



Business Plan

2001 / 2002



Vehicle
Inspectorate



Vehicle Inspectorate

'contributing to the improvement of road safety and environmental standards'

Our work directly supports drivers, vehicle owners, operators, and the providers of the MOT testing service, helping them comply with vehicle safety and environmental standards.

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More effective ways of working



Chief Executive
Maurice Newey

The Vehicle Inspectorate's major challenge for the coming year is to further improve effectiveness in delivering our road safety and environmental objectives.

We are introducing a new measure of effectiveness, called Performance Gain (PG). This will measure our performance based on the value of activities we undertake rather than the volumes, and will encourage staff to concentrate on activities that produce the greatest road safety benefits. Our vehicle and traffic examiners will be able to address priorities on a local basis within an overall organisational framework.

PG will be underpinned by improved information systems which will give us much better details of individual operators' performance as measured, for example, by annual tests, roadside or fleet checks. This will enable us to target and tailor our activity. For example, we believe that education and advice may be the best route to raising compliance levels for those operators who are striving to get things right, and this approach has been successfully adopted in pilot PG activity.

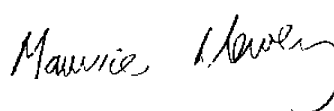
There will, however, be no let-up for those who continue to compromise road safety and environmental standards. A package of measures supported by the Road Haulage Forum, and centrally funded, will provide new equipment, facilities and more examiners for roadside checks. There will be more resources to tackle drivers' hours abuses and, following new legislation, we will have the power to impound the vehicles of illegal operators.

We are continuing to meet the objectives of the Modernising Government agenda in a variety of ways. Our contribution to the Driver, Vehicle and Operator (DVO) strategy, to provide a seamless delivery of services to our customers, continues with a number of new and ongoing projects featured in our plans.

Vehicle technology is developing fast and VI will be taking a leading role in the DVO project to introduce digital tachographs. There are also major projects to replace our existing Information Systems (IS) contract and to introduce computerisation of the MOT scheme. Both will reach significant milestones this year. We are also leading research to improve testing standards, including emission tests.

Our plans are influenced by feedback from our customers and we will be extending the range and number of our customer consultation groups this year to ensure wider participation and greater input into future years' planning. We will co-ordinate with stakeholder consultation groups being undertaken by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR).

Our quest for greater effectiveness requires, above all, having staff in place with the right skills and competencies. The implementation of a new grading and pay system and a new management development programme will support this, as will achievement of our action plans to ensure our organisation reflects the diversity of the community in which we work. We want to continue to support our staff to achieve their full potential and will demonstrate this in the coming year by seeking re-accreditation against the Investors in People (IIP) standard.



Our customers, work and organisation

Our customers

The industries and individuals we support include: the haulage and public service vehicle industries; the Traffic Commissioners; trade associations; vehicle manufacturers; private garages; and the public. To deliver our services effectively we also work closely with the police, Traffic Area offices, DVO group, other government departments, and local authorities. We are accountable to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions through DETR.



VI headquarters in Bristol

Our work

We achieve our organisational aim through various activities which we can describe as preventative, educational and advisory, or enforcement. They include:

- statutory annual testing and voluntary tests;
- specialist inspections e.g. certification of buses/coaches before they enter service;
- inspections of imported and amateur-built vehicles to be sure that they have been designed and built to acceptable safety and environmental standards i.e. Single Vehicle Approval (SVA);
- approval of applications from operators wanting to run goods vehicles at different weights;

- approving Authorised Examiners (AEs) and Nominated Testers (NTs) to provide MOT testing services;
- provision of statutory training for AEs and NTs;
- delivery of advisory services to MOT service providers;
- monitoring standards at MOT garages and tests, applying sanctions to deter those who do not comply with the standards;

- provision of a range of commercial training courses and products;
- delivery of local seminars covering a range of testing and enforcement issues;
- supplying a range of advisory videos and publications;

- technical investigations by our Vehicle Safety Branch (VSB), to identify manufacturing or design-specific defects, highlighting safety concerns, and monitoring safety recalls;
- support to the police by examining vehicles involved in accidents in order to identify contributory defects, including determination of whether a criminal act has been committed;
- providing information, through our accidents and defects databases, to manufacturers, the police and DETR, to assist in identifying issues and formulating policy;

- delivering a programme of research into new developments;
- monitoring the compliance of bus routes with their registered timetables; and
- enforcing the approved driving instructor scheme.

