

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!

You can also:

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What has happened since changes to vehicle tax rates were introduced?

This time last year, DVLA and the motor industry were gearing up for the new tax rules that came into force on 1 April 2017.



A lot has happened since, so I thought this would be a great time to update you and tell you about new changes on the horizon.

Tax reminders

Customers who bought a new car registered on or after 1 April 2017 will be getting their tax reminder (V11) through their letterbox from this month onwards.

These tax reminders will show the standard rate, or if the car had a list price of over £40,000, the standard rate plus the additional rate. See our [vehicle tax rates](#) for information.

New first registration service

During the past year, service designers here at DVLA have been working on our new first registration service. We have been working closely with manufacturers and dealers to ensure the service meets their needs as well as ours.

The new service will start the DVLA's [IT transformation](#), using APIs and cloud technology, while improving our internal IT estate.

Changes to tax rates for new diesel cars

In the Chancellor's [November budget](#), further changes to the way vehicle tax is calculated were announced. The change will apply to new diesel cars registered on or after 1 April 2018.

Put simply, new diesel cars registered from this date will have their first year rate calculated in line with the changes.

The rates will not apply to next-generation clean diesels. These are vehicles which are certified as meeting emissions limits in real driving conditions, known as Real Driving Emissions Step 2 (RDE2) standards.

The Chancellor also announced increases to current VED and standard rates in line with Retail Price Index (RPI) from the same date.

Other legislative changes

We have other changes to incorporate into our services. Some of these changes may be familiar to you, and include:

- Clean Air Zones (CAZ)
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- World Harmonised Light Vehicle Test Procedure (WLTP)

There may be some of these that you, as a driver, will never know about or even need to. But we have to factor these into our processes when registering a vehicle for the first time.

No doubt there will be more changes to come and we need to make sure we can introduce these with minimal disruption to our customers and stakeholders.

We will continue to work closely with industry colleagues, trade bodies and motoring associations to keep moving forward. This helps us to improve our services and make them simple to understand and easy to use.

To check when the tax is due for your vehicle, go to gov.uk/check-vehicle-tax.

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Proud to be ODP

Last Friday, I hosted the Operational Delivery Profession (ODP) launch event at DVLA's headquarters in Swansea. It was a great success, with over 120 staff from across Department for Transport (DfT) joining me for the occasion.

Head of Profession



As Head of Profession for ODP within DfT, I was honoured and proud to host this launch event. In my opening address I explained why it is so important for people to take opportunities that are presented to them and to be proud to be involved in the profession.

Within DfT we have 10,000 people who are part of the profession. Looking across the Civil Service as a whole, ODP is the biggest profession of all with over 230,000 people involved. There are so many different roles under the ODP umbrella. I was keen to put across how everyone in the room should recognise the importance of what they do. They are part of a respected profession, just like a teacher or an accountant, for example.

The inspirational Simon Wheatcroft



Our keynote speaker for the day was ultra-marathon runner Simon Wheatcroft. Extreme running is difficult anyway, but imagine doing it if you were blind? That's what Simon does!

His speech was truly inspirational, with a clear message running right through it about how important it is to show resilience, determination and grit. These are qualities ODP professionals already show in their work.

Living the values



We ran several breakout sessions at the event to discuss how those of us involved in ODP live the [Civil Service values](#) every single day.

These sessions gave our delegates a chance to have their say on what they think makes a brilliant operational delivery profession, and to share their ideas and experiences.

It was great to see everyone coming together like this, from such a diverse range of roles and experiences, learning from each other.

Celebrating ODP



After such a successful launch event, I firmly believe that it gives us all a platform to go back into our day jobs to both celebrate the profession and raise the profile of ODP across DfT.

I know from my own personal experience that it provides a fantastic opportunity for personal development and is a great community to be a part of.

If you are part of the profession and would like to find out more, search for ODP on Civil Service Learning or [#ProudToBeODP](#) and follow [@OpsDelProf](#) on social media.

