

Celebrating 5 years of Unity at DVLA

We are Unity, one of several Staff Network Groups (SNGs) at DVLA that aim to support and connect staff throughout the agency. We celebrate the ethnic and cultural diversity within DVLA, while providing a safe and supportive environment for members to talk about race, religion, and culture.

Unity was founded on 21 March 2016, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, to provide a strong voice for DVLA's minority ethnic staff.

As the co-chairs of Unity, we're both passionate about diversity and inclusion, and we've always been interested in different cultures. To us, Unity provides a space not only to meet new people, but to support them. We are, after all, one community at DVLA.

And it's been a great journey for us so far! We want to share with you some highlights from the past 5 years.

5 years of Unity

Our story began with a staff poll to see how many people would join an SNG to support and encourage inclusivity and diversity at DVLA. The response was incredibly positive and, following discussions with DVLA's Diversity team, Unity was born!

Since then, we've helped make sure DVLA is an inclusive and diverse place to work. From 'Time to Talk' days to coffee-time discussions, we aim to change perceptions around race inequality through conversations. After all, the smallest things can sometimes have the biggest impact.



Unity team in 2016.

With the support of the agency's Diversity team and our Human Resources (HR) colleagues, we've successfully raised awareness of vital issues with senior management. Last year saw the launch of race awareness training for DVLA staff, along with workshops to highlight unconscious biases. To support this, we developed a toolkit and etiquette guide for managers and colleagues, with information about different cultures and religions.

As a group, we've worked with departments across the agency to improve policies and practices. This includes promoting facilities on site to support those who need them, such as a multi-faith prayer room.

We've also tapped into DVLA's strong learning and development culture by signposting staff to mentoring schemes, both within the Civil Service and in the wider community. This includes supporting staff in attending events like the [BAME Into Leadership](#) conference, which is a key event for individuals interested in improving and enhancing leadership opportunities for minority ethnic individuals within the Civil Service.

Building community

At Unity, we build relationships through education and discussion. That's how change happens – by supporting those who wish to become allies. Perhaps one of our most visible advocates is our director champion, Andrew Falvey, DVLA's Commercial Director.

Andrew spoke about the importance of having a diverse workforce at DVLA:

We live in a multicultural society and it's important that our services are built to reflect that. It's also important that we promote DVLA as an employer of choice amongst all communities.

We're proud of the diversity and inclusivity of our workforce, but we're always seeking new ways to provide equal opportunities for all. Drawing from a wider pool of experience and talent benefits our customers and the community at large.

We couldn't agree more. At Unity, we want people to feel included and supported at work. One of the ways we do this is by organising events and activities for staff to get involved in.

Events and activities

Unity is run by a steering group, made up of colleagues from different business areas who are passionate and dedicated to championing our cause. As co-chairs, we oversee the steering group and aim to meet up at least every 6 weeks to plan our events and campaigns.

Over the past year, the pandemic has made it difficult for us to run our usual activities and we've had to adapt. We've used video conferencing to stay in contact with our members and emails to keep them up to date with our activities. Despite working remotely, we've still managed to recruit new members – this was a big achievement for us and shows how valued the group is at DVLA!

Over the years, we've organised a variety of events, from food tasting sessions to dancing classes. One of our proudest achievements was working with the Swansea Humanitarian Aid Response Project (SHARP) for staff to donate items for homeless people and refugees. We managed to collect over 10 cages full of donations!

Another highlight was welcoming Farhana Ali, Swansea's award-winning make-up artist, to DVLA to speak about how she overcame barriers to establish her successful career. Thanks to the success of these events, we now have around 50 members from across the agency actively engaged in the group.



Unity celebrating DVLA's 50th anniversary in 2019.

We run as many diversity and charity events as we can. Our fifth anniversary occurred during lockdown and we held 2 virtual photo competitions for staff to share their favourite cultural experience and recipes. It was heartening to see so many staff members from across the agency get involved and celebrate different cultures.

This month, we're promoting [Black History Month 2021](#) via our staff intranet. In the spirit of this year's '[Proud To Be](#)' theme, we'll be recognising the achievements and contributions that Black communities and individuals make, and have made, to our society.

Unity outside DVLA

While Unity exists to support staff at DVLA, we also actively support our local community.

We've worked with many local groups to support people with job applications and recruitment advice, including the [Ethnic Minorities & Youth Support Team \(EYST\)](#), [African Community Centre \(ACC\)](#), and [Swansea Council for Voluntary Service \(SCVS\)](#). By supporting our local community, we aim to inspire support from local businesses with our activities.

But learning from others is just as important. We visited the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency's (DVSA) staff group, Embrace, at their Nottingham branch to share best practice and see how their organisation works. We're always keen to learn – after all, that's how we grow!

