

News story: DVSA aims to stop violence against its staff

Between April 2016 and March 2017, more than 300 driving examiners, vehicle testers and roadside enforcement staff suffered physical or verbal abuse while doing their jobs. This was an increase of more than 50% on the previous year.

Attacks on staffs have included:

- verbal abuse and death threats
- damaging staff cars and offices
- serious physical assaults
- lorry drivers trying to run DVSA enforcement cars off the road
- failed driving test candidates driving off with their examiner still in the car against their will

DVSA's campaign aims to put a stop to this completely unacceptable abuse against its staff.

Don't take it out on our staff

Around 4,600 people work for DVSA. They help you to stay safe on Great Britain's roads by:

- testing learners to make sure they can drive safely
- helping keep vehicles safe through MOTs and annual tests
- taking unsafe drivers and vehicles off the roads

They all have a right to come to work without being abused, threatened or assaulted.

The campaign will:

- warn people what will happen if they do abuse, threaten or assault staff
- show how being assaulted at work affects members of staff
- encourage staff to report any instance of abuse so offenders can be dealt with

Posters warning about the consequences of assaulting staff will be displayed at DVSA sites across Great Britain

At driving test centres

Learner drivers who swear at or verbally abuse staff will be forced to:

- use a different test centre the next time they take a test
- take future tests with an extra supervisor present

Anyone who threatens or assault examiners, drives off with an examiner still

in the car, or damages DVSA property will:

- be reported to the police
- face the strongest possible penalties

Although it's extremely rare, driving instructors sometimes try to influence the results of a driving test by harassing or threatening examiners. They face being:

- banned from specific driving test centres
- removed from the approved driving instructor register

At the roadside, at operator sites or authorised testing centres

DVSA will:

- record any abuse from commercial drivers and vehicle operators as evidence for any investigation by the traffic commissioners – they have the power to suspend or take away driving licences and operator licences
- report serious incidents to the police

In some busy sites, enforcement staff are starting to trial body-worn cameras to capture evidence of abuse.

Body-worn cameras will be trialled by DVSA

Abuse will not be tolerated

Gareth Llewellyn, DVSA Chief Executive, said:

Our staff work incredibly hard to help you stay safe on Britain's roads. We do not tolerate anyone abusing, threatening or assaulting them.

Our message is clear – whatever has happened, don't take it out on our staff. If you do, we'll press for the strongest possible penalties.

The Traffic Commissioner for Wales, Nick Jones, said:

My fellow traffic commissioners and I welcome the agency's campaign to tackle the unacceptable abuse which staff may face whilst carrying out their professional duties.