

# Bats, bees and trees: DVLA's latest biodiversity action plan

The recent publication of our fourth [Biodiversity Action Plan \(BAP\)](#) marks another milestone in our commitment towards a more sustainable future. Although it focuses on our specific aims for the next few years, together with our [new Sustainability Report](#), the BAP also ensures that decisions about the future of DVLA will include the development of biodiversity across our estate.

Whilst publishing the plan is not a legal requirement for the agency, it does help us stay compliant with legislation and government targets. Meeting targets is not the only reason for doing this though. We recognise that biodiversity is vitally important in fighting climate change, and in ensuring good health and well-being within our local community and further afield. The plan supports our commitment to ensure we address these related challenges of public health, climate change and biodiversity, both now and for future generations.



The DVLA estate includes three sites in the Swansea area which provide a variety of different habitats including urban and industrial. We're proud of the progress we have made in the development of biodiversity on our estate and over the next five years we will focus on three main areas we want to improve.

## Our habitats

One of the main focuses is the habitats that we already have on the estate. On one grassland habitat surrounding a car park, we counted more than 16 species of plants and in a parkland area, we identified 25 species. We have many trees on the estate including Alder, whose catkins [provide an early source of pollen for bees](#).

We will target the areas we have identified as priority habitats in the BAP, meaning they are important for preserving biodiversity, such as hedgerows and ponds.

We plan to firstly maintain these habitats so that we do not lose any species and, where we can, look after these habitats in a way that improves their condition, making them better examples of these types of habitat. These management techniques include partially clearing vegetation from our pond and introducing tree and shrub planting in our woodland and parkland habitat. We will also time hedge cutting to avoid nesting season and allow leaves to gather below hedges to provide shelter for insects and hibernating hedgehogs.



## Our species

Our second priority will be to ensure the species currently using our estate continue to be present in healthy numbers in years to come. We have focused on key species whose needs will not be met by the general habitat conservation plans.

We have two bee colonies at one of our sites. Bee populations are coming under pressure and numbers are decreasing rapidly, so we want to make sure



that our population remains healthy by renewing the bee hives we currently have on site and introducing new hives where appropriate.

We also have six species of bats recorded on site, all of which are all legally protected. We plan to encourage these bats to continue using our site by providing bat boxes and identifying trees and buildings where they can roost. We will also work to minimise the light spill from our external lighting, ensuring there are dark corridors connecting their roosting areas.



Common lizards were found on one of our sites and although lizards are not rare, they are coming under increasing stress from development, so it is good to see a medium size population here. We will maintain the site and provide winter shelters to ensure these species continue to be present in healthy numbers.

The site is home to lots of different wild flowers. These include wood vetch and betony, the presence of which suggest that at one time the landscape looked very different. Our plans include taking action to preserve the area and adding signage to ensure the plants are not stepped on or disturbed.

## **Our community**

Our final priority is to engage with our staff and the local community. When we are able to, we will give local schools an opportunity to use our green spaces to encourage children to learn more about the natural environment and how important it is to protect this amazing resource. We will raise awareness of wildlife gardening with our staff and create a sign-posted trail to raise awareness of the biodiversity on site. We plan to include local schools in a biodiversity day and we are creating an official biodiversity steering group

to oversee the progress.



The sustainability team, with help from the official biodiversity steering group, will make sure these objectives are achieved. This group will be made up of staff from across DVLA including colleagues from Estates and the communications team who will help raise awareness with our staff and the wider community.

If you are interested in Biodiversity on the DVLA estate, you can find out more in [the Biodiversity Action Plan](#), and read more about our goals for a sustainable future in [the new Sustainability Report](#).

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## [DVLA's bilingual online services: behind the scenes](#)

[English] – [[Cymraeg](#)]

If you've ever used DVLA's public online services, you may well have spotted that most of them are also available in Welsh or used them yourself if you speak the language. As today is Welsh language rights day ('Mae gen i hawl'), it's the ideal time to reveal more about how we developed our 2 newest bilingual online services.