Making DVLA a great place to work

It's important that DVLA reflects the society in which we live. Seeing the positive impact Unity has had on DVLA, and [the people who work here](#), makes us incredibly proud to be a part of it. But we're not doing it alone – we're just one of 6 SNGs helping to ensure DVLA is a supportive and inclusive environment.

We've been lucky enough to watch Unity grow and evolve over the past 5 years, thanks to the dedication of our members and the support of our colleagues. But of course, there's always more work to be done!

Our future plans will see us commemorating Holocaust Memorial Day in January 2022, and we're also looking to increase our steering group membership.

Visit [DVLA's 3-year strategic plan](#) to see what the agency is doing to make sure we're a great place to work.

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[DVLA working with local authorities and police services to take action on unlicensed vehicles](#)

Vehicle tax evasion is against the law and while over 98% of vehicles are taxed correctly, a small minority of vehicle keepers continue to break the law. It costs [HM Treasury](#) £94 million every year, vital funds which would otherwise go towards public services so it's important to catch tax evaders.

We work closely with our devolved power local authority partners and the police to enforce against tax evaders and have recently been on the streets in Manchester, Walsall, Dudley and Nottingham carrying out targeted enforcement against untaxed vehicles.

I'm a National Enforcement Manager at DVLA, which means I'm the contract manager for the Wheelclamping & Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) enforcement contracts and the ANPR vehicle contract. I'm also the senior leader for Wheelclamping and ANPR staff both on site and remotely.



There are always new challenges in this line of work, but my role is to encourage and educate people to comply with the law by taxing their vehicles. [The last Roadside Survey](#), which has been carried out at 256 sites across the UK every 2 years since 2011, showed 98.4% of people were doing the right thing. We're so pleased this was higher than the previous survey, but that still means that 1.6% of keepers across the UK are not taxing their vehicles.

Taxing is not taxing! It is really simple to do and it can be done online in just a few clicks, so why would anyone risk losing their vehicle and paying fines? There are also options to [pay for your tax monthly by Direct Debit](#) so there really is no excuse.

What are devolved powers?

Devolved powers are given to local authorities who have chosen to take on DVLA's legal responsibility to take enforcement action on untaxed vehicles on the road in their area. This power is devolved from [the Secretary of State for Transport](#) and I'm responsible for working with current and future partners to support them to conduct enforcement activity in their area. This means that in these areas we have additional enforcement capability to support the national enforcement contract.

Police services can also be given devolved powers, including the ability to remove untaxed vehicles from the road under the same process as local authorities.



We have 84 Devolved Power Partners (DPPs) across England and Wales, and our national contractor, NSL, works alongside them to provide full geographical coverage across the UK.

We know from speaking to our DPPs how important having this responsibility to enforce is to them. They work hard to remove and disrupt criminal behaviour in their area, and I'm really proud that we are a part of that important work. DVLA staff also support police services in conducting targeted operations as they have the power to stop vehicles in transit which we do not – another way to encourage people to tax their vehicle.

What's been happening in Manchester, Walsall, Dudley and Nottingham?

These 4 areas are already committed DPPs but we wanted to give our help, advice and support to encourage increased activity whilst learning more about how they work. This has helped me to build a 12-month plan of working closer with our DPPs.

The support we provided was in the form of our own DVLA ANPR fleet who helped the DPPs to identify vehicle tax evasion hotspots, share intelligence and tackle untaxed vehicles by either clamping, impounding or issuing warning notices to the keepers.

Across the operations, we identified over 450 vehicles which were not taxed correctly so our DPP enforcement team took action either by clamping or impounding the vehicle – taking it to a local pound.



There are a few stand-out experiences for me. In Nottingham we found an untaxed car that the keeper had tried to hide behind a hedge, whilst in Dudley there were 7 untaxed cars parked in a row at the bottom of a road leading to an industrial estate – they resulted in a warning notice and 6 clamps.

In Walsall we put a warning notice on a large van that had not been taxed which had no rear tyres but was on bricks. When we were passing by later on, we found it had been moved onto a private driveway – we do not know how they moved it but we were pleased the notice had the desired effect for the keeper to take action.

We covered a really large area in Manchester where I witnessed an instant lift, where a car was lifted away from a main road and taken to the pound and, unfortunately, some of the abuse that the street team regularly gets from individuals who have not taxed their car.



What's next?

The last few months of working more closely with our DPPs has given us lots of insight into how they work and what more we can do to support them. If we can understand the different challenges that they face, then we will know more about how we can help them.

We all share the same goal – to remove untaxed vehicles from the road – this is only fair for those vehicle keepers who have done the right thing and taxed correctly. Anything that we can do to help, I absolutely believe we have a duty to do so.

