

Contents

Into the millennium	
Chief Executive's foreword	3
The challenges to be met	
Improving the quality of life	4
Modernising Government	5
New legislation and its impact	7
Framework for the 2000/01 Plan	
VI's aim and objectives	8
Strategic themes to take us forward	9
Key targets for 2000/01	10
Raising compliance of the road haulage and passenger transport industries with roadworthiness, road traffic and environmental standards	
Setting and maintaining standards	12
Increasing educational and advisory support	14
Taking action against illegal vehicles, drivers and operators	15
Improving the roadworthiness and environmental acceptability of private motor vehicles	
Setting and monitoring standards	16
Supporting the service providers	18
Protecting the car owner	19
Providing modernised and customer-friendly services	
Closer working to provide responsive service	20
Providing accessible and easily understood services	22
Minimising the burden on industry and the public	22
Running an efficient, continually developing and valued business	
Valuing our people and investing in their future	24
Providing an effective working environment	25
Ensuring a sound financial platform	26
Working smarter and greener	29
Investing in research and development	31
Reporting on our performance	
Accountability to Parliament and the public	32
Using the balanced scorecard	33
Abbreviations and definitions	34
Contact points and other publication details	36

Into the millennium



Chief Executive's foreword

The beginning of this millennium presents new and exciting challenges for VI, with the Modernising Government programme providing a clear focus for the continued development of the business. This will include further delivery of user-friendly services to support the road haulage and passenger transport industries, the MOT trade and private car owners. Planned initiatives to help our customers in the coming year include electronic access to information and a new national telephone number, directing customers quickly and easily to the people and information they need.

In the long term, technology is being developed which will increase the safety of vehicles and enable the delivery of more automated services. We have a shared interest with other agencies in research currently taking place, and will run joint projects to look at how we can use this technology to improve both the way we work and our impact on road safety. This forms part of our continued commitment to the Driver, Vehicle and Operator (DVO) strategy that is lead by DETR (Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions).

Within VI, the largest ongoing project is the computerisation of the MOT testing scheme which will be completed by the end of 2002. The contract has now been awarded and work will continue this year to design and develop the system. This will directly contribute to the DVO strategy by providing a critical piece of the jigsaw for electronic vehicle relicensing.

We recognise that we can do more to actively encourage drivers and vehicle owners to operate within the law. This year we will increase activity, and raise the profile, of our educational and advisory services. We will continue to provide courses, seminars, videos and publications for road haulage and passenger vehicle operators, and we will also be making better use of the IT systems we have developed to provide more information for vehicle owners and MOT testers, on web sites and via help lines. Those same systems will provide more detailed information for our own staff to work with, and enable us to better share intelligence with other agencies and our customers. The aim is to focus on those who compromise road safety and environmental protection while reducing the burden on those who operate safely.

Our commitment to our staff has now been recognised through our accreditation as an Investors in People organisation and our plans for 2000/01 build on this. There will be opportunities for personal development using National Vocational Qualifications and a focus on training for managers, ensuring they have the skills to develop their teams and take the business forward. Our apprenticeship scheme for Vehicle Examiners will be extended this year to help meet the needs of the business in the future. Following the ✓✓ award for our commitment to be 'Positive about Disabled People' we will also deliver our diversity action plan, taking on board new Civil Service Reform initiatives to make VI a progressive and rewarding place to work in the year 2000 and beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maurice Newey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Maurice Newey



The challenges to be met

4

'Improving the quality of life for the people of this country is perhaps the most important duty of government'

The Rt Hon J Prescott MP

VI staff know we have an important part to play in delivering the Government's aim of 'making Britain a better place to live in'. We provide various services which help to improve and monitor the mechanical and environmental standard of vehicles on the road and the behaviour of the drivers. Through the successful delivery of our services we contribute to making the roads safer, and to protecting the environment.

Our plan supports the objectives of our parent department: the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) and in particular the Modernising Government agenda. It also has to recognise the changes in legislation that will impact on the work we do and the way we work.

Improving the quality of life

DETR's aim is 'to improve the quality of life by promoting sustainable development at home and abroad, fostering economic prosperity and supporting local democracy'. The theme of sustainable development is a way of helping to create a better quality of life for everyone, now and for the generations to come. It means a more inclusive society in which the benefits of increased prosperity are widely shared, with less pollution and less wasteful use of natural resources.

Four broad principles form the basis of the sustainable development theme:

- maintaining high and stable levels of economic growth and employment;
- protecting the environment;
- using natural resources wisely; and
- making social progress which recognises the needs of everyone.

In the past year work has been undertaken to measure the progress of achieving sustainable development and there are now 15 headline indicators identified and reported against. (Reference: *A Better Quality of Life: A Strategy for sustainable development for the United Kingdom*, DETR)

The services we provide and the way we provide them all have an impact on meeting the four broad principles of the sustainable theme. This impact includes:

- minimising the burden our testing, training and enforcement services make on the road transport industry;
- improving environmental standards through vehicle emissions activities, work on reducing incidences of overloaded vehicles, and inspections ensuring compliance with health and safety rules for the movement of dangerous goods;
- working to green policies and practices; and
- being an organisation that is genuinely diverse in its employment practices.



For the most part our work directly supports the road haulage industry, the passenger road transport industry, light goods vehicle owners, the private car owner and the providers of the MOT testing service. VI's work assists these industries, businesses and individuals by:

- facilitating improved standards in the roadworthiness and operation of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), Passenger Service Vehicles (PSVs) and Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs) through: statutory annual testing and associated interim voluntary tests; provision of training and advisory services; checks of fleets at depots and at the roadside; prohibiting really unsafe vehicles from further travel in their current state; and disciplining 'illegal' drivers and operators through Public Inquiries and the courts systems;
- facilitating improved standards in the roadworthiness of private motor vehicles through: Single Vehicle Approval (SVA) inspections; approving Authorised Examiners (AEs) and Nominated Testers (NTs) to provide MOT testing services; provision of training for AEs and NTs; delivery of advisory services to the MOT service providers and to private car owners; monitoring the maintenance of standards at MOT garages and tests; and withdrawal of approval to be an AE or NT; and
- providing specialist expertise, co-ordinated through our Vehicle Safety Branch (VSB), to identify vehicle or

vehicle type specific safety concerns. This is known as our Accident/Defect/Recalls scheme. Services to the manufacturing industry and motoring public include investigating manufacturing and design defects as well as initiating and monitoring safety recalls. We also support the police by examining vehicles involved in accidents for contributory defects. Through our accidents and defects databases, we can provide information to manufacturers, the police and DETR to assist in identifying problems and formulating policy.

Overall our contribution makes the roads safer by playing a part in the reduction of the number of road accidents and consequent fatalities and serious injuries. The work we do improving the environmental standards of vehicles assists in improving air quality through the reduction of greenhouse gases. In these ways VI's work also helps to improve the quality of life for the general public.

Modernising Government

Delivery against the Modernising Government programme will be a major contributory factor in making life better for people and businesses. Within VI we have made a concerted effort over recent years to develop a sense of customer orientation in developing the policies and practices which support the services we deliver. This has resulted in a number of initiatives

including voluntary inspections, customer accounts, out-of-hours testing and advisory seminars. The Modernising Government agenda gives a welcome boost to this customer focus.

Modernising Government papers set out a way of working that ensures we are alive to the needs of customers when providing our services as opposed to our own needs of convenience. Its basic concept is the complete overhaul of the way government is organised and does its work, ensuring a more strategic approach to policy making and a more 'joined-up' delivery of services.

Specifically the programme is centred on five key commitments:

- **Policy making** – where there will be a forward-looking approach to the development of policies which will deliver results that matter and not simply relate to short-term pressures.
- **Responsive public services** – delivery of public services to meet the needs of citizens, not the convenience of service providers.
- **Quality public services** – delivery of efficient, high quality public services with no tolerance for mediocrity.
- **Information Age Government** – ensuring use of new technology to meet the needs of citizens and businesses, without trailing behind technological developments.
- **Public service** – where public service is valued, not denigrated.

Policy making

While our role is more focused on service delivery we have a part to play in policy making. Teams within our Product and Policy Strategy directorate have responsibilities which include the development of the services within our remit. They work closely with the policy staff in DETR on such developments, and on feeding into the formulation of new policies and legislation which affect our work. We are looking to improve our working practices with the department, with the particular aim of influencing improved 'timing' and 'practicality' elements of implementing new legislation and policy.

Examples of our contribution to policy work include: the Enhanced Single Vehicle Approval Scheme legislation (ESVA); involvement in the Vehicle Crime Reduction Action Team; and contributions to the Department's Road Safety policies.

Responsive and high quality services

The first stage in delivering high quality and responsive services is listening to our customers so that we properly understand their needs. We aim to improve our customer listening skills in the coming year, particularly through development of a 'Consumer Champion' role. Please see page 20 for further detail.

One of the outcomes of the Modernising Government programme is a more joined-up delivery of services. A main focus for VI in working successfully to promote and achieve 'joined-up' delivery of services, is

through our activities as a member of the DVO group. This group includes ourselves and other DETR bodies which have an impact on drivers, vehicles, and operators, namely HQ Policy Directorates, the Driving Standards Agency (DSA), the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA) and the Traffic Area Network. Further detail on this work is provided on pages 21–22.

Improved efficiency and effectiveness have been main drivers in the way we have operated and developed VI's business over a number of years. This has been achieved through the introduction of a 'Total Quality' approach which we will continue to promote in everything we do. While maintaining efficiency will remain important in coming years, improved effectiveness will be a higher priority in our development and delivery of quality.

The success of our performance in the delivery of responsive and quality services will be measured in a number of ways including: Government-set Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets; Secretary of State-set key targets; and our own internal customer service standards.

Information Age Government

The implementation of our major Information Systems (IS) strategy over recent years has transformed the operational and management information processes of the organisation from predominantly manual systems to computerised ones. As these new systems

are bedded into the organisation we are also looking to incorporate relevant IT developments on the electronic business horizon, including Intranet and Internet facilities. Our Private Finance Initiative MOT Computerisation project, described more fully on page 30 will be the other major focus for development in this field. Completion of the project will deliver significantly against the department's PSA target of having 25% volume of transactions conducted electronically by 2002, as well as being a critical element of the network supporting the DVO's electronic re-licensing project.

