

# A diverse and inclusive workplace

Uche Williams has been working in DVLA's Contact Centre for 2 years. Here, Uche shares her experiences of working at DVLA.



## **My background...**

I was raised in Lagos, Nigeria. My educational background is in Law, having completed my undergraduate degree in Nigeria. I moved to Swansea as an international student, doing my postgraduate degree and masters in International Maritime and Commercial Law.

I have now been living in Wales for just over 9 years. I am married and have a wonderful 3 year old daughter.

## **How I came to work at DVLA**

After my studies I worked with the African Community Centre in Swansea. While I was working there DVLA's HR department invited myself and my colleagues to exchange some ideas on how to increase the number of Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) representation in the Civil Service. We looked at what we could do to make working at DVLA more appealing, and to help others understand what roles were on offer at DVLA.

## **Time for a change**

This meeting was also an opportunity for me to find out a little more about DVLA. I decided it was somewhere I was interested in working and as soon as I saw a vacancy advertised I applied. My application was successful, which is how I came to work in DVLA's Contact Centre.

## **I really enjoy my job!**

The Contact Centre is a great starting point because it's the core of the business. Once you have this background knowledge you can progress and use this information to build a career and branch off in different directions. DVLA is so much more than a Contact Centre; there's actually a huge variety of other departments.

## **Approachable and supportive workplace**

Working in a fast paced, contact centre environment can be demanding with customers having high expectations. We have to know a lot about a diverse range of topics and if we can't give customers everything they want this can be difficult. My accent has, on occasions, caused a negative reaction from customers but my line manager has been amazing throughout and his support has really helped me to develop.

## **Opening up opportunities**

DVLA's Staff Networking Group, Unity, is an open supportive networking group, committed to upholding equality and diversity of race throughout the whole organisation.

As the secretary of Unity I have been able to look into issues that need to be tackled and make sure resolutions are reached. I am proud to perform this role at DVLA to try and make things better.

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## **Cars, collaboration and co-op service**

It's been a while since we wrote about our new vehicle registration service and the [transformation](#) of our services.



### **We've been working with the industry to improve our services**

Register a Vehicle (RaV) is the replacement service for AFRL (Automated First Registration and Licensing), used by all manufacturers and retailers registering new vehicles.

The AFRL service was developed in the 1990s and needed to be updated due to the changing requirements of both the industry and DVLA.

We've spent a lot of time working with the industry and trade bodies to make sure that the service is fit for purpose and meets their requirements. The service is more flexible, giving us the ability to make changes easily and quickly to meet new legislation and needs in the future.

### **Major manufacturers are using the new service**

In June, we saw the first integrated registration using APIs, resulting in a vehicle registered in the cloud. Fiat Chrysler is the first large manufacturer to adopt the new service and has already been joined by Mazda. With both added to the service, there are a total of 201 retailers using RaV to register around 4,000 vehicles already. They will be followed over the coming months by fellow co-op manufacturers into early 2019. The AFRL system will be decommissioned in February 2019.

Fiat Chrysler's Alan Napier said: "DVLA's technical redevelopment provided us with an opportunity to build in enhancements of our own, to arrive at an even more user-friendly system that fulfils everyone's needs. Working closely with the DVLA and key retailer partners, we were delighted to deliver the project on time and to have the DVLA's support with a phased migration strategy that ensured system continuity for our network. This was undoubtedly only possible

because of the regular communication throughout the development period and the commitment on both sides to the deployment of the required migration support resources.”

### **Even more developments are planned!**

Alongside this, the web service is currently being redesigned for current users and will be rolled out later this year.

The V55 series of forms, used to register vehicles where the electronic service cannot, are also being renewed to incorporate new fields based on new legislation introduced and made easier to access.

These forms will be available from September 2018 with future versions already being developed, based on customer insight, and will be introduced in line with other changes in February 2019.

We will keep you updated here with developments between now and spring 2019.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with us at [ved.reform@dvla.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ved.reform@dvla.gsi.gov.uk).

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## [Leading the way on driver safety at DVLA](#)



I'm Emma Melrose and I've had the privilege of being Head of [Drivers Medical](#) at DVLA since February. And I don't use the word privilege lightly. It's an extremely important role, at the heart of ensuring driver safety in Great

Britain. I head up a large team of people making [decisions](#) about people's fitness to drive every single day.

My career spans lots of different leadership positions in retail, contact centre telecoms, media and IT outsourcing, before moving to the public sector and DVLA in 2015. I'm passionate about providing excellent customer service and coming back into an operational environment has been energising. I enjoy leading people, and this role allows me the pleasure of doing this as well as playing an important role in supporting the mobility of the UK population.