[Welsh language rights day](#), which is promoted by the Welsh Language Commissioner, celebrates the Welsh language services provided by organisations and the rights people have to use them. We definitely had good reason to celebrate our bilingual online services recently, as our 2 latest ones – [change address on your vehicle log book \(V5C\)](#) and [get a duplicate log book \(V5C\)](#) – were the first ones we developed and launched in English and Welsh at the same time.

## Here's how we did it

I've worked with the Welsh Language Policy (WLP) team regularly over the last few years as vehicle registration service designer on several big changes, and I'm fully aware of the Welsh Language Act 1993 requirements to provide translations of forms, letters and online services. My first step was to include these requirements from the very start for our vehicle change of address (or VCOA for short) and duplicate V5C services.

We shared the content and structure with WLP Manager Rhianedd Rhys and her team as soon as they were finalised. This meant she could get the translations over to us to integrate into the service as a finished product.

What really helped us achieve this was the great working partnership between my Service Design team, the business analysts for the project and WLP, which ensured we got everything done successfully and on time.



## There were a couple of challenges...

Our biggest challenge was around time really and making sure what we sent to be translated was the final wording. Welsh translations tend to be longer than the English equivalent so we did face some issues about length of fields and space on screens to accommodate the additional space needed for the translations, which can be tricky at times. Nothing we couldn't get sorted together though.

## We learned handy lessons too

We certainly learned from VCOA, as we started working on the get a duplicate V5C service within a week of VCOA going live. We structured the project planning more, so when we finalised the screens we passed them for translation more regularly. There were a few last-minute changes because of insight but that is to be expected. It is [agile](#) after all.

## Bilingual bonus for users

The signs so far from users are really encouraging. Take-up of the 2 new Welsh services is already on a par with our long-established services like [tax your vehicle online](#) and [driver licensing online](#), which have been around for many years.

## And finally...

I'm not a Welsh speaker but was proud to deliver these services in Welsh. It would never occur to me that to do so would ever be an optional extra, so I see it as standard. I would like to recognise the patience, support and delivery of Rhianedd and her team, as we would not have done it on time without them.

I'm absolutely delighted that the Welsh services went live at the same time as the English services," adds Rhianedd. "These end-to-end Welsh language journeys are great news for us and our customers who wish to transact with us in Welsh, and build on the Welsh services we already provide. Thanks to everyone who made this happen!

"Our [Welsh language scheme](#) sets out our commitments to the Welsh language, as agreed with the Welsh Language Commissioner. We have a responsibility to show that we're treating the Welsh and English languages equally. We're very proud that usage of our current Welsh online services has increased year on year, so it was extremely important that these 2 services were launched at the same time as the English ones to make sure our Welsh-speaking customers can use their language of choice.

Da iawn bawb (well done everyone)!

All of our Welsh online services are listed on GOV.UK's [Welsh online services page](#), and you can find them under 'Trwyddedau gyrru' and 'Rhifau cofrestru cerbyd, treth cerbyd a phrofion MOT'.

[[English](#)] – [Cymraeg]

Os ydych chi erioed wedi defnyddio gwasanaethau ar-lein cyhoeddus, mae'n bosibl eich bod wedi gweld bod y rhan fwyaf ohonynt hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg

neu efallai eich bod wedi eu defnyddio nhw os ydych yn siaradwr Cymraeg. Gan fod heddiw yn ddiwrnod 'Mae gen i hawl', hwn yw'r amser perffaith i ddatgelu mwy ynghylch sut wnaethom ddatblygu ein 2 wasanaeth ar-lein dwyieithog fwyaf newydd.

Mae diwrnod '[Mae gen i hawl](#)' sy'n cael ei hyrwyddo gan Gomisiynydd y Gymraeg, yn dathlu'r gwasanaethau Cymraeg sy'n cael eu darparu gan sefydliadau a'r hawliau sydd gan bobl i'w defnyddio nhw. Yn bendant roedd gennym reswm da i ddathlu ein gwasanaethau ar-lein dwyieithog yn ddiweddar, wrth i'n 2 wasanaeth newydd – [newid cyfeiriad ar eich llyfr log cerbyd \(V5CW\)](#) a [chael llyfr log dyblyg \(V5CW\)](#) – fod y rhai cyntaf i ni eu datblygu a'u lansio yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg ar yr un pryd.