Valued public service

VI's commitment to staff and their development has been recognised through the Investors in People (IIP) accreditation, and future action planning will build on the good practice which has been embedded in the organisation. The ✓✓ award – 'Positive about Disabled People' – is another example of how the organisation is addressing its role as a public service employer. Plans arising from the Civil Service Reform initiative will consider how we can demonstrate the value we place on our staff, through the creation of well thought out pay policies, reward systems and development packages. Our diversity action plan will look at expanding opportunities for under-represented groups and at increasing the wealth of talent in the organisation.

New legislation and its impact

The Single Vehicle Approval scheme (SVA)

VI currently operates an SVA scheme whereby commercial imports, amateur-built vehicles and personal imports are inspected and certified to ensure they meet with UK vehicle regulations. Currently we issue 15,000 certificates annually. Volumes are expected to increase substantially in 2000/01 when agreement is reached over the lifting of quotas and the inclusion of older vehicles in the scheme.

Progress on assumptions being made about volumes are, at the time of writing, uncertain but it is likely to have a significant impact on our work requiring additional staff, new work on the estates programme and an enhancement to our IS system. Further detail is on page 17.

The Enhanced Single Vehicle Approval scheme (ESVA)

Legislation to introduce a more robust inspection is planned to overcome road safety, environmental and car crime concerns. The impact of this legislation further compounds the uncertainties of assumptions being made about volumes highlighted in the previous paragraph on SVA.

Bus and coach accessibility provisions examinations

As part of a package of measures to improve access to transport for disabled people, new regulations will be brought in

during the year affecting buses and coaches. For VI this will bring changes to the way we carry out Certificate of Initial Fitness (COIF) inspections and annual tests.

Family Friendly policies/Working Time Directive

VI's Human Resources strategy paves the way for the development of the organisation over the next three years. It recognises that new legislation, such as Family Friendly employment practices and Working Time Directive, must be effectively implemented into the organisation. Such policies have the potential to increase opportunity and equality for staff, and enable the organisation to be more effective. However, to be responsive to such legislative changes, HR personnel must have professional knowledge and qualifications. The recent restructuring of the HR directorate and plans for staff development in the coming year will facilitate this.

Freedom of Information, Human Rights Act

The Freedom of Information Bill has been designed to give the public better access to information which affects them. In the coming year VI will address the issues around information and records management to ensure it is open and accessible.

Any enforcement organisation must work within the law, observing the rights of the individual and ensuring fairness. VI will continue its practices in light of central

government guidance on the impact of the new Human Rights Act when it is implemented in England and Wales.

Detention powers for illegal operators

These proposals, which are awaiting legislation, will improve the effectiveness of our enforcement against illegal operators by providing for the impounding of unlicensed vehicles. They will also be subject to the new Human Rights legislation, therefore requiring VI to fully brief and educate its customers on the changes.

**AIM**

To contribute to the improvement of road safety and environmental standards.

Framework for the 2000/01 Plan

8

Relevant aspects of Government programmes and initiatives are drawn together to produce a framework for our own planning. This framework provides an aim for VI to focus on, and objectives that show what we want to deliver in achieving our aim. It also provides the context for strategic planning which looks more specifically at theme areas of delivery for the next three years, with these themes providing a direction for annual plans. High level monitoring of our annual plan is achieved through the setting of key targets.

VI's aim and objectives

The services we deliver and the way we deliver them are geared to meeting our organisational aim which is:

'to contribute to the improvement of road safety and environmental standards.'

Delivery of this aim supports the achievement of certain Departmental objectives, in particular by contributing to: 'the delivery of regulatory and other transport services to the public and industry, in an efficient and fair way', and by contributing to 'the improvement of health and safety by reducing risks from work activity, travel and the environment.'

DETR objectives relevant to VI are embodied in their Road Safety Strategy 'Tomorrow's Roads – Safer for Everyone'. VI has contributed to the chapter entitled 'Safer Vehicles' which outlines the improvements in vehicle safety which Government is determined to encourage in order to prevent accidents and protect car occupants and other road users.

We have spent time in the past year developing our own objectives so that they fit better with the concept of service delivery, as described in the Modernising Government programme.

We have four objectives which detail what we want to deliver in achieving our aim. These are listed below, with the main areas of activity supporting each one identified in italics:

- To raise the compliance of the road haulage and passenger transport industries with roadworthiness, road traffic and environmental standards
 - *through the delivery of effective testing, training, advisory and enforcement services.*
- To improve the roadworthiness and environmental acceptability of private motor vehicles
 - *through the delivery of effective MOT scheme services.*
- To offer modernised and customer-friendly services
 - *through the provision of easily accessible and understandable services which minimise the burden on law abiding operators and motorists; and working closely with the DVO group and other government bodies to deliver joined-up services.*
- To run an efficient, continually developing and valued business
 - *through the achievement of our Trading Fund objectives; improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of our processes; and beneficial investment in our people, estate, equipment and information systems.*

Strategic themes to take us forward

As forecast in last year's plan we have now undertaken a review of the future direction and role of the Inspectorate. A strategic planning Awayday was held with key members of the Department, Traffic Commissioner representation and VI staff. Input included a talk from a major coach operator. Debates covering the full spectrum of VI's work were focused on two questions: 'Does VI need to change what it is doing?' and 'How can VI be more effective?'

The major outcome of our joint thinking was that while VI's core business should remain as now, there should be a shift in culture from the currently perceived 'policing' approach. Testing and enforcement services will continue but there will be extra emphasis on educational and advisory activities together with a much higher profile of the preventative role.

In developing the ideas and actions that came out of our review, we have identified five themes which set the scene for change and development over the next three years. These themes are:

- Modernising Government;
- greater educational and advisory role;
- improving effectiveness;
- new developments;
- performance management.

Detailed plans to enable progress against each of these themes will be developed and reviewed continually, providing a dynamic aspect to our planning. A more formal annual review of the themes and supporting plans will ensure our strategic direction continues to fit with the needs of our customers, whether they are departmental stakeholders or consumers of our services. A brief outline of the activities to be covered under each of these themes is provided below.

Modernising Government

We will look carefully at the work we do and the way we do it to ensure we deliver results that matter. Under this theme we will specifically focus on the aspects of 'joined-up government' and electronic delivery of services.

Greater educational and advisory role

The provision of education and advice has always been fundamental to our role of testing and enforcement. Now we want to expand the volume and profile of these education and advisory services. This approach will lead to a better understanding of, and ability to comply with the legislation, policies and practices surrounding the standards and operation of vehicles on our roads.

Improving effectiveness

Within this theme we want to develop ways of working which will both improve the use of our resources and the impact they

make. This will include: working more closely with other agencies and the industries we affect; the development of our testing, training and enforcement network; research, development and exploitation of new technology; and better collection, measurement, analysis and use of data to provide improved information so facilitating better targeting of our activities.

New developments

Work under this theme will cover two main strands of activity. Firstly being responsive to the changes in legislation which impact on our staff and customers, secondly seeking new business opportunities that support the development and spread of the services we deliver.

Performance management

This theme embraces a range of activities that will ensure enhanced performance at both an organisational and individual level. The 'Modernising Government' initiative of Civil Service Reform will also be actioned under this theme. Plans include: continual review of the structure and responsibilities, both of teams and individuals; improved communications; 'working smarter' by developing better management of the information we have at our disposal; implementation of our Human Resources strategy to ensure we have sufficient and suitably trained staff to run our business; and 'working greener' to minimise the impact we make on the environment in our day-to-day work.

Key Target 1

To meet the quality and general effectiveness levels as specified in the measures set for 2000/01.

Key Target 2

To meet the requirements on levels and types of activity laid down in the MOA on each Road Transport Enforcement Scheme as agreed with DETR.

Key Target 3

To continue to improve customer focus across VI through the implementation of initiatives in line with the Modernising Government agenda and with particular emphasis on increased advisory and educational services.

10 Key targets for 2000/01

Assessment of our performance is the final block in establishing a framework for our annual plan. Our accountability to Parliament and the public is predominantly measured through key targets. These are agreed annually with the Secretary of State through DETR. Successful delivery of the more broadly described targets is determined by a number of 'key' (ie pass or fail) measures. VI's key targets and underlying key measures for 2000/01 are set out below.

Key target 1. This key target looks at the effectiveness of our testing and enforcement work. It requires us 'to meet the quality and general effectiveness levels as specified in the measures set for 2000/01'. The key measures are to achieve:

- at least 229,428 points value for roadworthiness prohibitions of which 7,360 will be for emissions;
- at least 3,445 weighing prohibitions;
- at least 63,347 points value for successfully prosecuted offences for drivers' hours/tachograph and other offences, including overloading and C & U offences (for all vehicle types);
- HGV and PSV statutory test error rates less than 0.19%; and
- completion of the trial of the newly devised measure of effectiveness of our supervision of the MOT scheme, with a view to establishing a base year of data and setting a target for following years.

In order to evaluate meaningfully a new effectiveness measure, Performance Gain (PG), five of the 23 enforcement areas will be piloting the proposed PG system throughout the year and will be managed according to the PG value they produce rather than the effectiveness outcomes listed in the first three key measures above. The levels of achievement required above have been increased by 3% above last year's anticipated outturn and then reduced pro-rata to acknowledge that the measures only apply to 18 of the 23 areas. Our agreement with the Department to set these targets in this way acknowledges that the five pilot areas will deliver effectiveness gains by operating PG. It is expected that the gains which the five areas deliver will be at least similar to what would have been delivered if they were not working with the PG methodology. Further detail on the PG project is on page 29.

Key target 2. This key target measures the delivery of our enforcement activities. The levels of enforcement activity are agreed with the Department annually and formalised in a number of Memoranda of Agreement (MOA). The three main MOAs cover: HGV/PSV enforcement; LGV enforcement/Accidents, defects and recalls; and MOT scheme activities.

In delivering this key target we will 'meet the requirements on levels and types of activity laid down in the MOA on each Road Transport Enforcement Scheme as agreed with DETR.' The key measures are to achieve:

- 97% of the total output units of each MOA;
- at least 71,070 emissions checks; and
- at least 1,545,000 tachograph charts checks (1,400,000 HGV and 145,000 PSV).

The impact of the PG measure as discussed under key target 1, similarly affects the emissions checks value set under this key target.

Key target 3. This key target provides a focus on the improvement of customer service and links in with current government initiatives and our strategic theme of a greater educational and advisory role. It requires us to 'continue to improve customer focus across VI through the implementation of initiatives in line with the Modernising Government agenda and with particular emphasis on increased advisory and educational services'. The key measures for the coming year are to:

- assign the role of consumer champion and deliver against an action plan of customer surveys;
- deliver against the internal electronic services programme, in order to achieve the PSA targets of 25% electronic service capability by 2002 and 100% by 2005, with a particular focus on web-site improvements in the coming year;
- develop educational and advisory products and increase activity in this aspect of work; and

Key Targets 4 and 5

To break even while achieving an average 6% real rate of return on capital, over the period 1 April 1998 – 31 March 2003.