Our organisation

VI was established as the first Executive Agency on 1 August 1988. Our Chief Executive, Maurice Newey, is responsible to the Secretary of State for the day-to-day running, performance and future development of the Agency.

We have approximately 2,000 staff. They work at our headquarters in Bristol; offices in Swansea, Cambridge and Edinburgh; and at 91 test stations and 23 enforcement offices across Great Britain.

Our plans in context

There are many influences on our plans from government initiatives to public opinion. Across society there is an increasing demand for improvements in quality of life which include safer roads and a cleaner environment. We welcome the opportunities that this provides us to undertake more work. Additional resources will be targeted to address issues important to people in their localities. In particular we will improve support to operators and drivers by raising the level of advice and education we give. This activity will be balanced by our continuing enforcement and testing activities which all play a part in increasing compliance with road safety and environmental standards.



A major influence for taking forward government and departmental objectives is our work within the Driver, Vehicle, Operator (DVO) group. This group consists of VI, DSA, DVLA, VCA, TAN and DETR(c). Through the group we aim to deliver effective and easy-to-use services as stated in the joint mission statement:

'working together to improve road safety, reduce crime, protect the environment and deliver modern, user-friendly services.'

Government influences

Our work and priorities are influenced by government and departmental objectives, strategies, and initiatives. These are detailed in a range of centrally produced documents including:

- *Transport 2010 – The 10 year Plan* (DETR);
- *Tomorrows Roads – Safer for Everyone* (DETR);
- *Strategy for sustainable development for the United Kingdom* (DETR);
- Modernising Government and Civil Service Reform.



Delivery of our plans support the achievement of DETR's objectives by contributing to:

- 'the delivery of regulatory and other transport services to the public and industry, in an efficient and fair way'; and
- 'the improvement of health and safety by reducing risks from work activity, travel and the environment'.

By working towards shared strategies, policies and practices we aim to deliver a more cohesive approach and consequently greater impact in the stated areas of road safety, vehicle crime and environmental standards. A number of projects are in place to enable improved joint working across the DVO group and our involvement in some of these is detailed in this plan. There is particular commitment to joint exploitation of new technology and staff development through involvement in projects and activities across the group.

The preparation of new legislation and its implementation has an impact on our plans with changes in the coming year including: Enhanced Single Vehicle Approval; powers to impound vehicles; the introduction of the vehicle identity check under the provisions of the Vehicle (Crimes) Bill; and Human Rights Act legislation which cuts right across the scope of our work.

Consumer interests

We seek to take account of our customers' views in the planning process. This has been done in recent years through a range of liaison meetings, surveys and interviews. We have also achieved this through joint working with the Motorists' Forum initiative, the Commission for Integrated Transport (CiT), and in particular through the Road Haulage Forum. Consumer input has been given a greater focus through the work of our Consumer Champion and action planning from our recent successful VI/DETR/Customer Testing Awayday.

Strategic framework

Our strategy is based on five themes which draw on government influences and consumer interests. They determine the future direction for our business planning, with specific focus on our role within the DVO group. They are:

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

Our main driver is to change HOW we deliver improvements in road safety and environmental standards and increase our effectiveness to:

- ensure there are fewer non-compliant vehicles and drivers on the road;
- minimise the impact of our activities on compliant operators; and
- make the most of technological developments including information systems so that we continue to become a modern IT-based organisation.