## Dyma sut aethom ati

Rwyf wedi gweithio gyda thîm Polisi'r Iaith Gymraeg yn rheolaidd dros y blynyddoedd diwethaf fel dylunydd gwasanaeth cofrestru cerbydau ar nifer o newidiadau mawr, ac rwyf yn llwyr ymwybodol o ofynion Deddf yr Iaith Gymraeg 1993 i ddarparu ffurflenni, llythyron a gwasanaethau Cymraeg. Fy nghan cyntaf oedd cynnwys y gofynion hyn o'r dechrau gyntaf ar gyfer ein gwasanaethau – newid cyfeiriad cerbyd (VCOA yn fyr) a V5CW dyblyg.

Rhannom y cynnwys a'r strwythur gyda Rheolwr Polisi'r Gymraeg Rhianedd Rhys a'i thîm mor gynted â'u bod wedi'u gorffen. Roedd hyn yn golygu y gallai anfon y cyfieithiadau draw atom fel y gallwn eu hintegreiddio i'r gwasanaeth fel cynnyrch a oedd wedi'u cwblhau.

Yr hyn a oedd wedi ein helpu i gyflawni hyn oedd y bartneriaeth gweithio da rhwng y tîm Dylunio Gwasanaeth, y dadansoddwyr busnes am y prosiect a thîm Polisi'r Gymraeg, a wnaeth sicrhau ein bod wedi gallu gwneud popeth yn llwyddiannus ac ar amser.



## Roedd ychydig o heriau...

Ein her fwyaf oedd yn ymwneud ag amser yn bennaf a sicrhau bod y gwaith



roeddwn yn anfon i'w cyfieithu oedd y cynnwys terfynol. Mae cyfieithiadau Cymraeg yn dueddol o fod yn hirach na'r cynnwys Saesneg felly wnaethom wynebu rhai problemau gyda hyd y meysydd a'r lle ar y sgrin i gynnwys y lle ychwanegol oedd eu hangen am y cyfieithiadau, a allai fod yn ddyrys ar adegau. Serch hynny, nid oedd dim byd nad oeddwn yn gallu eu datrys gyda'n gilydd.

## Dysgom gwersi hwylus hefyd

Roeddwn yn bendant wedi dysgu o VCOA, wrth i ni ddechrau gweithio ar y gwasanaethau cael V5CW dyblyg o fewn wythnos i VCOA fynd yn fyw. Roeddwn wedi strwythuro cynllunio'r prosiect yn fwy, felly wrth i ni orffen y sgriniau roeddwn yn eu hanfon i gael eu cyfieithu'n fwy rheolaidd. Roedd ychydig o newidiadau munud diwethaf yn dilyn mewnwelediad ond mae hynny i'w disgwyl. Dyna beth yw gweithio'n [ystwyth](#) wedi'r cwbl.

## Bonws dwyieithog am ddefnyddwyr

Mae'r arwyddion hyd yma wrth ddefnyddwyr yn galonogol iawn. Mae'r nifer sydd wedi defnyddio'r 2 wasanaeth Cymraeg newydd yn barod yn hafal gyda'n gwasanaethau sydd wedi'u sefydlu ers tro fel [trethu eich cerbyd ar-lein](#) a [thrwyddedu gyrwyr ar-lein](#), sydd wedi bod mewn bodolaeth ers nifer o flynyddoedd.

## Ac yn olaf...

Nid wyf yn siaradwr Cymraeg (diolch i Rhianedd am gyfieithu'r flog hwn i mi), ond roeddwn yn falch iawn i greu'r gwasanaethau yma'n Gymraeg. Ni fyddai fyth yn croesi fy meddwl ei fod yn ychwanegiad opsiynol, felly rwyf yn ei weld fel cam safonol. Hoffwn gydnabod amynedd, cefnogaeth a gwaith Rhianedd a'i thîm, oherwydd ni fyddwn wedi gallu eu cyflwyno ar amser hebddynt.