To achieve an Aggregated Cost Efficiency (ACE) Index of +1%.

- ascertain the views of HGV/PSV operators in respect of the current testing regime and make recommendations for any changes which would assist the effectiveness of VI's testing services in improving road safety.

Key target 4. This target assesses the financial performance of the business through a measure regularly used in the commercial environment. The target is set over five years and this plan covers year three of that period. While the main target is 'to break-even while achieving an average 6% real rate of return on capital, over the period 1 April 1998 – 31 March 2003', an in-year indicative measure is to achieve 5%.

Key target 5. This target looks at the efficiency of the organisation as measured through an efficiency index specifically developed for the Agency in 1989. This year the key target is 'to achieve an Aggregated Cost Efficiency (ACE) Index of +1%'.

Key target 6. The internal management performance of the business is assessed through the delivery of this key target. To date this has been assessed by the results of an annual staff survey and, in addition last year, by the target of gaining Investors in People status. This year it was felt a broader range of measures would better assess our performance and the key target has been amended to reflect this. Under this target we will 'improve performance management across the business through

Key Target 6

To improve performance management across the business through delivery of specified measures for 2000/01.

delivery of specified measures for 2000/01' as follows:

- to deliver against our civil service reform action plan, specifically including the development of a new pay and appraisal system, liP evaluation and a number of initiatives related to our diversity plan;
- to improve sick absence management and reduce the rate to an average of 9.5 days per full-time equivalent by 2001;
- to complete implementation of the Government Secure Intranet (GSI) in our headquarters sites; and
- to implement and deliver against our environmental action plan with a particular emphasis on targets to reduce waste and increase recycling.

Key target 7. This key target embraces major projects which span a number of years and reflect longer-term investment in the business. The nature of these projects invariably means benefits will not be realised in a year. In the coming financial year we will 'secure the long-term development of the organisation through: a) progression of the MOT Computerisation project; b) continued development of electronic services delivery; and c) a network review resulting in an updated network strategy.' Key measures for this work are:

- to complete the initiation and design stages of the MOT Computerisation project by the end of the March 2001;

Key Target 7

To secure the long-term development of the organisation through: a) progression of the MOT Computerisation project; b) continued development of electronic services delivery; and c) a network review resulting in an updated network strategy.

- to establish a project plan to secure the continuous support for our IS on expiry of our current contract in December 2002, ensuring close co-operation with other DVO agencies through regular planning meetings. This project will include a comprehensive review of the ability to meet our future IS requirements, with full exploitation of relevant new technology; and
- to undertake a review of our testing and enforcement site network strategy and make initial recommendations by 31 October 2000.

Performance against these key targets gives an assessment of our achievements across the business. Results will be reported in our Annual Report and Accounts.

The main detail of this year's plan is laid out in the following chapters corresponding to our objectives.



Raising compliance of the road haulage and passenger transport industries with roadworthiness, road traffic and environmental standards

12

We deliver this business objective by improving road safety and environmental protection through our role in testing and enforcement standards for HGV, PSV and LGV fleets. Our overall purpose is to reduce the number of potential or actual offenders on the road. Although we are not the only players directly involved in achieving raised compliance, it is the ultimate goal.

Results from annual compliance surveys, which we conduct, show a small improvement in the mechanical condition of the fleet; there can be no let up in our efforts to improve roadworthiness compliance. Random checks for compliance with drivers' hours' regulations reveal a worsening trend and the proportion of all traffic convictions for drivers committing these offences is on the increase. We will put more effort into addressing this in the coming year with a package of measures aimed at improving understanding and compliance with the regulations and a range of disciplinary actions to deal with minor offences.

Another useful indicator as to the levels of compliance with roadworthiness standards is found in the initial fail rates of vehicles when first presented for annual test. The initial fail rate for HGV motor vehicles has levelled off after rises in the last three years but the trailer rate has continued to increase, albeit at a lower rate than before. The PSV rate has marginally deteriorated but this is in the context of an added check for seat belt condition and installation. It is of serious concern that more than a third of heavy goods and a quarter of passenger service vehicles fail the test when first presented.

The services we deliver in support of this objective fall into three broad categories. First, we help to maintain the roadworthiness, road traffic and environmental standards by providing a range of testing services and by carrying out various roadside and fleet site enforcement checks. Second, we give advice and training to assist customers in their understanding of, and compliance with the regulations. Third, we pursue disciplinary action where necessary. In delivering these services we aim to improve our targeting of those who operate illegally and so reduce the burden on the compliant.

Setting and maintaining standards

Testing services

VI carries out all HGV and PSV annual statutory testing following legislation which lays out the broad areas of test content. The specific methodology and standards for pass/fail are in our inspection manuals, the detail of which are agreed with policy specialists in DETR.

Testing scheme activities include:

- annual statutory testing or re-testing of about 706,000 lorries and trailers (HGVs) and 81,000 buses and coaches (PSVs), including the certification of every new bus and coach before it enters service (COIF);



- voluntary HGV/PSV testing and testing of around 21,000 non-PSV buses and LGVs; and
- specialist inspections in respect of the carriage of dangerous goods (ADR), perishable foodstuffs (ATP) and goods sealed for customs purposes (TIR).

Our testing work is demand-led, however, in 2000/01 we anticipate a small rise in the volume of HGV tests, especially three-axle vehicles, reflecting the increased loads which vehicles are permitted to carry. We also expect the number of PSV tests to rise, reflecting the increase in the number of vehicles certified during the previous year. We conduct a small number of annual tests for LGVs (vehicle classes IV, V and VII) in VI tests stations and expect the demand for these to decline.

The Specialist Inspection scheme of Single Vehicle Approval (SVA) predominantly covers private motor vehicles and is dealt with in the next chapter.

There will be no major changes to the content of statutory tests this year but there will be changes to the PSV test for new vehicles built in accordance with the PSV Accessibility regulations which will come into force in 2000. We have amended our operating instructions, and plan to train and update staff to meet demand from our customers when these regulations come into force. The COIF inspection will also be affected by changes made under the PSV Accessibility regulations. In addition, enhancements to the COIF inspection are planned which will

The Specialist Inspection schemes include ADR, TIR, Certificate of Initial Fitness (COIF), TEMPO and TACHO figures. In all of these schemes outputs and demands vary, making workloads differ year on year.

Scheme output units for 2000/01

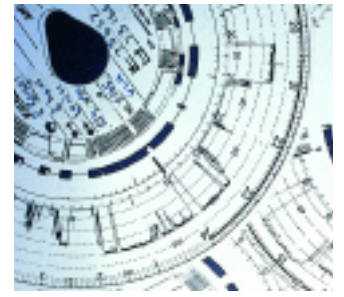
	Outturn 1998/99	Outturn 1999/2000	% Difference from 1998/99	Draft assumption 2000/01	% Difference from 1999/2000
Main Schemes					
HGV Statutory Tests	596,000	633,000	6.21	639,330	1.0
PSV Statutory Tests	101,000	101,000	0.0	102,010	1.0
LGV Statutory Tests	16,500	15,700	-4.85	12,500	-20.4
Specialist Inspection schemes					
	24,352	27,400	12.52	24,500	-10.6

improve customer service and streamline delivery of the inspections.

Maintaining the accuracy and consistency of test standards is measured through the test error rate and is monitored by our Standards Officers. They ensure that testing standards at VI stations and Designated Premises (DPs) are applied consistently and they play an important role in assisting performance improvement across VI by comparing local and national data. The team seems likely to have increased the accuracy with which the test is applied and this contributed to an increase in the initial test fail rate for motor vehicles and trailers from 1995 to 1999. The test error rate measures the errors in judgement or fact on test items made by

our staff. These are expressed as a percentage of all tests carried out. The target test error rate for 2000/01 is 0.19%. The Standards Officers also give independent assessments where customer complaints cannot be resolved locally and provide links between test stations, Technical Services and Scheme Policy branches.

In 2000/01 Standards Officers will be involved in initiatives to improve the quality of local management checks in test stations and a review of 'Out of Hours' testing.



Enforcement scheme output units

	Outturn 1998/99	Forecast outturn 1999/2000	Difference from 1998/99 %	Draft assumption 2000/01	Difference from 1999/2000 %
HGV 'O' licensing and enforcement	283,372	275,320	-2.84	285,320	3.63
PSV 'O' licensing and enforcement	40,815	48,400	18.58	55,594	14.86
HGV/PSV driver licence enforcement	7,440	6,500	-12.63	7,526	15.78
DSA traffic enforcement	1,645	1,290	-21.58	1,596	23.72

- routine and targeted checks of HGV and PSV drivers' licences and checks of amateur-built vehicles and those subject to cherished registration mark transfer on behalf of DVLA; and
- checking of driving instructors' certificates for DSA.

Levels of work, expressed as output units, are agreed with DETR and formalised in MOAs. Output units are based on a weighting according to the average time taken to carry out the test or inspection.

Increasing educational and advisory support

VI has always played an important role in educating and advising our customers whether through training, formal advice or on-the-spot one-to-one guidance. Encouraging raised-compliance standards by sharing knowledge and best practice is an aspect of our work we want to expand on in the future.

Educational and advisory support is provided by our training department (VI Training Services [VITS]) and by testing and enforcement staff. Education and advisory services include:

- a range of commercial courses, including vehicle inspection, drivers' checks, hours and records, spot check standards, air brakes and brake performance. In 2000/01 there will also be new refresher courses on vehicle inspection;

Some of the standard output units used to determine scheme output units have been revised to recognise the way a more targeted approach in our work practices is more time-consuming as we analyse more readily available data. Consequent better targeting of the non-compliant should produce an outcome of increased effectiveness with the additional benefit of minimising the burden on the compliant.

Enforcement checks

Vehicle examiner and traffic examiner staff undertake a range of checks which assist operators and drivers in maintaining and improving the condition of their vehicles and in improving safe driver behaviour.

