA's View Driving Licence project won both the Next Gen Digital Challenge and the Civil Service Digital Award. DVLA was also voted Fleet Service Company of the Year in the 2014 Association of Car and Fleet Operators (ACFO) Awards. DVLA gained the most votes among ACFO members to win this award, which recognises the Agency's engagement with fleet operators over the ongoing development of a range of online solutions for the corporate sector.

20. DVSA has made significant investments into improving online practical test booking services for business customers, and is also working with users, traffic commissioners and other stakeholders to develop a new, more efficient licensing and compliance system.

21. VCA operates almost entirely on a business to business basis and in a commercial environment, competing with other public and private sector companies across the world. In general, companies have a choice whether to use VCA services and this means that as an organisation, there is a significant focus on meeting the needs of business, without compromising on standards – customer satisfaction was recorded at 95% in 2013/14.

22. In respect of future digital and electronic services, all transactions must now comply with the Government's digital standard. This standard requires extensive user testing during development and before going live and requires that each service has a service manager to effect ongoing improvements in response to user feedback.

Driver Training

Recommendation 6: If businesses and drivers must commit time and resource to mandatory training then that training must be worthwhile and effective. At the present time this is not the case. (Paragraph 21)

Recommendation 7: Under the current regulations the Government could not add modules on vulnerable road users to the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) or compel drivers to select them. If the Government unilaterally amended regulations to make such modules compulsory drivers from other countries using roads in the UK would not have equivalent training. We recommend that the Government lobby the European Commission to introduce an amending Directive to require the inclusion of a compulsory new training module in the Driver CPC focused on vulnerable road users. (Paragraph 21)

23. As these two recommendations are linked, we are responding to them together.

24. The Department is clear that mandatory training must be worthwhile and effective, and has worked with the HGV industry and stakeholders to ensure mandatory training is fit for

purpose. It is for the employer and employee to identify the course that best meets the needs of the company or the individual driver. Cost should not be the sole factor in choosing the training to be undertaken, and consideration should be given to conducting training annually throughout the five year entitlement period.

25. Driver CPC has been in operation for six years, and the first five-year cycle of periodic training for professional lorry drivers has come to an end (the equivalent period for bus drivers finished in September 2013). Many in the industry have recognised it can deliver benefits in terms of improved skills and a sense of professionalism for drivers. We acknowledge the suggestions that some drivers are merely seeking to satisfy the requirement to undertake 35 hours of periodic training but believe that the vast majority of drivers use Driver CPC to improve their skills and knowledge.

26. DVSA is working with the industries and the Sector Skills Councils to raise the quality of training that is available. DVSA approves all courses that are offered for Driver CPC periodic training, assessing each course application against the syllabus prescribed in Directive 2003/59/EC. Course approvals have to be renewed each year. DVSA also undertakes inspections of courses and audits of training providers, to ensure that they are delivering quality training.

27. When introducing Driver CPC, the UK negotiated flexibility in the content and timing of training to allow individual drivers to choose courses that meet their individual training needs. We reiterated our desire to maintain that position in our response to the Commission's review of Driver CPC in autumn 2013, arguing against mandating specific training content on the basis that it is better to allow freedom for drivers to select training that meets their individual needs.

28. DVSA considers that the safety of vulnerable road users is an important issue that should be covered in periodic training. So it is encouraging training course providers to include content on the safety of vulnerable road users in each periodic training course in the future. Guidance will be issued shortly to training bodies by the Joint Approvals Unit for Periodic Training that all seven hour blocks of periodic training should contain information relating to vulnerable road users; this will be considered as part of the course approvals process from April 2015.

29. This change means all UK drivers covered by periodic Driver CPC requirements should receive training related to vulnerable road users during the five-year training period just started (except for some drivers starting their second training before April 2015). This route achieves significant change far more quickly than an amendment of the European directive, whilst retaining more choice for the UK.

30. The Commission's review of Driver CPC is ongoing. DVSA and the Department will ensure that the UK's interests are represented in those discussions to protect the interests of British business and the UK's enviable road safety record.