Rwy'n hynod falch fod y gwasanaethau Cymraeg wedi mynd yn fyw ar yr un adeg â'r gwasanaethau Saesneg," ychwanegodd Rhianedd. "Mae'r teithiau hyn sy'n gwbl Gymraeg o'r dechrau i'r diwedd yn newyddion arbennig i ni a'n cwsmeriaid sy'n dymuno trafod gyda ni yn Gymraeg ac yn adeiladu ar y gwasanaethau Cymraeg rydym eisoes yn eu darparu. Diolch i bawb a wnaeth i hyn ddigwydd!

"Mae ein [Cynllun Iaith Gymraeg](#) a gytunwyd gyda Chomisiynydd y Gymraeg yn dangos ein hymrwymiad i'r iaith Gymraeg. Mae gennym gyfrifoldeb i ddangos ein bod yn trin y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg yn gyfartal. Rydym yn falch iawn bod ein gwasanaethau Cymraeg presennol wedi gweld cynnydd blwyddyn ar ôl blwyddyn yn y nifer sy'n eu defnyddio felly roedd yn bwysig iawn sicrhau bod y 2 wasanaeth newydd hyn yn cael eu lansio ar yr un pryd â'r gwasanaethau Saesneg. Mae hyn yn sicrhau bod ein cwsmeriaid Cymraeg eu hiaith yn gallu defnyddio'r iaith o'u dewis nhw wrth drafod gyda ni.



Da iawn bawb!

Mae ein holl wasanaethau ar-lein Cymraeg wedi'u rhestri ar [dudalen gwasanaethau ar-lein Cymraeg](#) GOV.UK, a gallwch ddod o hyd iddynt o dan 'Trwyddedau gyrru' a Rhifau cofrestru cerbyd, treth cerbyd a phroffion MOT'.

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## Business Analysis Programme at DVLA – twelve months on

It's been just over a year since our students started the programme and, despite the disruption of the pandemic, our Business Analysis (BA) development team have done an amazing job. They've successfully reached the midway point of their two-year programme, and are progressing steadily towards achieving the [BCS International Diploma in Business Analysis](#).

### Working from home

The entire BA team was ready for the new environment and transitioned seamlessly to working from home. Digital tools have allowed everyone to stay connected, with the experienced members of the team doing a fantastic job of mentoring and coaching our new Business Analysts (BAs). The BAs have continued to learn, explore and develop while making the most of technology and developing an inclusive community that promotes sharing ideas, learning and keeping in touch.



## Opportunities and experience

A primary ingredient in our development programme are real-world experiences that allow students to practice and experiment with new tools and techniques. Our new analysts have wasted no time in becoming fully active members of the team. They can be found supporting BAs on key business initiatives, running workshops, process mapping, and working with engineering squads. They have also started to take the lead on small projects.

James Gray, BA student, had this to say about the programme,

I have just completed an assignment working on the apply for a duplicate log book (V5C) service. It was amazing to be part of a delivery team delivering at pace in an agile environment. The collaboration between business representatives and the engineering squad made them a pleasure to work with. For me personally, it was rewarding to work on the end-to-end delivery, being involved from the start and refining requirements to help deliver the service into production using agile methods.

The students' enthusiasm for assignments is a positive challenge to the team supporting the programme, making sure opportunities are tailored to individual learning experiences, and providing insight into different aspects of daily BA life.

## Courses and exams

The development programme has a set learning path in line with the diploma, where courses and exams were delivered in a classroom environment. Since the pandemic, all courses have been completed digitally using video conferencing tools, with online monitoring of exams becoming a new experience for most. The BAs embraced the new approach and worked through some initial bumps to successfully pass the exams and achieve their certifications.