These include:

- monitoring the maintenance standards of lorry, bus and coach operators at their premises;
- assisting Traffic Commissioners in their operator ('O') licensing function;
- three high-profile periodic national roadside spot-checks, codenamed Operation Tourist (targeting the coach fleet), Coachman (targeting school buses), and Mermaid (targeting lorries);
- carrying out roadworthiness spot-checks on around 218,000 lorries, buses, coaches and cars, including emissions checks on about 25,000 lorries, buses and coaches and on around 100,000 cars, LGVs and taxis;
- examining around 125,000 lorries, buses, coaches and LGVs for road traffic offences, of which around 65,000 lorries are weighed to check for overloading;
- examining over 1.5 million tachograph charts to check for tachograph drivers' hours offences;

- general advice from testing staff on matters related to vehicle testing and the standards that we apply – more specifically at the time of test we will advise customers where they do not meet those standards and where they have problems with vehicle maintenance;
- the opportunity for customers to ‘walk through’ tests with station staff to understand the test standards we apply and to visit test station open days to learn more about the way we work;
- local seminars covering a range of testing and enforcement issues providing advice and ensuring direct communication with customers. This work includes attendance at Traffic Area seminars for new operators ensuring they are aware of the services and products we provide;
- help for drivers to deal with minor defects at roadside checks through the issue of advisory notices by vehicle enforcement officers;
- help and advice for operators by vehicle enforcement officers at fleet visits on ‘O’ licensing, records and vehicle maintenance;
- seminars on subjects ranging from ‘Drivers’ hours’ to ‘Maintaining roadworthiness’. New for 2000/01 will be Transport Managers’ seminars which will give a detailed overview of the main areas of transport legislation that operators need to be aware of; and
- VI staff available to give talks and presentations at local trade, motoring association and motoring club meetings.

Apart from increased activity in the above aspects of educational and advisory work, there will be a number of new initiatives this year to support HGV and PSV drivers.

Regulations on drivers’ hours are complex, and to support newly qualified and existing drivers, we will be looking at the publication of an easy-to-follow guide and new courses. Further work will be done to investigate the feasibility of using approaches other than prosecutions for minor offences such as re-training on drivers’ hours.

Taking action against illegal vehicles, drivers and operators

In an ideal world our educational and advisory work supported by testing services and enforcement check activities would be sufficient to ensure safe vehicles and compliant driver behaviour on our roads. However, we live in the real world and this means that we have to devote resource to pursuing disciplinary action against illegal vehicles, drivers and operators.

We aim to focus enforcement checks on the recognised non-compliant, where possible. We will achieve this by utilising technology and acquired knowledge to best advantage. Laptops are now held by every examiner and their use provides these staff with quicker access to up-to-date information, including operator details, vehicle test history and recent roadside checks results. This enables better targeting of our effort.

Our Intelligence Unit, established in 1997/98, is also used by VI to deliver a more targeted approach to our enforcement activities. The unit will improve and develop its intelligence gathering role by using new database technology and sharing information with other organisations and enforcement agencies in Britain and other EU states.

We also rely on information from the public and will continue to encourage use of the Smoky Vehicle Hotline to report commercial diesel lorries and buses with excessively smoky exhausts.

Once we have successfully identified wrong doing, a number of courses of action are open to us including: providing on-the-spot or follow-up instruction and advice; prohibiting vehicles (either immediately or on a delayed basis if the defect does not cause an immediate danger); prosecuting through the courts; and assisting Traffic Commissioners with Public Inquiry action.

Over the forthcoming year our Traffic Examiners will be increasing their focus on drivers’ hours abuses with a small increase in staff numbers on special investigations to continue the successful work done in this area in 1999/2000.



Improving the roadworthiness and environmental acceptability of private motor vehicles

16

The focus of this business objective is private cars and light goods vehicles as opposed to the commercial fleets covered under the last section. Achievement of the improved standard of cars on the road is again not solely dependent on VI's activities but we do have a major role to play in delivering this aspect of improving the safety of our roads.

Through the Motorists' Forum initiative, which was formally launched in January 2000, we will be contributing to the work of a Technical Issues working group, which includes ourselves and the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT), DVLA, Highways Agency (HA), the police and experts from the automotive industry. It will be investigating the impact and potential of existing and emerging technologies to improve road safety and environmental standards and to tackle vehicle crime. Improvements in vehicle safety have contributed significantly to reducing road deaths and injuries; the work of this group will enable continued advancement in this area.

Apart from our involvement in national policy initiatives, work towards delivering this objective centres around our activities under the MOT, SVA schemes and Accident/Defects/Recall schemes.

The scope of our work in these schemes covers: being the focal point for vehicle standards; the delivery of expert support to service providers; and an element of protection for the end consumer – the private car owner.

Setting and monitoring standards

The MOT scheme

This scheme covers the following activities:

- publishing testing procedures and conditions for approval to run a test station;
- setting MOT testing standards for vehicles, appointing garages and authorising staff to conduct the tests;
- MOT Training for Authorised Examiners and Nominated Testers who provide MOT tests on cars, light goods vehicles (LGVs) and motorcycles;
- sale and secure distribution of some 230,000 pads of MOT certificates;
- supervising standards at the 19,000 MOT garages which annually carry out over 29 million MOT tests, and disqualifying from testing those who do not meet the required standards; and
- conducting appeal tests and investigating complaints about substandard testing.

Standards and levels of activity are agreed with DETR. The proposed levels of activity for 2000/01 are set out in the table opposite.



MOT scheme output units

	Outturn 1998/99	Forecast outturn 1999/2000	% Difference from 1998/99	Draft assumption 2000/01	% Difference from 1999/2000
MOT scheme					
MOT document issue	229,300	230,000	0.3	234,600	2.0
MOT standards control	144,000	154,200	7.1	157,300	2.0
Nominated tester training	20,500	24,000	17.1	25,000	4.2

NB: The relative values of units in the different schemes are not comparable. Document issue counts one output unit for every pad of certificates issued; standards control output units relate to standard output hours for specified activities or the number of hours input for investigations work; nominated tester training outputs refer to the number of students days.

The responsibilities of a garage authorised by the MOT scheme to conduct tests are laid out in the *MOT Testing Guide*. This covers provision for the secure storage of MOT certificates, training and supervision of testers and sets out the facilities and equipment which the garage must provide.

A major change to the way this scheme is operated will occur with the implementation of MOT Computerisation which is due to roll out in 2002. Further detail on the project is provided on page 30. MOT scheme staff will have a large part to play in the MOT Computerisation programme, defining the information which will be needed and resolving vehicle specific testing issues which will arise as a result.

Single Vehicle/Enhanced Single Vehicle Approval schemes (SVA/ESVA)

In anticipation of increased demand on SVA when quotas are lifted, and proposed legislation introducing ESVA from April 2001, we will this year expand the team of specially trained examiners. The number of locations able to process these specialist inspections will be increased either by enhancing existing premises, renting new sites or authorising privately owned facilities (designated premises). Identified sites will be provided with appropriate equipment and facilities for the customers and their vehicles. The VI Intranet will also be enhanced with the capacity to circulate electronically the detailed model reports staff need to complete the ESVA inspections. Specialist standards officers have been trained to ensure the quality and consistency of these inspections.

As well as conducting our own inspections we will continue to provide a certification service to recognise European inspection certificates where the standards meet the UK requirement.

We have worked with policy units in the Department and lead commercial importers to estimate the demand for this work but no one knows for sure what the volumes will be. The uncertainty over volumes produces resource risks for the business and contingency plans are in place to manage this risk.

The Department has an objective 'to protect and improve the environment' which is embraced by our organisational aim. We support Departmental policies and initiatives to protect air quality by improving the standard and consistency of vehicle emissions checks. Following recommendations from the National Audit Office (NAO) Emission Study, we will consider recent data from the pilot scheme of emission checks conducted by Local Authority staff. If the Department concludes its proposals to extend the pilot scheme, we will also offer further emissions checks training to Local Authorities.

Supporting the service providers

MOT garages and testers

VI provides mandatory training for all new AEs and NTs and refresher courses for existing testers. The current training is under review and VI will be consulting with interested parties to develop a replacement for the existing nominated tester training course. This will reflect the changes that have taken place within the test scheme and those which MOT Computerisation will bring.

Apart from their formal initial and refresher training, MOT test stations receive regular visits to monitor their testing standards. These visits are geared to allow a thorough check of the administration systems and testing standards and we currently aim to visit each station at least every 12 months. In line with the importance of emissions work we aim to carry out an observed catalyst emissions test with every NT. We take this opportunity to provide advice and guidance and identify any further training needs.

We have successfully held advisory evening seminars for the trade and are looking at the feasibility of further seminars in 2000/01. These are designed to keep the MOT trade up-to-date on developments, and will include in the coming year, the MOT Computerisation project. These seminars are a good opportunity for VI to meet the scheme users and pass on information about the way we operate. The format of the seminars allows for question and

answer sessions as well as an opportunity to view publications and videos.

MOT scheme and publicity staff produce *Matters of Testing*, a newsletter issued to all MOT test garages on a regular basis. This has proved to be an excellent way to pass on advice and guidance to AEs and NTs. Surveys of the newsletter have shown it to be well received by the Trade. Publication of the newsletter will continue in 2000/01 along with free videos which demonstrate complex or frequently misunderstood areas of the test.

As part of our supervision of the MOT scheme, VI conducts appeals where a customer believes their car has not been tested fairly (usually that it failed when it should have passed). A VI Examiner will arrange to re-examine the vehicle.

Commercial/personal vehicle importers

Our plans to meet the demand that legislative changes to the SVA scheme might bring are geared to ensure a responsive service to the commercial importer by seeking to minimise the burden in terms of waiting times and travelling distances.

Advice on the current and the enhanced Scheme will be available from the SVA team in Swansea, who will be responsible also for the quality assurance of all model reports. Work will continue to examine the feasibility of VI offering a one-stop shop, to include the registration and first licensing of cars and LGVs.

Protecting the car owner

Quality of tests

Standards of testing at individual garages are checked at routine and targeted visits by VI's Vehicle Examiners. This may include incognito checks where a vehicle is submitted for test and observed during test without the tester being aware that a VI examiner has presented the vehicle. During and after such visits there is an opportunity to provide advice, guidance and additional training.

Where necessary we will conduct special investigations to deal with malpractice within the scheme. Using the disciplinary points systems laid out in the *MOT Testing Guide* allows us to deal consistently and fairly with poor performance. Where appropriate we can take action to withdraw authorisation to conduct MOTs from a garage and/or disqualify individual testers.

Developments in the MOT scheme in the coming year will include a set of measures to gauge our effectiveness in controlling standards. We will conduct an exercise using random spot checks on recently tested vehicles to establish a benchmark standard and measure changes to test standards in the long term. Using this benchmark we will be able to monitor and improve the quality of MOT testing.

