

Picking up the baton at DVLA contact centre

I'm delighted to join a vibrant working environment with such great people.

We are a multi-channel customer service provider with around 1,100 staff handling over 24.5 million enquiries a year. The strong leadership and excellent people development that exists is second to none. I think our vision says it all:

To be a centre of excellence in everything we do



Award winning customer service

We recently received [Customer Contact Association \(CCA\)](#) accreditation for the 12th consecutive year, this time successfully obtaining [CCA Global Standard Version 7](#).

To support our accreditation independent external assessors met with staff, senior leaders and key stakeholders to benchmark our operation against the CCA standards.

Continuous focus on customer experience, strong processes, staff development and engagement were key strengths highlighted by the CCA in their assessment.

This achievement follows on from our recent success at the [CCA Excellence Awards](#), where we picked up Team of the Year and Individual of the Year awards.

What I bring to the role

I have over 20 years' experience in a contact centre environment, covering every role from phone advisor to operations manager and everything in-between! I'm excited to use my expertise to help shape how we take the contact centre to the next level.

Coming from the private sector into the public sector has its advantages. Bringing different perspectives and experiences can be helpful when looking at continuous improvement, pushing digital transformation, and supporting our customers and people.

What the future looks like

We'll continue supporting customers by offering a choice of channels. I look forward to building on technology we've already introduced such as [chatbots](#) and webchat.

I'm proud of the awards we've achieved, the engagement of our staff and how we always strive for excellence. We've got a culture where everyone works towards a common team goal, no matter what individual roles they play.

To find out more

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[Business Analysis Programme at DVLA – four months on](#)

The first group of 10 has come on board

It's been four months since our students started the first [Business Analysis \(BA\) Development Programme at DVLA](#). The programme is part of the [Centre of Digital Excellence](#) which was set up in 2018, aimed at recruiting and developing talent in a number of digital areas. We welcomed our first ten students in September and set about immersing them in all things BA. The group is a good mix, with 50% new to DVLA and the others moving over from other parts of the agency.

The students hit the ground running, starting with a 3 week boot camp where they were immersed into the DVLA culture and introduced to the foundations of BA. They were set challenges and tasks and worked through multiple BA

methodologies and techniques. We also started preparing the students for their first British Computer Society (BCS) module – the Foundation in BA.



After boot camp it was straight to work, letting them start using their newly learned tools and techniques to help deliver front line digital services for the agency. The feedback from the software development teams has been great, and shows how quickly the students have started to add real value

Gaining experience and qualifications

Our first group has successfully completed their BCS Foundation in BA module and have started their journey to achieve an International Diploma in BA. We are incredibly proud of what our candidates have achieved so far and the effort our team have put in to help them along their path.

We took time before Christmas to review their progress with them and see how much they've learned and reflect on how their confidence has grown. It's been a busy few months but they're also looking forward to what comes next.

Vicky Goldsbury, one of our first students said:

The BA development programme has given me the opportunity to be totally immersed in a new development challenge and taken me right out of my comfort zone. It's got a great mix of on the job learning and formal qualifications. Pair that with the support and knowledge we've had from our peers and the wider DVLA community, has meant

it's been a great scheme to be part of so far.

Next steps for our students

In the next module, our students will continue studies with BCS, including Requirements Engineering, Systems Development and an introduction to programming. They will also work on our programme to create a digital future.

What's next for the scheme

The scheme has proved incredibly successful. As well as all candidates passing their first module, which is a great personal boost for them, they are also able to help with developing DVLA's frontline services which will help get things done quicker for customers

We are now sharing knowledge with other organisations and government departments who have expressed an interest in the programme. If you have an interest in becoming a Business Analyst, [keep an eye on the Civil Service Jobs website](#) where all our opportunities will be advertised.

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Royal recognition for DVLA's LEAP training programme

Getting your training right allows you to attract better staff, and retain talent. Our Learn, Engage, Adapt, Perform (LEAP) training programme was developed in-house for new and existing leaders. It's a 12 month programme where delegates can explore and understand their role as a leader and build excellent leadership skills. Nearly 500 staff have received the training so far, in just under three years.

So I'm delighted that the programme has been recognised and celebrated with a [Princess Royal Training Award](#).



A huge honour

I helped commission, design and develop LEAP and I was nominated by my training colleagues to accept the award from HRH Princess Anne on behalf of the team. I was honoured, but to say I was nervous was an understatement!

I was joined at the awards ceremony by my colleagues Mari Rees and Richard Perry, and Mark Shackell, a leader from our Contact Centre who has come through the programme.

Mari said:

The awards ceremony was a wonderful way to recognise the hard work of colleagues who created the LEAP programme. Hearing all the stories of the other award winners made me feel proud that the DVLA was in such good company.

Every member of the team has played an important part in gaining this award, I was pleased to represent them on this special occasion.

The ceremony

Entering [St James's Palace](#) was a surreal experience. Taking in the beautiful surroundings and being part of the excitement and nervousness of all the other award winners was like nothing I have experienced before.

After being invited into the waiting hall we mingled with the other award

winners ahead of the presentation ceremony.