I'm really proud of my teams, both those who work behind the scenes in Swansea and members who work remotely, for the hard work and challenging contact that they deal with every day.

Action is still ongoing by many of our DPPs and we've recently launched a new communications campaign reminding vehicle keepers to tax. You can listen out for the adverts on radio or you may see it on digital channels.

To avoid the risk of losing your vehicle, make sure it's taxed – you can [check online to see if your vehicle is taxed](#) in just a few steps. And if you need to tax your vehicle, [it's quick and easy to do online](#) and you can [spread the cost of vehicle tax by setting up a Direct Debit](#).

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Shaping the future of our facilities management

There will be big changes made by DVLA as we come to the end of our Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract in 2025 and with this there are opportunities to learn and grow. This exciting programme of change means we've been recruiting people to help us, with more new roles emerging over the life of the programme. These roles are critical in helping us shape the way we'll manage our site and services as we exit the current PFI contract.

Back in 2005, DVLA awarded the integrated PFI contract to Telereal Trillium. Their goal was to refurbish our main site, provide a full range of facility management (FM) services and conduct some additional building work around our estates.

We're now in the final 4 years of the contract, so we're looking at our next steps.

How our services are currently managed

There are many different facilities, vital to DVLA's everyday operations, which are split into soft and hard services. Soft services are cleaning, bus services and catering with hard services covering building maintenance and the provision of furniture.



Why our services are changing

In the 2018 autumn budget, the [Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that government would no longer use the current model of PFI](#) for new government projects. DVLA will be one of the first to exit a PFI contract following closely behind DWP and HMRC, the first two central government bodies to go through the expiry process. We'll be working with the [Infrastructure and Projects Authority](#), the government's centre of expertise for infrastructure and major projects, to take forward any lessons learned from the exit of the PFI contracts.

Our facilities management team has started to look at ending some of our soft services contracts early, by March 2023. This includes cleaning, waste management, pest control, catering and transport services. One of the first changes has been the removal of the lease of our staff minibuses which happened in March 2021.

Next steps

My team's role will be to ensure a seamless transition from old to new service providers. We'll make sure the services are tendered and procured correctly and continue the safe, secure running of the agency.

When the PFI contract expires, we can manage our services differently. We'll look for improvements in value for money and quality through a more distributed approach. It allows us to look at smaller contracts, enabling us to work with a varied range of smaller businesses, specialist suppliers and service providers.

We are currently working with some expert consultants to review our current practices and consider in detail all the potential options. We're exploring all possibilities available from a fully in-house service provision managed by DVLA, to a total facility managed service through a new supplier contract.



Roles and recruitment

The programme will involve multiple projects to manage the exit and expiry of current service provisions. This will include the development of a new operating model and finding suitable new service providers.

If you have a background in facilities management, we're currently looking for [senior FM governance and project managers](#) and would love to hear from you. You can register for vacancy alerts through [Civil Service Jobs](#).

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[Supporting the IT industry – DVLA](#)

Launch the second Business Analysis Development Programme

It's been two years since we launched recruitment for our [first Business Analysis Development Programme](#). When we originally came up with the concept and design of the programme it was a voyage into the unknown. We'd never done anything like this before so it was exciting to see what we could achieve.

The two-year programme has been specifically designed to provide a fantastic foundation to individuals to start a career in IT. It gives them the opportunity to develop skills, gain real-world experience and the qualifications needed to be fully 'job ready' to apply for an entry-level Business Analyst (BA) position on completion, with industry recognised qualifications.

The formal learning is supported by practical experience, with mentors and support networks to help students and guide them. It gives students the opportunity to gain experience working on delivering some of the most important digital services within government, allowing them to put into practice their learning in a real-world environment.

The programme so far

We've been lucky that our first group has fully immersed themselves in the role and DVLA. They're almost at the end of their journey now, with one module of the programme left to complete.



During their time on the programme they've already achieved the British Computer Society (BCS) International Diploma in Business Analysis and APMG Foundation and Practitioner in Business Analysis. They've also picked up other skills on their way, [including hands on experience of programming](#) and building their own websites, as well as day to day work with our business

units and the development squads.

Nikki Hayes, student, had this to say about the current programme:

“This role comes with plenty of opportunities to develop your skillset in a safe learning environment with lots of support along the way. I’ve not only achieved a diploma but with on the job learning I’ve now developed a wide range of skills. Starting out I would shadow existing BAs, now I’m taking on my own pieces of work.

“I work closely with stakeholders and development teams on a daily basis and work on continuous improvement and legislative changes for various services in DVLA.”

As the first group nears graduation, the programme is open again for new recruits and we’re excited to see who is on the next group.

What’s new to the next programme?