Information and advice

By increasing awareness of the MOT scheme with members of the public we can raise standards of MOT testing. There are videos and publications available to help

the public prepare their vehicles and understand the process of the MOT test.

The public or trade can call the MOT Enquiry Line to check the validity of MOT certificates or raise queries about tests, test standards and appeals. Many members of the public and auction houses now use the Enquiry Line to check the authenticity of certificates before purchasing a vehicle. The Enquiry Line number is widely publicised and can be found on the MOT certificate.

Work done by our Accident/Defects/Recalls branch on recall campaigns is available on our website. Car owners have free access to the vehicle recall reports, which are listed under make and model numbers. Using this information, they can check for possible safety defects on a vehicle they own or are about to purchase.

Where a private motorist believes that a vehicle (usually one they have recently bought) has been improperly issued with a test certificate, VI can re-examine the vehicle free of charge. This is known as an 'inverted appeal'.



Providing modernised and customer-friendly services

20

The Modernising Government programme seeks to improve the way we work to ensure our customers get a responsive quality service, where customer needs are addressed above the convenience of those providing that service.

We can achieve our overall aim of improved road safety and environmental standards more effectively by working in partnership with our customers, and by improved consultation. We aim to work more closely with all parties who have a vested interest in our work whether as 'joint-provider', for example the Traffic Commissioners and the police, or as 'end-user', for example the vehicle operator, owner or driver. We want to make it easier for 'joint-providers' to be more effective and for 'end-users' to stay inside the law by giving all these customers easy access to useful information. We particularly want to reduce the burden on law abiding operators, vehicle owners and drivers through minimum disruption and inconvenience whilst nevertheless carrying out our services to the highest possible standard.

Closer working to provide responsive service

VI has nominated a 'Consumer Champion' to ensure that customers' views are fed into our planning process and that VI takes positive action to improve its services. Consumer views will inform management and business decisions. The 'Consumer Champion' will facilitate the setting of targets and indicators to measure the extent to which we respond to customers' views and will report on the progress we have made. They also have a responsibility to keep the organisation as a whole informed so that everyone understands

what they need to do to improve customer service.

The first task for our 'Consumer Champion' will be to develop the ability of the organisation to gather more meaningful information from our customer surveys. In the coming year we will conduct in-depth one-to-one surveys and establish customer focus groups. Recommendations will be made about making real changes to the services we offer and the way we deliver them, and these will be fed into the planning cycle for 2001/02.

Working with 'end-user' customers

We will continue to meet on a regular basis with operator associations and trade bodies, operator groups, drivers and vehicle presenters to discuss aspects of our service which are key to them. This happens at both local and national levels. Regional and Area Managers organise seminars and customer surveys to find out what customers want on a local basis. This way services can be adapted to meet local geographical or operational needs. At a national level, Scheme Managers regularly consult with customers and provide advice and information on legislative and technical changes.

This year we will also be contributing to work initiated by the recently formed Commission for Integrated Transport (CfIT). Our involvement will include membership of the Road Haulage Forum and its sub group



looking specifically at enforcement issues. VI are taking the lead in arranging discussions with CPT (the Confederation of Passenger Transport) with a view to achieving similar objectives to the Road Haulage forum.

Liaison meetings take place with trade bodies such as FTA (Freight Transport Association), RHA (Road Haulage Association) and CPT to discuss issues of a national and strategic nature and share ideas about best practice and the support VI can give to the trade.

One of our projects this year will be to undertake a review of the statutory HGV/PSV testing regime. We will be exploring test content, policy, network and fees. As part of this project we will run a workshop session specifically aimed at obtaining end user customer views on these matters.

Feedback on the MOT scheme comes from customer and product surveys, the trade press and meetings with bodies such as RMIF/IGA (Retail Motor Industry Federation/Independent Garage Association), SMTA (Scottish Motor Trade Association), NTDA (National Tyre Distributors Association), and MVRA (Motor Vehicle Repairers Association). There is a regular 'readers survey' of the *Matters of Testing* newsletter, which generates ideas for future issues and MOT testing in general.

Responding to and monitoring complaints can help us to identify problems and make changes. We are committed to the principle of 'putting things right when they go wrong'. Our complaints procedure is publicised in various customer leaflets and on our web site. We will be reviewing our procedures this year.

Working with 'joint-provider' customers

Regular liaison between VI and DETR staff ensures that our work reflects the aims and aspirations of the Department and that we are kept up to date with latest policies and strategic thinking. Working with other bodies such as the Traffic Commissioners, other DVO agencies, the police and Trading Standards ensures both a more streamlined service for our 'end-user' customers and a more effective and efficient use of our resources.

Work within the DVO exercise will be a main driver this coming year for delivering more joined-up services. The aim of the DVO group is 'to improve the co-ordination of government services to individual, corporate and other government customers; and facilitate in particular a "joined-up" service to drivers, vehicle keepers and operators whilst improving consumer protection, road safety and the environment.' A Strategy Board, accountable to Ministers, has been set up to formulate the strategy for achieving this and a task force has been appointed to plan and help co-ordinate a programme of work.

Staff across the agencies meet at all levels to work on projects, share best practice and work towards providing modern and customer friendly services. A number of initiatives exist to share data, information sites and resources to integrate our services where possible and so provide the customer with better service. Some of the things we will be doing this year include:

- work with other DVO agencies to develop a joint strategy to share information and databases. In particular, we will develop co-ordinated Information Systems with a view to offering cross cutting services to our customers in the future;
- close consultation with other DVO agencies to share best practice and experience as the project to renew our IS Service Contract progresses;
- production of joint DVO video and booklet (*Owning a Car*) aimed at new drivers;
- development of a web site with one-stop shop information, working as part of the DVO Web Team;
- participation in a DVO Call Handling working group to implement information systems and processes to handle misdirected calls more efficiently;
- work with DSA on the Theory Test in connection with drivers' hours regulations and on the awareness campaign for new drivers on regulations;

- work in project teams with DVO agencies (DVO/TANU/VCA & DETR) on strategy and plans for the implementation of digital tachographs (expected usage 2002/03) and SMART card technology;
- work with DVLA to set the standards for an MOT style check centred on rebuilt written-off vehicles;
- work with DVLA to extend the pilot scheme on the checking of HGV Vehicle Excise Duty at time of test;
- exploring the possibility of providing commercial vehicle registration and licensing services at the time and place of vehicle test; and
- participation in a joint DVO stand at the Motor Show.

The effectiveness of the DVO exercise will be reviewed in autumn 2000.

Providing accessible and easily understood services

In addition to work on a joint DVO web site, there will be a number of improvements made to the existing VI web site. The site will be made more user friendly to increase access to our services and make more information available electronically.

Information will be available on the site including the Business Plan, Annual Report and newsletters such as *Matters of Testing*. We will work towards accepting credit card payments over the web for those products and services which are commercially available.

The web site contains details of products such as videos, publications and training courses which help operators and drivers keep abreast of new developments, and improve their knowledge and understanding of current standards and regulations.

Further information can be requested on-line and we will also produce an electronic version of the HGV inspection manual on CD ROM with others to follow.

In 2000/01, our Vehicle Safety Branch will be launching an upgraded electronic Vehicle Safety Defect Report, and will continue working with the police to improve the service we offer for post accident vehicle inspections. These initiatives, together with the development and improvement of databases, will enable VI to gather and provide more detailed information about vehicle defects and the cause of accidents. This will be available for use by manufacturers, the police and DETR.

Our Technical Services Branch also maintain a technical records database for each goods vehicle, trailer and bus, and take enquiries from customers (and VI staff) regarding test standards on HGV, PSV and SVA.

In addition to enquiry lines, we will launch a new National Telephone Number in 2000/01. This has been successfully piloted in Scotland and will give customers easier access to a range of VI services without the inconvenience of redialling. By phoning one number customers can book a test or check opening hours, access the

MOT enquiry line or provide VI with valuable information such as Smoky Vehicles or enforcement intelligence. For customers who want to maintain established contacts with their local stations direct phone access will also remain available.

At Heavy Goods Vehicle Test Stations and at exhibitions we attend, a range of leaflets and publications are available, written in plain English. These include *The Service We Give You* which outlines our standards of service and is also available in the Welsh language.

VI uses a range of other media to provide information to the trade and public. We will continue to raise awareness of our enforcement activities and our support services through improved publicity in both national and local press, and radio.

Further details of information available from VI and where to meet us are available from page 36 to 40.

Minimising the burden on industry and the public

As part of our commitment to 'Service First' (a Charter programme set by central government to improve service delivery across the public sector), VI publishes standards of service for each scheme and our central administration. This way customers and users know what they can expect from VI.

Testing services

Customers using our testing stations can decide where they want to go for their test. Our network and capacity of test sites is based on keeping travel to the nearest test site to a benchmark of about 30 miles. It currently comprises 91 VI Goods Vehicle Test Stations and 390 privately-owned sites, which we have approved for testing, otherwise known as Designated Premises (DPs). The percentage of HGV/PSV tests undertaken at DPs has been rising in recent years and we anticipate that this trend will continue.

We have service standards relating to booking times, test cycle times and prohibition clearance. These are:

- test appointment booking time – 90% within 18 working days of request;
- test availability exemption rate less than 0.01%;
- test cycle time of 90% in less than 90 minutes;
- prohibition clearance appointment – 99% within 3 working days of request.

The majority of our own test stations have a laden test trailer for hire which can be attached to the customer's tractor unit during the test. This is not only more convenient for the presenter but also reduces traffic congestion for other road users.

Some customers take advantage of our pre-funded accounts facility which allows them to set up an account with a minimum of £250. They can then use our services

and charge the cost to their account. This way they can book vehicle tests, purchase publications and videos without the inconvenience of numerous cash or cheque transactions. VI staff maintain the accounts and let customers know when they are running low. Customers appreciate this service, in particular the larger companies with several vehicles and drivers. After some disruption to the service following introduction of new software the system is fully functional and providing customers with an easy to use payment facility. Enhancements to the service will look at the use of direct debit as a means of funding the accounts.

Training services

We have made it easier for customers to attend the training courses we offer by making them available at locations across the country. Suitable for individuals or groups, they can also be delivered at customers' premises. They can be tailor-made to meet an individual operator's needs, and delivered at times to suit them, for example evenings or weekends.

Enforcement services

Our enforcement service has a fleet of vans which have IS equipment installed to improve the efficiency of the vehicle roadside check. The use of IT at the roadside gives us access to intelligence data about operators. This way we can target illegal and poor performing operators and reduce disruption for the law-abiding operators.