## Learning to code

Earlier this year, our new BAs were introduced to code through face to face classroom training at DVLA, self-led tutorials, a mini-project and some excellent support from our own Centre of Digital Excellence (CoDE) MSc students. They learned HTML, CSS, and Javascript and developed a web application which contributes towards a learning objective for their development portfolio. This provided them with a full end-to-end example of taking an idea into production. While many found the task challenging, the feedback was positive. And it provided the students with an appreciation of the role of engineers and the important relationship of BAs in daily interactions with delivery teams.



## What next?

Over the coming weeks, the students will complete module 3 of the development programme which finishes with an end-of-module assessment and submission of their development portfolio before kicking off module 4. They will continue to study for their BCS diploma, and the BA team are proactively looking for new experiences to supplement the learning journey.

We are now sharing knowledge with other organisations and government departments who have expressed an interest in the programme who have shared their interest in the programme.

If you have an interest in becoming a Business Analyst at DVLA, keep an eye on the [Civil Service Jobs](#) website where all our opportunities will be advertised.

[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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# From PA to Analyst

There's a diverse range of careers and roles at DVLA and a huge focus on personal development within the agency. Jodie Lewis, an IT Business Analyst (BA), tells us about her career journey at DVLA.

## First steps

I started in a temporary position processing online driving licence applications. I'd left a permanent position and I was terrified of not gaining permanent employment. But I learned everything I could, listened to all my feedback and six months in, I was made permanent. I was absolutely chuffed!

Two months later, I saw an internal advert for a personal assistant role in Human Resources (HR) and I called the contact for a quick chat about the role and submitted an application. I was successful at interview and that was the beginning of my journey into the world of HR. I supported DVLA's IT Services (ITS) Business Partner and the knowledge and relationships I built from this point were important for everything that came next.



While working in HR I took every opportunity, including creating leaflets, monitoring recruitment figures and reporting back to the Department for Transport Resourcing Group (DRG). I learned lots along the way and was promoted to PA for DVLA's Deputy Director of HR.

When I saw an opportunity for a completely different role as a secondment in our ITS Recruitment Support team, I knew I wanted to go for it. I had wanted to move into ITS for a while and a recruitment role seemed the perfect step



to make that next move.

## Steps towards Business Analysis

I first became interested in [Business Analysis \(BA\)](#) when supporting a DVLA recruitment scheme for a BA role in London as part of the Clean Air Zone (CAZ) project. I got to meet the candidates, saw their CVs and I quizzed the interviewers about the role, asking what skills they look for and the type of person they'd like to work with.

On my return, I asked to shadow one of the BAs on the DVLA team so I could ask some more questions, with the aim of understanding 'a day in the life'. When the next round of recruitment opened up at DVLA, I was able to write about my skills in a relevant way to show how they could be useful in the BA role.

## Learning more

There's a lot to learn [when you become a BA at DVLA](#). Before I started in the role I prepared by sitting the 'Foundation in Business Change' exam.

I've been able to develop my skills with training opportunities – even during the pandemic – and have taken several exams including 'Foundation in Business Analysis' and 'Managing the Requirements Process'. It's fantastic to have such focus on my personal development. The training is also helping me to prepare me for the [BCS International Diploma of Business Analysis](#) oral exam.



During training I studied the theory and methods but the real world can be a little different. I have learned a lot of this role 'on-the-job' and no day is the same. One day I am running a workshop with stakeholders to understand their requirements, the next I could be developing process maps or writing acceptance criteria for stories. BAs can work across multiple projects and can move as and when they're needed.

I've had to get my head around technical talk with squads and am still learning about the drivers and vehicles processes.

## **Best things about the job**

There are so many great things about this role. I enjoy the interesting nature of the projects I'm currently aligned to and seeing all the innovative things the squads do.

My ever-growing team have been so friendly and supportive. The experience between them is vast and it's great to have people to bounce ideas off and discuss things that you may not understand or even to get a different perspective on things. I'm so excited to be in a role where I get to play a part in the changes that are happening within DVLA now and in the future.