Firstly, we are looking at how the programme will run remotely. The last year has shown that this is possible and our range of collaboration tools support remote working too. We will also be recording sessions so that students can go back and re-watch them.

Secondly, we’re taking on board the feedback from our first group for all the learning and improvements, so that we can implement it to make the programme even better the second time around. This includes finding solutions to the challenges remote working brings with catering to learning styles.

But best of all, we’ve got even more [digital services](#) that we want to build for the motoring public, so there will be plenty of opportunities to get our next group involved in making these happen.

What does the programme offer?

You’re given the opportunity to study for a recognised qualification – the BCS International Diploma in Business Analysis. You will also be given a personal mentor to help you through your time.

But perhaps more importantly, the programme gives you the chance to gain experience working on some of the most important digital services within government, putting into practice your learning in a real-world environment right here in DVLA.

The offer and how to apply

The scheme is now open for applications, until 7 June 2021 and again it offers a fantastic opportunity to learn digital skills while you earn.

The programme is open to anyone with an interest in developing their skills, with no specific academic entry requirements.

We have 6 positions available on our programme. They run for 24 months with a salary of £26,126, giving you the opportunity to earn while you learn. It offers a real alternative to some of the more traditional routes, such as university.



Jodie Lewis, [one of our current business analysts](#), said:

“The advice that I would give to someone applying for the Business Analysis Development Programme would be that if you are committed to developing yourself, not afraid to ask questions and have an inquisitive mind, then go for it, definitely apply.”

To find out more about the roles, entry requirements and application process, [please visit our current vacancies page](#).

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[Do you know how to tell DVLA online that you've sold or transferred your vehicle?](#)

Since we launched our online [Tell DVLA you've sold, transferred or bought a vehicle](#) service back in 2015 more than 40 million transactions have been processed.

Making it easy for users

We wanted to make telling us you've sold, transferred or bought a vehicle as

quick and easy as possible. Using [your feedback](#) we've made the service simple, putting the needs of customers, both public and trade first. Telling us you've changed a vehicle is now quicker and easier than ever.

By using the online service, the DVLA database is updated immediately, and you get instant confirmation by email without having to send any documents in the post.

You'll automatically receive a refund for any full remaining months of vehicle tax, this will be sent to the address on your V5C vehicle registration certificate (log book). Your online notification will cancel any Direct Debit you've set up for your vehicle tax – it's as easy as that.

One tip to make sure the process does run this smoothly is to make sure the address on your V5C registration certificate is the correct one.

If you've moved, you can tell DVLA straight away by using this service: <https://www.gov.uk/change-address-v5c>

Over the past 12 months, over 70% of vehicle keepers told us online that they've sold, bought, or transferred a vehicle.

The service is available 7am to 7pm, 7 days a week.



Our easy step by step guide to tell us you've sold or transferred a vehicle privately

All you need is the 11-digit document reference number from your vehicle V5C (log book).

1. Go to [gov.uk/sold-bought-vehicle](https://www.gov.uk/sold-bought-vehicle).
2. Tell us you've sold it privately to a person or business.
3. Remember to give the full name (not initials) and address of the new

keeper.

4. Give the new keeper the green 'new keeper' slip (V5C/2) so they can [tax the vehicle](#).

If you sell your vehicle to a motor trader or garage or need to tell us the vehicle is scrapped or written off

With your consent, [the trader can tell DVLA that you've sold the vehicle to them online](#) – just give them the V5C and ask them to use the online service to tell us straight away.

If you prefer, you can tell DVLA online that [you've sold or transferred a vehicle](#) yourself by using the 11-digit document reference number on the yellow slip (V5C/3).

You can also use this service to tell us about the scrapping of a vehicle and any insurance write-offs.

Protect yourself from fraud

Please keep your V5C (log book) safe. The V5C's 11-digit document reference number is the key to using our services online and, like a credit card number, shouldn't be shared, copied, or photographed.

What our service users have said

"Offering customers, the online option to inform DVLA of any changes, etc. is extremely helpful and very easy to use – especially during lockdown when we are unable to go out to post letters or documents. Please continue with this service. Thank you."

"Very simple and easy to use. Great not to have to post a form."

"Don't know how you can improve the service, because it's brilliant as it is."

"Superb easy service 5 stars for this organisation."

Be part of our research – join our online panel to help improve our services

We value customer feedback through our research and are looking for volunteers to test our services. To volunteer, [join our online research panel](#).

In the meantime...

Check out our [wide range of online services](#) – they're all quick and simple. I've highlighted just a few below:

[Follow DVLA on Twitter](#), [follow us on Facebook](#) and [connect with us on LinkedIn](#). You can also [subscribe to the DVLA digital services blog](#).

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