With new equipment such as the mobile brake testers we are trialling, we can carry out more comprehensive tests at the roadside rather than take vehicles to nearby test stations, minimising disruption for stopped vehicles.

Our leaflet *The Service We Give You* details the standards we apply at the roadside and the commitment we make to minimise the burden on drivers and operators while carrying out enforcement duties. These include:

- avoid delaying vehicles by more than one hour at road checks;
- keep delays to buses and coaches carrying passengers at road checks to a minimum by beginning inspections within 15 minutes and releasing vehicles within 30 minutes of being stopped. Note: where prohibitions of further movement of the vehicle are issued or drivers cautioned for offences, longer delays may be necessary but these will be kept to a minimum commensurate with the action which has to be taken; and
- where appropriate, issue an exemption to a prohibition to allow limited safe use of the vehicle subject to conditions specified.



Running an efficient, continually developing and valued business

24

To deliver against our aim of improved road safety and environmental standards requires successful achievement of the first two business objectives which have a particular focus on the effectiveness of what we do, as well as promoting improvements in the business from a customer perspective. However, long-term ability to deliver continuous improvement also requires that we maintain a clear view on the efficiency of our operations and on development opportunities. Equally we must ensure that our working environment allows for staff creativity and development.

Valuing our people and investing in their future

Our greatest asset is our staff, and the new Human Resources (HR) Strategy has been designed to ensure that they are effectively managed, rewarded, and their potential realised. A range of measures in the HR Strategy are planned to achieve this. The Strategy has been broken down to allow for prioritisation of incremental change through the annual planning cycle.

VI gained IIP accreditation in December 1999, but we recognise that we must work hard to maintain it. To do this we must ensure staff feel valued as individuals, allowing them to contribute to the organisation and the achievement of its goals. We plan to develop and train our own 'in-house' assessors to support the organisation in continuous improvement and through effective management development to make the retention of the IIP award part and parcel of the organisation.

Implementing effective Human Resource Strategies

We will review our recruitment process with a view to filling posts more quickly with suitably qualified staff. We also want to attract more applications from women and members of ethnic minorities and people with disabilities by assessing the types of opportunities we offer and recruitment sources we use.

There will be a greater emphasis on managing performance particularly rewarding good performance and reducing poor performance and sickness absence. HR staff will develop systems and training to support managers in this role and ensure VI policies reflect best practice.

A management training programme is also planned, to ensure new and existing staff are given effective line management support to carry out and develop in their roles. The creation of a workforce plan, will also give the organisation more effective control over the staff resource, and ensure we have the right staff with the right skills in the right place at the right time.

The previous five-year pay strategy is now at an end and a new strategy has been designed. This will look at a range of issues needed to ensure VI continues to provide an appropriate and attractive pay system that meets current and likely future needs.

The HR team will be working to deliver a number of targets set in the Civil Service Reform action plan and Public Service Agreements.

Investing in training and development

The existing training and development strategy will be reviewed to ensure it supports VI's culture and the broader HR strategy with its commitment to continuous

development. VITS (VI Training Services) will develop management training as an extension to the 'Quality People' programme already in place. They will also re-design other job-specific training including Single Vehicle Approval training, and packages for finance and procurement users to reflect organisational change.

We will work closely with DVO agencies and other organisations to offer development opportunities to our staff through exchanges and work-shadowing programmes. This encourages closer working and the exchange of ideas. Staff taking part can develop new skills and bring a fresh perspective to the organisations concerned.

Our apprenticeship scheme, which was launched internally in 1999, will be extended and more recruits are planned for September 2000. This will ensure we continue to expand our pool of suitably qualified Vehicle Examiners in the future and provide opportunities for staff to progress.

Listening to staff views

Staff attitude surveys are conducted annually. These are considered by Directors to be a valuable health check on the state of the organisation. Analysis and comments from the surveys along with a rolling programme of site visits by Directors ensure that we listen to staff concerns with a view to targeting our efforts appropriately. We can also use the

information gained to build on areas of achievement and spread best practice across the organisation.

Providing an effective working environment

Estates strategy

In addition to a planned maintenance programme, there is a five-year Estates strategy, which this year will focus on space use and accommodation requirements.

The development of the new testing station and training school in North Manchester is proceeding. Completion is planned for late 2000/early 2001. This will include new HGV/PSV testing facilities, as well as dedicated SVA facilities and training bays.

Network review

There will be a major review of our existing network of sites and facilities in 2000/01. This will consider the future potential of the network from both an operational view, and one of maximising property assets.

We will also review the geographical boundaries of our Operations directorate to ensure that they are capable of alignment with those of regional government. This will make the collection of regional data and information easier and in the long term create possibilities for closer working with other parts of government.

Better facilities

A programme of improvements is planned in the coming year to the facilities available in our test stations and at the roadside.

In our test stations the replacement of smoke meters was postponed last year pending new EC legislation on diesel emissions. This will now go ahead with appropriate equipment selected, and due to be installed by October 2000. Replacement wheel-play detectors will also be installed to carry out effective checks of steering and suspension components on the heaviest trucks. As described on page 17, facilities will be developed to meet anticipated levels of SVA inspections.

At the roadside we will add more support vehicles to our existing fleet of 23 vans. These fully equipped mobile enforcement units are designed to carry portable weigh pads, smoke meters and other enforcement equipment which enable us to be much more effective at the roadside, particularly at locations where there are no fixed weighbridges or established check sites. Digital cameras will also replace those currently used by our enforcement staff giving electronic access across the organisation to visual information and evidence.

Safer working

This year we plan to consolidate the improvements of health and safety management, through reinforced training and support. Work on monitoring

procedures will ensure all our staff fully understand their responsibilities for health and safety. There will be a detailed review of the Health and Safety at all sites, to ensure we meet with all current legislation. This will include water quality and electrical installation surveys.

Ensuring a sound financial platform

Over the medium-term planning period we are hoping to be in a position to respond positively to the fast developing and changing business environment we work in. It is anticipated that we will need to invest quite heavily in the business in order to keep pace with these potential changes.

During the last 10 years successful delivery of efficiency and cash targets together with investment in our IS programme has meant the business has no immediate reserves to call on to fund new investment. Being a trading fund gives us some flexibility to generate the capacity for the required investment. We will therefore be looking to implement a package of fee increases, departmental loans and further efficiencies/ways of working differently to ensure prudent and beneficial investment will be possible.

Trading account management

One of the key financial objectives placed on the Trading Fund by the Treasury is that the costs incurred in undertaking all aspects of work involved with a particular scheme, for example the testing of HGVs, should be matched by the total amount of

income received from the fees charged for carrying out those tests. Similarly the costs of undertaking the roadworthiness enforcement and 'O' licensing enforcement of HGVs and operators should be matched by the income received from the Department for this work.

Return on capital

The business has been set a key financial target in keeping with a measure regularly used in the commercial environment. This is a Return on Capital target, which measures the return on average resources consumed. Performance is monitored throughout the year through assessment of a forecast figure and the final outturn forms part of our audited accounts.

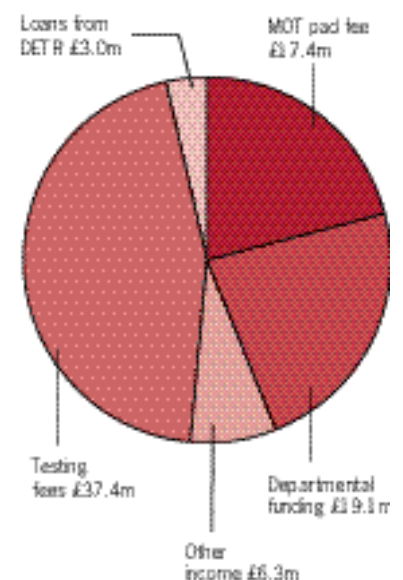
VI's financial target is outlined in key target 4: 'to break even while achieving an average 6% real rate of return on capital over the period 1 April 1998 – 31 March 2003.' The indicative in-year target is 5%.

Forecast income and expenditure plans

Forecast income

Our income comes from statutory testing fees, funding from DETR (to cover 'O' licensing support and enforcement activities), funding from other Agencies, sale of MOT certificate pads and also a number of smaller sources determined as miscellaneous (for example training course charges, sale of publications and videos). Departmental funding figures include the directly received receipts of 'court costs awarded'.

Forecast income £83.1m



We plan to increase Statutory HGV/PSV testing fees from 1 June 2000. Fees were last increased in August 1998 and prior to this had been held or lowered, equivalent to a reduction in real terms of 25%. This year's expected 6% fee increase will enable us, in part, to increase the level of capital investment in modernisation of the estate, develop electronic and one-stop shop services and undertake further work on information reports to support operator targeting. We intend to increase the charge for an MOT pad of 100 certificates to £83 per pad (currently £58 per pad) in preparation for the introduction of the MOT Computerisation systems in 2002.

The planned expansion of the SVA scheme and potential lifting of quotas has been built into the income assumption. Uncertainties over the timing of this change to the scheme introduce a risk to the planned levels of income, which could be up to £1 million short. This will in turn impact on our capacity to implement planned expenditure and capital investment.

Expenditure plans

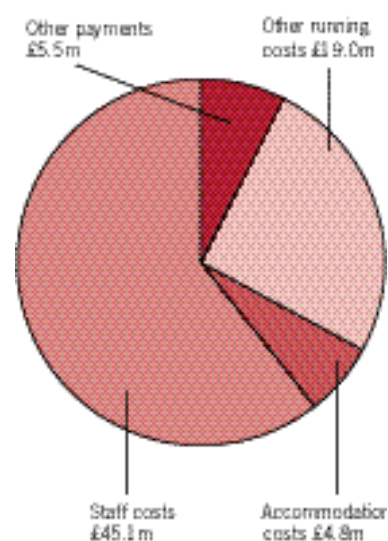
Expenditure plans cover staff, accommodation and other running costs and payments; these include weighbridge capital costs on behalf of DETR, MOT Computerisation project costs, research and development investment, interest payments on our loans and dividend payments to DETR and Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT).