In achieving this change, the WHAT, i.e. the range of our current activities, will remain broadly the same. However, we want to achieve a better balance across our activities and be more supportive of the industries and agencies that we come into contact with by increasing the proportion of our advisory and educational activities.

Long-term planning will build on our contribution to the delivery of smarter, cleaner, safer vehicles on the road, as featured in the Department's Ten Year Transport Plan.

Business objectives

Our organisational aim, which provides an overarching focus for delivery against our strategic themes, is:

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

This is supported by four business objectives. These objectives are detailed below, with the main areas of activity supporting each one summarised 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 standards of private motor vehicles**
– *through the delivery of effective MOT and SVA 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; 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; beneficial investment in our people, estate, equipment and information systems.*

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

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

The overall purpose of this business objective is to reduce the number of potential or actual offending vehicles on the road. To achieve this we deliver annual statutory testing of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV), Public Service Vehicles (PSV) and Light Goods Vehicle (LGV) fleets; offer advice and guidance to drivers, owners and operators and enforce roadworthiness, road traffic and environmental standards at the roadside and fleet premises.

Testing activities



A VI tester working at one of our 91 stations

We conduct annual statutory tests and re-tests of lorries (HGVs), trailers, buses and coaches (PSVs) and a limited number of smaller vehicles (LGVs). In addition, we also certify new buses and coaches, undertake advisory testing and offer a range of specialist inspections including: the carriage of dangerous goods; the carriage of foodstuffs on international journeys; and goods sealed for customs purposes. The volume of statutory testing work we envisage conducting in 2001/02 is detailed in the table below.

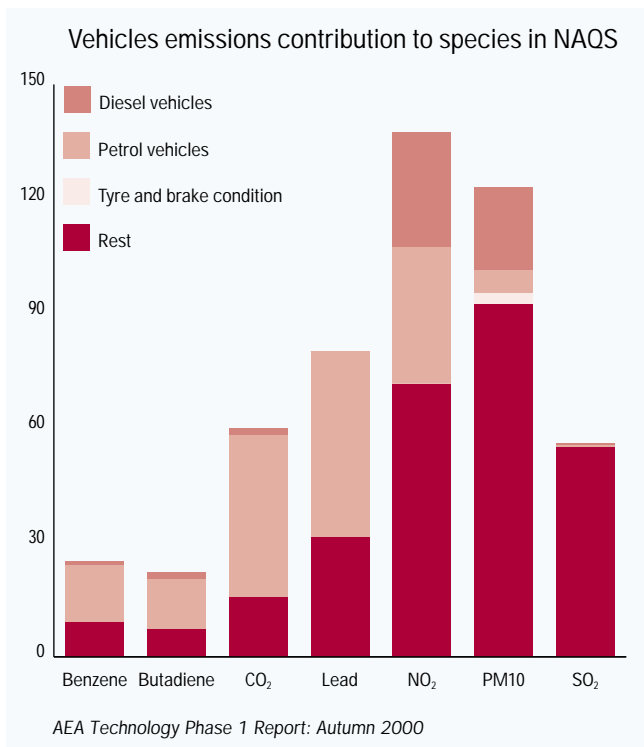
We plan to ensure that vehicles are tested to standards that make them safer and cleaner. We will achieve this by working with the Department to improve the test and the services we offer, as well as using new and better equipment and researching into new technology.

In 2001/02 we will also:

- **Change the test for PSVs.** Under regulations made in the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995, new buses and coaches carrying over 22 passengers must be equipped with suitable access and other facilities for passengers in wheelchairs and/or with impaired mobility. Changes have already been made to our Certificate of Initial Fitness (COIF) inspection to accommodate this and we will follow this with changes to the annual test in autumn 2001. Although few vehicles will be affected initially, we expect volumes of such vehicles to increase progressively in subsequent years and we will be planning for increased resources and appropriate fee changes to reflect this.