If you're interested in a career in Operational Delivery at DVLA then don't forget to check out [Civil Service Jobs](#) for the latest opportunities.

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Motorcycle traders are invited to see our new RaVe service at the Motorcycle Trade Expo

Come and see our new 'Register a Vehicle electronically' (RaVe) service at the Motorcycle Trade Expo from **Sunday 14 to Tuesday 16 January 2018**.

The feedback we had at [last year's event](#) was really positive, so we're keen to see as many traders as possible at our stand this year.

This will be a great opportunity for you to see our new first registration service, RaVe, and discover how it will benefit your dealership.

RaVe

You'll be familiar with our current [vehicle registration schemes](#), either using our paper V55 forms or web based Automated First Registration and Licensing (AFRL) system.

Our new RaVe service, currently in development, will eventually replace our AFRL web service. It has a totally new look and feel to make it easier for you to use. We're continuing to work with the motor trade to develop the service.

At the event

Allison Avo and I will be on hand to showcase this service and how:

- you'll save time and money, by reducing administration in your business
- to make the transition
- simple it is to use

We'll also answer any questions you may have on vehicle registration and licensing and will demonstrate our digital services.

We want the service to be as user friendly as possible, so your feedback will be really helpful.

For information about the event go to [Motorcycle Trade Expo](#).

We hope to see you there, we're on [stand KS10](#) within the Knowledge Shop.

Order your FREE tickets for Motorcycle Expo 2018

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How DVLA helps to connect people to nature



With the changing of the seasons, our natural environment outside our offices here in Swansea can look particularly striking. So it's a good time to take stock of what we do in DVLA to look after our local environment and reduce our impact on it.

Why we look after our environment

This is really important to us in DVLA, and it's something we've been actively doing for a number of years. We're also bound by both legal and governmental commitments to reduce our environmental impacts and enhance the flora and fauna which exist on our estate.

These commitments are set out in our [Strategic Plan](#), [Sustainability Report](#) and our [Biodiversity Action Plan](#). I'm head of DVLA's Sustainability Team and we're the team responsible for ensuring the commitments are carried out. It's not just a job to us though, it's a passion that goes beyond just meeting these obligations. We also want to encourage other staff to share in the joy we find in nature and educate them in the importance and value of the natural world.

Our three sites are in residential and industrial locations and are relatively small (around 40 acres in all, or roughly 40 football pitches). Within these sites we have dedicated conservation areas, ponds, grassed areas and verges that we leave untouched, as well as protected ancient hedgerows. All of these are supporting an increasing number of wildlife and plant species, including otters, bats and small blue butterflies. Last year, we counted at least 12 species that are listed in [Section 7 \(Priority Species](#)

[List](#)) of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.



Zero cost, maximum benefit

This has cost us nothing to do, has had no negative impact on the effective running of the estate and is bringing pleasure and increased knowledge to many of our staff. To help us with this work we've found many experts already working in DVLA who have enthusiastically shared their knowledge and expertise.

We have a chairperson of the local ornithological society, who has undertaken bird surveys and led bird walks around the estate in their own time. We also have conservation experts who help us monitor and analyse wildlife, and advise us on how we can develop our estate's biodiversity. There's even an avid forager who has shown us how to find food in the unlikeliest of places (including rough patches of ground!)



The best bits...

To me, the most wonderful thing I've seen from our work in encouraging nature to flourish is the joy that everyone gets from it. Colleagues send us lovely photos of the birds and wild flowers they've spotted on site. They also tell me how their lunchtime walks around the sites, looking at the natural environment we're helping to prosper, let them take a break from the pressures of work and recharge their batteries. This just shows the difference connecting with nature can make to us every day.

Here at DVLA we're extremely lucky to live and work in a beautiful part of the world, and we're making the most of our little bit of that. We're doing our bit to help people connect to nature, and I'd like to pass on the [United Nations environmental challenge](#) to us all: in this busy world, why not find a way to experience nature, breathe it in, and remember that by keeping our planet healthy, we keep ourselves healthy too.

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