## **A fresh pair of eyes**

My first 6 months in Drivers Medical have been a steep learning curve, but I'm lucky enough to have been supported by a fantastic team of knowledgeable and enthusiastic colleagues. I was immediately struck by the importance of being the only group of people in GB doing what we do. Around 600 colleagues handled about 750,000 customer cases last year. Getting out and about to understand the important roles that my team do has allowed me to understand what we do well and identify areas for improvement.

## **Meeting experts in the field**

Two months in, I attended the [Secretary of State's Honorary Medical Advisory Panels](#) where I sat amongst leaders in the field of medicine. I was humbled as I listened to the medical experts taking time to consider any impacts on the driving population and the complexities that we need to consider. I've also had the pleasure to meet with a number of our medical charity stakeholders, which has given me the opportunity to consider and understand the challenges their members and our customers face.

## **It's a balancing act**

We in the Drivers Medical team are responsible for road safety while ensuring the wellbeing of those affected. Our purpose is to make efficient, accurate and timely decisions for drivers who have contacted us about a medical condition that may impact on their ability to drive.

Each one of these customers has their own story to tell, a situation that presents difficulties in their lives. It is so important that we treat them with compassion and empathy.

## **What's next**

Over the coming months, I will be working with my colleagues in other areas of DVLA to review our existing services. This will tell us where we are doing well but will also tell us where we need to make improvements that benefit us and our customers.

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# Working with medical charities to make our roads safe

I'm DVLA's relationship manager for medical charities and I work in our Corporate Services Team. It was set up just over 3 years ago to gain a better understanding of our corporate customers' needs.

We work closely with a variety of stakeholders on anything from the launch of new services, to raising awareness of what drivers need to do if they have a medical condition. We currently work closely with around 15 key medical charities.

## **How it all started...**

In 2016 we invited some key medical charities to DVLA to talk about our drivers medical work. It was a great opportunity to share views, discuss current topics and build on the work we've done to develop a service for drivers [to tell us about a medical condition](#). It's proved to be of real benefit to everyone involved. Our charity forum now meets every 6 months with members representing customers affected by medical conditions that could impact on their ability to drive.

## **Listening to views**

We've discussed how people maintain mobility if they need to give up their driving licence and carrying out driving assessments for people wanting to understand how their illness affects their driving. This gives us real insight into the challenges drivers, with specific medical conditions, face on a daily basis. We also talked about how we help customers better understand how their condition affects their driving by directing drivers to charity websites.

## **Working together**



We shared what we're doing to improve some of our customer facing letters and how the charities help us gather valuable insight. All the charities are supportive and we're working with them to survey some of their customers to find out more.

We also discussed how we could work together to understand why young people are reluctant to tell us about their medical condition. Towards the end we also talked about geographical hot spots and the most common medical conditions we're told about.

## **Most people who report a medical condition keep their licence**

Working closely with charities in this way should help them support their members and encourage them to be confident in telling us about a medical condition. It will also help us in our aim to encourage anyone with a medical condition to have all the information they need to continue driving and, make sure all drivers are safe on our roads.

## **Do you want to get involved?**

We're looking for lay members for our [medical panels](#). Medical panels help maintain and improve road safety, giving expert advice on relevant medical conditions and their impact on driving. You'd play an important role on the panel and be expected to challenge assumptions and ask for explanations of medical terms and concepts that aren't clear. We're recruiting this autumn – so, if you've an interest or some experience in diabetes, vision, neurological conditions, psychiatry or cardiovascular illness look out for our adverts on [Charityjobs.co.uk](http://Charityjobs.co.uk) and [Civil Service Jobs](#).

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## **[Supporting our working carers at DVLA](#)**

Last week I attended a launch event for the [Employers for Carers Wales hub](#). I was thrilled to have the opportunity to talk about how we've been able to secure resources to set up the Carers Network at DVLA. This is a network run by staff for staff, whether they're a carer, former carer or ally, it's open to anyone.



As I see more and more people trying to balance work and care, I'm really committed to working with the group to make a difference to the lives of people who are trying to juggle their responsibilities. This is something that is likely to affect most of us at some time during our lives and linking up with others who are going through or have been through similar experiences can definitely help.

**It's important that our carers feel they have support in the workplace**

I recognise the importance of providing a supportive workplace for the carers



we employ. They have valuable skills that we want to retain. It's really important to help our staff cope with their caring responsibilities and at the same time feel engaged and productive in the work they do.

Alongside the help that's always available here at DVLA, we created guides on our staff intranet for carers and their managers bringing all our policies into one place and signposting them to external support organisations.

It's important too, that carers feel they're not alone. Through our regular drop in sessions and very popular coffee mornings people can come together to share their stories and experiences or just pop in and listen.

**We've worked hard at DVLA to create a safe and supportive environment for all of our employees. If DVLA is somewhere you'd like to work...**

**Then come and join us!**

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