Digital services and extending digital services

Recommendation 8: Digital services must cater for all users not just individual motorists and the agencies' assisted digital strategies must help and support those who cannot access services online. The Department needs to ensure that its motoring

agencies have viable plans for assisted access, which recognise the distinct needs of individuals and businesses. The motoring agencies must ensure a good standard of accessibility to their services is provided to users who are unable to benefit from investment in digital services. They should also monitor outcomes and customer feedback to ensure that their assisted digital strategies are working. (Paragraph 27)

Recommendation 9: Digital services are clearly popular and they have the potential to reduce costs for the taxpayer, motorists and businesses. We recognise the need for the multi-channel approach that the agencies are adopting; and lessons learned from the progress made so far should inform the planning and roll-out of new digital services. Concerns about digital exclusion and access to services for people who cannot use online services are valid. The move to digital provision and recent organisational changes (for example, the closure of DVLA local branches) have the potential to make access to some services much more difficult and costly for certain groups of people and some businesses. The Department and the agencies need to show how they are addressing these concerns and what steps they are taking to ensure that there is alternative provision for those unable or unwilling to use digital services, especially in the context of changes to local networks and branches. The Department should also consider the extent to which reliance on the Post Office and other providers is an adequate means of dealing with digital exclusion. In addition, digital services must work seamlessly with those that will continue to require some degree of physical presence. (Paragraph 30)

31. As these two recommendations are linked, we are responding to them together.

32. The Department is committed to implementing its actions in response to the Government's Digital Strategy⁴. Since 2012, the Department has worked with the agencies to increase take up of their digital services through GOV.UK – with considerable success. DVLA is implementing three of the Government's 25 digital exemplars.⁵

33. Each agency is committed to providing users with multi-channel services to meet their needs. For example, DVLA already offers vehicle taxation online but has also retained the option for customers to use the Post Office. The introduction of direct debit and the abolition of the tax disc has increased online take-up since October 2014. DVLA also offer first registration of a vehicle via both an online service and a paper channel. The DVLA Contact Centre provides a telephone assisted digital service for users who require help with online services such as Electronic Vehicle Licensing, Drivers Licensing Online and View your Driver Record. The Agency also provides a telephone transaction service for vehicle relicensing, duplicate registration certificates and driving licences. DVLA's ongoing intention is to provide the best customer service, regardless of the channel through which users choose to interact with the Agency.

34. DVSA has also been highly successful at moving transactional services online and encouraging take-up. In September 2014, 97% of practical driving tests were booked

4 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-for-transport-digital-strategy>

5 These are View Driving Licence, Personalised Registrations and Vehicle Management.

online. DVSA received just 120 paper applications for driving tests in the first six months of 2014/15.

35. Although online take-up of transactional services is high, DVSA also makes services available through non-digital means. It is possible to book, change or cancel a theory test by phone and to book, change or cancel a practical test by paper application or phone. Vocational and motorcycle trainers can also reserve test slots by phone or fax and notify the Agency of the names of candidates who will use those slots in the same ways. There is a customer support team available to the public between 8am and 12pm Monday to Friday and for business customers between 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday.

36. Vehicle type approval does not lend itself to a wholly digital approach because of the degree of product testing and face-to-face interaction required. However, where digital tools can be employed to support the process, VCA has introduced them. For example, VCA uses an online tool to allow customers to quickly and securely send and receive documentation, which leads to efficiencies in the overall approval process.

37. The Department and its motoring agencies recognise the issues around access and the capability of internet-based services. We continue to work with the Cabinet Office on the development of the Assisted Digital (AD) approach to make sure AD support is in place before any new service goes live and remain committed to ensuring that our services are available to people who remain either unable or unwilling to use digital services. The Post Office for example has more than 4,000 outlets. They are required to offer good geographical cover and meet strict service level standards. Motor dealers will soon be able to carry out a number of services on behalf of their customers. The paper route remains open for all applications.

38. However, we have a duty to reduce costs to the taxpayer, and encourage people to use our digital services wherever possible, designing them to be easy to use and in line with Government Digital Service's (GDS) Digital-by-Default Service Standard which is published on GOV.UK. Before going live every Digital by Default Service developed by the Department is also required to make sure appropriate Assisted Digital (AD) support is in place to extend the reach of digital services. Impact Assessments are carried out when introducing new proposals and the Department is committed to ensuring alternative channels do not degrade inclusivity and disability access.