Capital investment

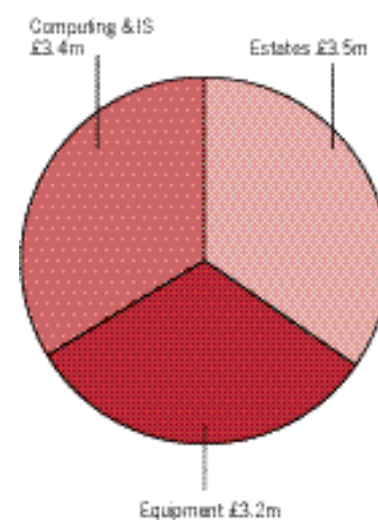
Our financial plans for 2000/01 include a heavy investment programme. We believe this is an important provision if we are to ensure that staff have efficient equipment suitable for the purpose and, where possible, to keep improving working conditions. This will in turn allow employees better opportunities for delivering improved effectiveness and efficiency. This year's planned investment includes:

- work to enhance the IS infrastructure;
- delayed investment in the estate, and the building of a new testing station in North Manchester. This will replace and improve upon the service provided by the current site in this location, as well as providing additional testing facilities to meet the assumed volumes of activity under the SVA scheme;
- capital investment to meet the assumed increase in the SVA activity;
- a continued programme of replacing equipment. This includes diesel smoke meters, additional weigh-pads, testing station wheel play detectors (a four-year replacement plan), and a rolling programme for replacing pool cars;
- additional, VI specification, vans for mobile enforcement (to transport IS weigh-pads and smoke meters);
- continued development of our computer systems. This includes the continuing computerisation of our Prosecution & Legal Services (PLS), links to the Court systems and further development of the Data Warehouse; and

Expenditure plans £74.4m*



Capital expenditure £10.1m*



*The expenditure plan and capital investment figures show the extent of commitments which do not correspond exactly to actual cash movement.

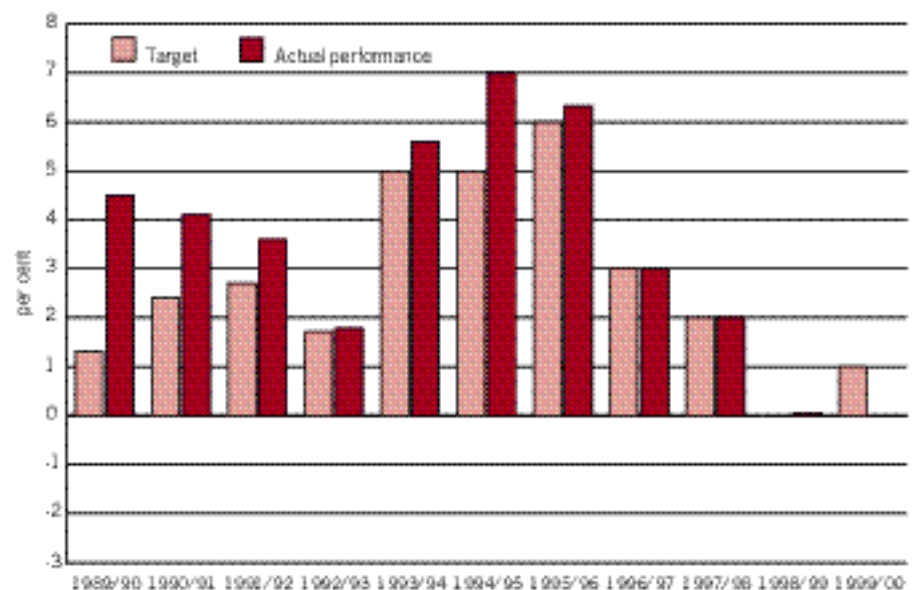
- the further development of the new telephony system installed last year, including the development of a national telephone number able to handle all types of queries, test bookings, etc.

Although this is an exceptionally high annual capital spend, some of the work cannot be delayed (IS, SVA and PLS), while other work has been delayed for long enough (estates, equipment replacement). The remaining projects will build on the current investment and contribute to achievement of the Government's 'modernisation' objective (Data Warehouse and telecommunications).

Additional funds

The level of investment planned above includes the provision of a new multi-purpose site in North Manchester and the expansion of facilities for the introduction of the scheme during the year. These projects will require high expenditure at the early stages of the project life which cannot be met initially by funds within the Agency. Higher than planned fee increases cannot be considered to meet this requirement. Therefore we will pursue our only other option this year, which is to take on long-term loans from DETR.

VI ACE performance



Efficiency improvements and our current measurement

Our efficiency measure is known as ACE (Aggregated Cost Efficiency).

ACE looks at changes in the unit costs of each Scheme. The outputs and costs of the year are compared with those of the previous year (after taking inflation into account). This information is then pulled together into a single index for the Inspectorate.

An ACE target is agreed as a key target with the Department annually. The target for the 2000/01 financial year is 'to achieve an Aggregated Cost Efficiency (ACE) Index of +1%'.

The delivery of +1% ACE will be extremely demanding in a year where we will have the further change and continuing pressures connected with the roll out of the complex IS strategy and the progression of the major MOT Computerisation project. We are also absorbing many new costs to meet new legislation and continuation of current practices, such as:

- new and continued Health and Safety legislation;
- the increased production of the MOT newsletter;
- compliance with provisions in the Welsh Language Act;
- improvements associated with VI's 'greening' policy;
- resources required to plan for the introduction of the Euro; and

- a broad range of activities that fall within the Modernising Government initiative.

This year's target must also be seen in the context of the cumulative +29% improvement in efficiency that has been achieved since VI became a Trading Fund in 1991. These achievements are shown in the bar chart opposite.

Development of our measurement of efficiency

ACE currently acts a driver for the Agency as a whole to either produce more work for the same/less money or produce the same work for less money. However, there is a limit to how far the organisation can continue to reduce costs and/or improve the use of our assets without either eroding the quality of service or harming longer-term investment or development. Acceptance of the limitations of ACE provided the opportunity to review our efficiency key target. The review recommended that ACE was replaced with a measure that encompassed both our effectiveness and efficiency, while at the same time placing a value on our various activities. The resultant proposed measure is called 'Performance Gain' (PG).

Following a study to prove that the PG concept could work, DETR agreed to consider it as a replacement to ACE and a project team was established in December 1998. Since then, considerable development work has been undertaken with the assistance of VI staff and departmental customers. Before acceptance as a key target for the business, PG will be piloted in five enforcement areas from the beginning of the financial year.

Working smarter and greener

In a large geographically spread organisation it is often difficult to make the best use of resources. The flow of communication and use of information is not always consistent. The recent introduction of new technology has changed much of that, improving communication and our ability to gather, manage and disseminate information.

Further development of IS

In recent years VI's IS strategy has focused on creating electronic systems for our test station and roadside operations. This has created a wealth of information and intelligence about our activities which we can use to improve our effectiveness and efficiency.

A new Head of IS will be appointed to take the strategy forward, and ensure effective management of IS resources and development. Work on the IS infrastructure will improve the flow of data across the network and provide tools to access and analyse it. The planned VI Intranet will give access to new web-based applications, including the Data Warehouse, SVA database, as well as HR and Finance functions. We will also work towards BS7799 secure network accreditation.

The Data Warehouse will hold a range of management data, becoming the hub of VI's business reporting system and a key component in the success of the new PG system. VI will also be connected to the Government Secure Intranet (GSI), enabling us to access, and share information with, other departments and agencies. This will also give us safe connection to the Internet enabling us to take full advantage of e-commerce opportunities, such as on-line procurement. To allow for the integration of VI Intranet and GSI connection, the Lotus Notes system will be upgraded to Version 5.0. The Oracle System developed for the HR unit will be upgraded to Release 11 and enhanced to provide management information. Phase II of the Oracle Financials system will be implemented, and we are looking to improve the production and clarity of accounts, and speedier turnaround of budgets.

On the operational side, further enhancements will be made to the test lane system. A feasibility study will trial printing of test certificates in the test lane, reducing waiting times for customers. We will also be looking at how we could extend the systems to non-computerised stations and DPs. On enforcement, the system will be expanded to include better targeting information which will assist in investigations and prosecutions. It is also planned that we will be able to transfer casework via email, enabling work to be processed much more quickly than at present.

Work on the electronic links to courts is well underway, with interface documents near completion. When fully operational, this will allow court cases to be sent and received electronically, giving access to listings and other benefits. This will lead to a speedier and more efficient prosecution process. We will be working with other agencies on this project in line with the cross government working initiative. There will be a further review of court costs applications, to reflect more realistic recompense for VI.

Much of the services which support the VI Infrastructure and operating systems are currently provided by an outside supplier. This contract is due to expire in December 2002. A detailed project will begin this year to investigate the full range of procurement options available. This will ensure the new contract delivers a service which best meets our business needs in future years.

MOT Computerisation

The contract for the MOT Computerisation project has now been awarded, and work has started on design and development. Trade and consumer interest groups will advise the VI project team during the design stage, to ensure the needs of key users are met.

The roll-out of the system is due to commence from mid-2002. This will provide support to AEs and NTs via easy-to-use electronic manuals, guides and vehicle-specific information. These will help testers to identify the correct test standards and procedures for individual vehicles. The system will also deliver automated processes for recording results and generating certificates. A database of vehicles and testers will be created. The system will reduce potential for errors, theft and fraud within the scheme.

Management of the scheme will focus on analysis of the data which the scheme generates. This will provide information such as testing trends, and determine levels of enforcement activity as well as support through advice and guidance. MOT Computerisation will bring benefits to VI's customers, by offering a seamless service and improving the quality of MOT Testing.

MOT Computerisation will provide electronic delivery of service, and improve road safety by providing information essential to the work of other government organisations. Motorists will benefit from more consistent testing and fraud within the scheme will be reduced.

Management of records

During 2000/01, work on electronic access to information will be supported by a three-year project to standardise VI's management of records. This will improve the flow of information and result in better records management. It will also meet the requirements of new legislation, and ensure VI conforms to government standards.

Investing in research and development

Projects to research new developments in road safety and environmental protection are undertaken by a small team. In the coming year they will manage a programme to include:

- research into an effective means of testing low emission diesels;
- investigation into the high failure rate of vehicles for headlight aim;
- joint funded European research into on-board diagnostic and monitoring systems; and
- trial of mobile roller brake testers at roadside enforcement checks.

Auditing for improvement

The Internal Audit team plays a major role in the continuous improvement of all our processes. It is responsible for auditing individual systems, operational centres, and reviewing our internal controls. Their programme of work is agreed by VI's Audit Committee, who can also, along with the Chief Executive, commission special investigations. The internal audit team will continue to liaise with the National Audit Office (NAO) who are our external auditors and with other audit groups elsewhere in DETR.