As the award recipient, I had to leave my colleagues to be seated in a separate area. I waited patiently until I was called to step forward. It was a pleasure to be greeted by Princess Anne who asked me how many staff worked for the agency and congratulated us on our achievements.

After the ceremony, the award recipients were taken to small tables and Princess Anne took the time out to visit each of the tables, where we all got to give a quick overview of our achievements. I thought that was a very nice touch from someone whose time is always at a premium.

The whole day was fantastic and something I will always remember. I feel privileged to have been part of it.



In good company

This award sees DVLA join a select group of businesses and organisations who have achieved the award, including household names such as IBM, The Royal Bank of Scotland and the Royal Navy.

On average only about 40 of these sought-after awards are given each year. We are only the second Civil Service organisation ([the other was HMRC](#)) to have achieved this standard of excellence in the four years since the awards launched.

Future plans

Great training and [opportunities to develop and progress](#) are at the core of our values. With this award under our belt, LEAP goes from strength to

strength – the next round of delegates are three months into the latest programme and enjoying every minute.

To find out more

You can [read about what it's like to work at DVLA](#) and [take a look at our latest vacancies on Civil Service jobs](#).

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DVLA's school hosting days make learning fun

We know that Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) will be as important to future generations as IT literacy is to today's workforce. To help with this, we've recently launched our new Discover, Reach, Interesting Interaction, Visualise and Engage (DRIIVE) programme.

Through DRIIVE, we use our IT expertise to teach children how to use coding in a practical way through problem-solving, teamwork and creative sessions.



Sharing skills, opening doors

Our school hosting days are one part of DRIIVE.

During the sessions, children have a chance to learn how to code automated vehicles, create [chatbots](#) and program digital ID badges. They also find out how teams at DVLA work together on exciting projects such as creating digital services that millions of people use.

By taking part, children develop practical skills, and it also helps schools to take these lessons back to the classroom.



Our aim is to introduce IT skills by making them fun and easily accessible for all. Ideally, we hope this will pique their curiosity in the STEM subjects and not only influence their educational choices for the future, but teach them the importance of mastering STEM.

Our hosting days are aimed at encouraging and hopefully inspiring our next generation of STEM experts. The development of these skills is critical and who knows, in the future some of these children may choose a career at DVLA!

An amazing day

Our first school hosting day was with our local year 6 pupils from nearby [Clase Primary School](#).

Through different activities and interactive sessions, the children learned about emerging technologies, such as virtual reality and facial recognition.

We also taught them about [scratch coding \(coding for beginners\)](#) and how to use [Micro:bit](#) and OhBot (computer programming tools). For the finale, they all had a go at navigating a Sphero (a small round robot) around a pre-built track.

[embedded content]

Great feedback

The pupils were amazing and all keen to learn and brimming with questions, which was fantastic. Every child left with a certificate and more information to take home with them to show how they can continue their learning about STEM.

It was a brilliant opportunity for us to share our knowledge and we were able to donate decommissioned laptops to the school. This will help to continue STEM in the classroom.

Ffion Morgan and Suzanne Ward, both teachers at Clase Primary School, had this to say:

An amazing day from start to finish – 10 out of 10!

This has given us loads of inspiration to take back into the classroom.

Just the beginning

This is just the start. Our aim is to invite or visit 6 schools each year for a day of fun and learning about STEM and to keep working closely developing key skills in the local community.

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[Introducing DVLA's Emerging Tech Lab](#)



The team

I lead DVLA's Emerging Tech Lab, and I'm joined by a technical lead and three developers.

Two of our developers are on DVLA's Masters Level Apprenticeship Programme. As well as exploring how we can make use of modern cloud platforms and technologies, they have also spent time studying for a masters degree in Software Engineering at Swansea University. Now back in the workplace, they are putting their new skills to use.

What we do

We use new and emerging technologies to solve problems set by the business. We do this by developing proof of concepts (PoC), which means we test a concept or theory to see if it has the potential to be turned into reality. At the end of each project we produce a working PoC, and share with our colleagues what we've done and what we've learned along the way.

Our first project

We realised a lot of people start their journey with us by applying for a driving licence. As part of the application process, we ask you for a passport photo which then gets printed on your driving licence. Our clerks must check each photo conforms to the passport photo criteria.

The process of checking each photo is time consuming and we wondered if we could train a machine to take on this task. The answer was yes and, after some research, we built our own machine learning model to do this.



Teaching begins

We taught the model what acceptable and unacceptable photos look like.

To do this we took photos that conformed to the passport photo criteria and ones that didn't, and tagged these as either acceptable or unacceptable. Capturing the acceptable images was straightforward, but we had to get creative with the unacceptable images. Dolls, figurines and even snapchat filters featured in these!

The moment of truth

After uploading the tagged images we left the machine to learn. After just a few minutes, it told us it was ready and invited us to test it. We fed in a selection of new images and waited... our machine passed with flying colours, a great result!

What's next?

We've got a full backlog of ideas to explore using technologies such as artificial intelligence, augmented reality, chatbots and more challenging machine learning use cases. So we're going to be pretty busy over the next few months.

To find out more

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