Copycat websites

Recommendation 10: It is illegal to deliberately mislead the public or obtain money by fraud; the agencies providing services on behalf of the Government should do everything practicable to prevent users of their services from being misled or becoming the victims of fraud. Transport for London's agreement with the DVLA to alert drivers using unofficial websites is an interesting model that the Department should evaluate to see how well the approach works and whether it can be extended to other services. It will be important to understand how much any alternative approach costs to administer, what effect it may have on fees for users of services and whether it results in fewer motorists using unofficial sites. In such an evaluation it will be important for the Department to consider the effect of the scheme on unofficial operators and any unintended consequences for legitimate providers of value-added services. We also ask

the GDS to provide specific details of its progress so far in identifying and alerting search engines to misleading websites offering services to motorists, and to report on what enforcement action has been taken against such sites. (Paragraph 33)

39. This is an issue of relevance and concern to DVLA, DVSA and the Department. Copycat websites are not affiliated with or authorized by the motoring agencies, and some use the DVLA trademark illegally in their domain name.

40. Typically these sites suggest they provide services, already available directly from the motoring agencies, in a way which adds value, or they underplay the services that customers can get for free, or at a lower cost, from the agencies on the Gov.UK website. They can often be found in the sponsored links or paid-for results section of online search engines.

41. The Department is involved in addressing this issue and is in contact with the Government Digital Service (GDS), other public organizations with similar concerns, enforcement agencies and search engine providers. DVSA and DVLA have both recently issued press notices warning customers not to use unofficial sites. In addition, we will review the TfL model referred to in the Committee's Report.

Sharing vehicle keeper data with parking enforcement companies

Recommendation 11: Protecting personal data is an issue that people feel strongly about and the DVLA needs do more to explain to the public the legal basis for its sharing of personal data and the steps that are being taken to deal with private parking companies and local authorities caught misusing parking data; the Government needs to ensure there is more transparency and better accountability on this issue. We recommend that the DVLA and Department for Transport consider whether each vehicle keeper should be told when their data is released and what more can be done to help target persistent repeat offenders. The Government needs to be mindful of the costs of any changes and we would expect it to consult widely on any proposals it brings forward, including how the costs of any such scheme could be met. (Paragraph 42)

42. DVLA takes its responsibilities to protect people's personal data seriously. Private parking operators who receive DVLA data are required to be members of an Accredited Trade Association (ATA) and comply with its code of practice. Action is taken when companies are found not to be meeting the standards required including, where necessary, suspension of the company's facility to request vehicle keeper data. In 2013, DVLA ceased supplying data to private parking companies on 22 occasions.

43. A range of communication channels are used to inform motorists that private car park operators can request vehicle keeper information to pursue alleged parking contraventions. This means that motorists should be aware that their contact details could be requested from the DVLA. There would be significant costs for DVLA to write to every vehicle keeper when their data is released – postage alone would be around £400k per annum. Based on similar system changes the costs of introducing the change is estimated to run into millions of pounds, making it impracticable at this time.

Recommendation 12: The DVLA should not subsidise private parking companies by providing data at a loss, if anything it should err on the side of making a small surplus.

As it reviews its fees and income, the DVLA should consider whether efficiencies can be made to reduce the cost of processing these requests. If not, the DVLA should adjust the fee for the provision of personal data to ensure costs are covered. The DVLA should make clear on its website how the costs are calculated. It should also consider whether the enhanced provision of information to drivers, as recommended above, could be financed through the fee (Paragraph 43)

44. DVLA's fees are set at levels that cover costs. Given the fluctuation in transaction and enquiry volumes, fees are kept under annual review. The Agency sets its fees in line with Managing Public Money guidelines.