Green policy

We will prepare and implement our Green Policy, which includes an Environmental Management system and a Green Transport plan. This will ensure that VI minimises the impact it makes on the environment. To this end, much of the old VI pool car fleet will be replaced with more environmentally friendly bi-fuel LPG vehicles where available.

Reporting on our performance



Accountability to Parliament and the public

VI is accountable to the Secretary of State, the Minister and Parliament through the Advisory Board. The role of the Advisory Board is to offer advice to the Minister and to the Chief Executive on VI's strategies, its current work and to review progress and performance. It is chaired by the DETR Director General of Planning, Roads and Local Transport; it comprises VI Directors and senior policy customers from DETR.

The Chief Executive is personally responsible to the Secretary of State for operating the Trading Fund in accordance with the Vehicle Inspectorate Trading Fund Order 1991. In particular he is responsible for ensuring that: the Agency's resources are used efficiently and effectively, and that the Agency provides good value for money service in consultation with its customers.

The Agency provides the Advisory Board and Departmental customers with regular performance monitoring information. This takes the form of quarterly reports and formal in-year statements which include comments on progress and performance against our key targets and PSA targets.

Financial performance is managed throughout the year at budget holder level and at a number of management board levels through to the Advisory Board. Projected key target outturn, cashflow and scheme performance form the main elements of this monitoring.

Public reporting of our performance will be through the published Annual Report and Accounts and our Annual Effectiveness Report.

Using the balanced scorecard

Our key targets are also aligned to our four objectives which contribute to our aim of improving road safety and environmental standards.

To maintain a balance across our work areas and address all the issues of the business in an integrated way, we use a balanced scorecard system. By using the scorecard we can provide a clear, up-to-date, easily accessible picture of where we are going. The scorecard also gives us an early warning of performance shortfalls.

The scorecard covers the four areas of performance:

- excellent service to customers;
- sound financial performance;
- continuing improvement of internal management; and
- investment for the future.

In the chart (right) we summarise how the business objectives and key targets fit into our balanced scorecard.



Abbreviations and definitions

34

Abbreviation	Definition		
ACE	Aggregated Cost Efficiency Index – the Vehicle Inspectorate's overall measure of efficiency	ESVA	Enhanced Single Vehicle Approval Scheme
ADR	Certification of vehicles for use under international arrangements for the carriage of dangerous goods	FTA	Freight Transport Association
AE	Authorised Examiner – an individual, person in partnership or company meeting requirements (premises, equipment, personnel and good repute) to carry out MOT testing	GSI	Government Secure Intranet
ANPR	Automatic Number Plate Reader camera technology	HA	Highways Agency
ATP	Certification of vehicles for use under international arrangements for the carriage of perishable foodstuffs	HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle – goods carrying vehicle over 3,500kg design gross weight
COIF	Certificate of Initial Fitness – the certification of Public Service Vehicles as fit to carry passengers before use	HMT	Her Majesty's Treasury
CPT	Confederation of Passenger Transport	HR	Human Resources
Data Warehouse	A collection of corporate information derived directly from operational systems and some external sources together with a set of tools to query, analyse and present information. Its specific purpose is to support business decisions. It is a place where we publish used data	H&S	Health and Safety
The Department/ DETR	Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions – the parent department of the Vehicle Inspectorate	IIP	Investors in People – national accreditation of an organisation meeting defined standards on personnel and business management
DP	Designated Premises	IS	Information Systems – used in context of the Information Systems Strategy which will provide a comprehensive computerised system for handling and analysing data
DSA	Driving Standards Agency	IT	Information Technology
DVLA	Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency	LACOTS	Local Authorities Co-ordinating body on food and Trading Standards
DVO	Driver, Vehicle, Operator Agencies/ Directorates of DETR	LGV	Light Goods Vehicle – goods vehicle not exceeding 3,500kg design gross weight
E-commerce	The management of information about products and services and the ability to conduct business transactions, electronically	MOA	Memorandum of Agreement – written requirement agreed with the relevant policy directorate or Agency of the DETR on the type and level of activity to be undertaken under a scheme
		MOT	Ministry of Transport – usually referred to in the context of the statutory MOT test
		NAO	National Audit Office
		NT	Nominated Tester – a qualified mechanic who has been nominated by an AE to carry out MOT tests
		'O' licence	Operator licence issued by Traffic Commissioners which permits the commercial operation of HGVs or PSVs
		PLS	Prosecution & Legal Services
		PSA	Public Service Agreement

Abbreviation	Definition		
PSV	Public Service Vehicle – a vehicle licensed to carry (normally nine or more) fare-paying passengers	T&S	Travel and Subsistence
RHA	Road Haulage Association	TSO	Trading Standards Officer
RMIF	Retail Motor Industry Federation	VCA	Vehicle Certification Agency
Scheme	The breakdown of VI work into an identifiable area called a scheme	Vehicle Examiner (VE)	Vehicle Inspectorate employee responsible for the front-line enforcement of the roadworthiness of goods and passenger vehicles, and for standards control of MOT testing stations
SMMT	Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders	VED	Vehicle Excise Duty
SMTA	Scottish Motor Trade Association	VI	Vehicle Inspectorate – an Agency of the DETR
SVA	Single Vehicle Approval scheme	VITS	Vehicle Inspectorate Training Services
TACHO	The scheme for approving and inspecting tachograph calibrating centres	VRO	Vehicle Registration Office
Test availability exemption rate	This relates to occasions when a vehicle or trailer cannot be tested before the expiry of its current test certificate, owing to the inability of the Inspectorate to provide a test appointment at any reasonable location within the required timescale		
Test error rate	This measures the number of times testing staff are found to have made errors of fact or judgement, on whether items inspected during the test should pass or fail; it is recorded as a percentage of all tests carried out. All errors are recorded but are weighted according to the severity of the error		
TIR	Certification of vehicles for use under international arrangements for goods sealed for customs purposes		
TQ	Total Quality. The initiative on Total Quality within the Vehicle Inspectorate to improve business processes and develop services to meet customer satisfaction		
Traffic Examiner (TE)	Vehicle Inspectorate employee responsible for the front-line enforcement of safety and licensing provisions on goods and passenger vehicles		

Contact points and other publication details

36

Vehicle Inspectorate (VI)

Vehicle Inspectorate Headquarters and Training Centre

Vehicle Inspectorate
Berkeley House
Croydon Street
Bristol BS5 0DA

Headquarters: 0117 954 3200
Training centre: 0117 954 3291

Vehicle Inspectorate Operations and Distribution Centre

Vehicle Inspectorate
Welcombe House
91–92 The Strand
Swansea SA1 2DH

Tel: 01792 458888

General Customer Enquiries

	Email	Telephone
General enquiries	enquiries@via.gov.uk	0870 6060 440
Vehicle test bookings	bookings@via.gov.uk	0870 6060 440
Accident/Defects/Recalls	recalls@via.gov.uk	0117 954 3300
Intelligence officer network	enquiries@via.gov.uk	0870 6060 440
MOT certificate enquiry line	enquiries@via.gov.uk	0845 600 5977
Press office	press@via.gov.uk	0117 954 3334
Publications information	enquiries@via.gov.uk	0870 6060 440
Smoky vehicles hotline	enquiries@via.gov.uk	0870 6060 440
Technical service enquiries for PSV certifications, motor vehicle trailer plating and specialised inspections	technical@via.gov.uk	01792 458 888
Training services	training@via.gov.uk	0117 954 3291
Headquarters	enquiries@via.gov.uk	0117 954 3200
Headquarters fax	enquiries@via.gov.uk	0117 954 3212

Vehicle Importing

Single Vehicle Approval (SVA); (Vehicle Inspectorate)

General and Technical Enquiries	enquiries@via.gov.uk	0870 6060 440
SVA test bookings	bookings@via.gov.uk	0870 6060 440

Addresses and/or telephone numbers of local stations and offices can be obtained by contacting our headquarters or the official VI web site.

Web site information:

The web site holds a vast array of information regarding VI and its activities. Topics featured include:

- MOT, HGV, PSV, SVA, etc. test information;
- enforcement details;
- press releases;
- publications;
- training information; and
- opportunities to send electronic feedback.

To visit the site please go to the address listed below.

General web site address: **<http://www.via.gov.uk>**

Any opinions or suggestions can also now be sent electronically to this email address:

enquiries@via.gov.uk

MOT Enquiry Line

0845 600 5977 (calls charged at local rate).

Our dedicated team can answer your questions on appealing against the issue or refusal of a test certificate; MOT Test standards; the *MOT Test Manual and Guide*; and the validity of your MOT Certificate.

Smoky vehicle hotline

You can play a part in helping to improve environmental standards by reporting commercial diesel vehicles with excessively smoky exhausts. If you wish to make a report please telephone the appropriate VI office with the following details:

- vehicle registration number;
- type of vehicle;
- date, time, place you saw the vehicle and, if possible, the name of the firm operating the vehicle; and
- your name and address (to prevent malicious reports) which will remain confidential.

South East	020 8665 0885
West	0117 953 1924
South Wales	01443 224771
West Midlands	0121 789 7999
East	0116 276 2411
North East	0113 288 7818
North West	0161 494 9085
Scotland	01506 445216

Intelligence Unit

Are you or do you know of someone who is forced to break the law relating to:

- Drivers Hours – PSV or HGV;
- Vehicle Maintenance;
- MOT Testing;
- Driving Instruction; or
- Illegal Operators?

If so contact your local VI Intelligence officer:

South East:	01903 767593
West:	01722 414131
South Wales & West Midlands:	01562 515688
East:	01536 513621
North East:	01937 844724
North West:	01228 531737
Scotland:	0131 244 6520

Personal Contact

VI will be attending various exhibitions and organising Open Days throughout the year to promote our products and services. This will also enable us to meet the customer, giving you a chance to ask questions in an informal atmosphere.

2000 events include:

Exhibitions

IRTE Exhibition, Scotland	Glasgow	31 August–1 September 2000
Expo Coach 2000	NEC	3–5 October 2000
Motor Show	NEC	18–29 October 2000
Community Transport Association Exhibition	Telford	21–23 November 2000

Other

Trans-Lancs Rally (Heaton Park)	Manchester	3 September 2000
---------------------------------	------------	------------------

Seminars

VI will be attending North West and North East Traffic Area Seminars across the regions between May and November 2000. Please contact the Traffic Areas for further information.

Open Days

Many Heavy Goods Vehicle test stations will be offering the opportunity to visit their sites by holding Open Days. Contact a Test Station in your area to find out the date for the Open Days in 2000/01.