It's been a massive change of direction in my career but I'm thrilled to have the chance to do it. The role is challenging and there is a lot to learn but at the same time, I couldn't be more excited about the opportunity I've been given. Taking that temporary position was the best move I've made and I'd definitely recommend [working at DVLA!](#)

If you enjoy problem solving, building good relationships, asking challenging questions and can articulate your findings in a way that people understand then you'll likely make a good analyst. [Check out our latest opportunities on Civil Service Jobs.](#)

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## **Creating great online services: how we test services in our research lab**

To design online services which improve the experience for users when they transact with DVLA, it is important to understand what our customers need from us.

Our User Experience (UX) team use several different testing methods to get this insight. Dan Williamson, User Research Lead, explains more about user testing at DVLA.

### **Why, when and where we test**

Government services should be as simple, inclusive and accessible as possible so that everyone can use them. If we want our customers to complete a transaction using a certain channel, we need to make sure what we offer them is the best it can be.

Testing happens throughout a service development. We determine the frequency and the method of testing based on the features within the service that have changed.

Under normal circumstances, we do roughly 40% of our testing in [our UX Lab](#). It's a state of the art facility that uses connected devices, cameras and microphones so that we can test developing digital services with users. With participant consent to filming, we record what we find and this footage is used to inform changes to the services and provides evidence for why we make those changes.



The rest of our research is carried out across the country in meeting rooms, in context in a participant's home or place of work, or on the street.

## Our testers

Some of our services are targeted at certain types of user (for example vocational drivers or [drivers with a medical condition](#)) and sometimes we will need to speak to specific segments within our customer base (such as [people who have received a fine](#), use certain technology or are of a certain age).

We have a contract in place with a participant recruitment company and we send these specifications to our recruiters together with details of when and where we want to carry out the research.

## Before testing starts

Once we have agreed the objectives for the research with the service designer, we plan the session with the interaction designers who build the screens we test.

We may ask questions like:

- which features do we want to test/discuss with the user?
- where do we think we may identify pain points?
- which research technique do we think will work best?

Then we write a topic guide for the session. This contains the main points and themes we want to cover during the session, as well as prompts for the researchers to remind them where to delve a bit deeper.

## The day of testing

We always spend some time getting an understanding of the participants; how confident they are in using digital services, what devices or apps they use and a bit about their socio-economic background. This helps us to get to know them and puts the participant at ease too.

If we are testing screens for usability, we set the scene and give the participant tasks to complete. It is human nature to help people when they get stuck, but as researchers, the value comes from seeing where they fail.

Sometimes we conduct an in-depth interview with the participant. This is designed to understand their behaviour at a deeper level – why they do things in a certain way, how they feel about what we are talking about or what we could do to make things simpler for them.





## Outcomes of testing

Every insight we get adds value – whether that is changing the flow of a service, moving things around on a screen or amending content. Every service we have been involved in has been changed based on our research.

It isn't often that we get a real 'Eureka!' moment and a lot of the insights we get are used to inform subtle, iterative changes to a service that make it more useable, simpler and more inclusive. Equally these small changes could have a benefit to the organisation, such as increasing the ability for customers to self-serve or reducing casework and demand on the Contact Centre.

But sometimes user testing shows that a very small change can be beneficial. While testing the prototype for the [penalty payment online](#) with participants it was identified they did not understand that they needed to tax their vehicle or tell us they were keeping it off road, once they had paid the fine.

On the 'payment successful' page of the service, the participants were told in large bold print that they had to either tax, [register their vehicle as off the road](#) or dispose of their vehicle, however when asked what they thought they had to do next, the majority of users missed that instruction and thought they taken all necessary action to complete their task.

This was fed back and a new prototype was created so that the participant was taken to [pages where they could tax](#), make a Statutory Off Road Notification

(SORN) or [dispose of their vehicle.](#)



We are committed to user-centred design. We have a great record for user research at every Government Digital Service (GDS) Service Assessment which take place at several stages before we can put our service on GOV.UK.

Our research has been the basis for so many changes, from small tweaks to wholesale change in a constant effort to get these things right for our users.

Now you've seen all the hard work that goes into making a great online service – why not check out the [wide range of services we provide on GOV.UK](#) and try them for yourself?

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