45. DVLA implemented a first phase of fee changes on 31 October covering Drivers fees.

Policy changes that increase reliance on the quality, accuracy and effective sharing of data

Recommendation 13: Interoperability of systems and the ability to share data with other agencies needs to be given a high priority by all the motoring agencies. The motoring agencies should think carefully about what data their users need, how this can be shared effectively and what safeguards need to be in place. They should assess policy changes to understand what impact they may have on data sharing. The need to share and exchange data needs to be balanced with the protection of personal data. (Paragraph 48)

46. In terms of interoperability, the IT systems and databases used by the respective Agencies have been developed to meet specific needs and to enable performance of statutory functions. There are already a number of important areas where DVLA and DVSA share data through a mixture of electronic transfer methods. These include confirmation from DVSA that a vehicle has a current MOT prior to it being taxed using DVLA's electronic vehicle licensing system and notification from DVSA that a learner driver has passed their driving test. Memoranda of Understanding are in place between DVLA, DVSA and other agencies within the Department and beyond⁶. There is little need to share data routinely between VCA and other agencies and this need does not extend to personal data. However, the need to appropriately protect personal information is considered as part of any request to share data and Privacy Impact Assessments are carried out in accordance with the Information Commissioner's Code of Practice.

47. In terms of wider users of DVLA data, the enormous benefit of sharing the vast amount of data that the Agency holds is recognised – as well as the importance of protecting personal data. DVLA operates a comprehensive process for managing requests for its data.

48. Nonetheless, all agencies are committed to being as transparent about their work as they can. DVSA publishes information proactively about driver and vehicle testing. Both DVLA and DVSA are considering what additional information could be made available to the public.

⁶ For example the Memorandum of Understanding Between The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency And (police force, DVSA etc) For The Provision Of The Driver Validation Service and the Memorandum of Understanding Between The Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency and The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency For the Supply and Receipt of the ADLI Interface.

49. Access to data can also be constrained by current IT systems. DVSA is looking at how it might improve its IT to enable industry to access core datasets.

Working with enforcement agencies

Recommendation 14: Offenders need to be caught and dangerous vehicles must be removed from the road network. An intelligence-led approach to enforcement that targets the most serious non-compliance and the repeat offenders depends on access to and the effective sharing of data. We view this as essential to reduce the likelihood of traffic accidents and save lives. The Department should drive forward a culture change in the approach to sharing data between the motoring agencies and their enforcement partners and should identify the steps that need to be taken to ensure data is accurate and can be shared in a timely way to support the work of the agencies and enforcement bodies. (Paragraph 53)

50. The motoring agencies already have a proven record in sharing data. DVSA share both MoT and goods vehicle test data with DVLA so that there is assurance that the vehicle is roadworthy before it is licensed. Furthermore, there is extensive sharing of data between DVSA and the Traffic Commissioners to ensure there is effective regulation and enforcement in respect of licensed goods and passenger vehicle operators.

51. DVLA is working with the insurance industry to enable it to use driver data to confirm driving licence entitlement and current endorsements and motoring convictions. DVLA is also working with the police and HMRC to develop an enforcement process to deal with foreign registered vehicles in the UK remaining in the UK illegally. In addition, DVLA is exploring what opportunities exist to share intelligence with other enforcement agencies. Any opportunities identified by DVLA and other enforcement agencies will of course need to be underpinned by appropriate legal powers.

52. DVSA uses networked ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) data in its enforcement activity with the aim of using the data to coordinate road checks, better target non-compliant vehicles and use staff time more effectively. It is setting up a Strategic Traffic Management Office to deliver this work and maximise the use of the ANPR data. This will be a central strategic resource management and tactical deployment function that will coordinate both strategic planning of resources and road checks and provide the tactical coordination of targets as they pass through the network. The team will also be able to monitor enforcement productivity in real time and redirect local teams as needed. DVSA is working with other agencies and enforcement partners to share ANPR data where appropriate and possible.

53. The systems for the HGV levy, which was introduced in April, were designed from the ground up with data sharing in mind. There is the capability to take information from HMRC on vehicles entering and exiting the country, and merge it with data from the levy payment system. This provides information on which vehicles are in the country, but have not paid the levy. This data is then shared with DVSA. The project to link this data with DVSA ANPR cameras will go live shortly, giving DVSA improved capability to target enforcement of non-compliant vehicles.