Numbers of tests	Actual outturn 1999/2000	Forecast outturn 2000/01	2000/01 vs 1999/2000 %	Planning assumption 2001/02	2001/02 vs 2000/01 %
HGV	925,000	933,400	+0.9	952,000	+2.0
PSV	91,200	91,750	+0.6	91,750	0.0
LGV	20,100	17,000	-15.4	17,000	0.0
Specialist inspection	11,600	10,900	-6.0	10,900	0.0

- **Conduct research into the headlamp aim test.**
Headlamp aim is one of the highest failure items at annual test. We will identify the reasons for this, review the standards we should be setting, and, to help operators get it right, establish whether new automatic measuring devices are needed.
- **Develop a strategy for brake performance testing.**
With brake performance defects continuing to cause a high proportion of test failures, we need to find a way of encouraging operators to improve brake maintenance. We also need to ensure that our brake test methods are as effective as possible, and to do this we will review the latest techniques and equipment available to inform our strategy.
- **Research into a revised test for low emission diesel vehicles.** Diesel emissions are a major contributor to air pollution, as the graph below illustrates:



The current test for diesel emissions is very basic covering smoke opacity rather than any of the other pollutants which diesel vehicles emit (e.g. oxides of nitrogen and fine particulates). We need to find a more thorough but cost-effective way of testing the new generation of diesel engines, enabling a significant contribution to be made to national air quality (NAQ) targets.

- **Extend our current trial contract with ABRO (the defence logistics organisation) to test Army 'B' (non-combat) vehicles.** This existing test involves checks of lights, brakes and emissions on a six-monthly voluntary fee-paying basis. We are planning to offer this service at many of our sites in 2001/02, and work is under way to make the necessary changes to our Information Systems (IS) to accept the revised number-plate format required. We are pleased to be working with ABRO to ensure that Army vehicles are even safer on the road.



Testing a non-combat vehicle

- **Review the COIF testing standards.** We will, with the Department, review these standards for new buses and coaches to make the test more robust and comprehensive.



Using new electronic speed limiter/tachograph equipment at the roadside

- **Consult with the trade with a view to introducing new elements to the annual HGV/PSV test from 2002.** Using recently developed equipment, we can now check the operation of the electronic speed limiter and tachographs for correct setting and illegal tampering with seals (recent trials show that 1 in 5 vehicles do not have correctly sealed tachograph heads). This will contribute to road safety by ensuring that drivers keep within maximum speeds and permitted driving hours.

Education and advisory activities

We are pleased to be working with drivers, operators and vehicle owners, to ensure that they understand and comply with often complex standards, rules and regulations.



Giving advice on a check of tachograph charts

In 2001/02 we will increase the level and extend the range of advice and education we give by:

- **Introducing new effectiveness measures to encourage advisory and educational work.** A pilot project has shown that we can enable our Vehicle and Traffic Examiners (VEs and TEs) to be more proactive in giving advice and education by giving value to such activities. We have also developed a package of products which can be used to support this work which include 'health check' visits for new operators by TEs to ensure all aspects of their transport operation meet VI standards. We also plan a review of the sanctions we apply at the roadside to consider educational and other alternatives to prosecution where appropriate.
- **Extending our range of products.** We will offer information and education through a new medium by developing an interactive CD-ROM on HGV and PSV driver's hours and records. This will be ready for release during 2002/03 and will contain a library of information on driver's hours, providing supplementary information to the current videos and seminars.



CD ROMS – a new training medium

- **Providing a video for new drivers on driver's hours rules.** Over the past few years we have produced a range of videos and manuals to help drivers, operators and owners maintain and operate their vehicles as safely as possible. The rules and regulations governing driver's hours are complicated, and driver's hours and tachograph prosecutions are increasing. Working together with the Driving Standards Agency (DSA), we will give a copy of the video to all newly qualified HGV drivers to help them get it right from the start. As technology makes new HGVs safer than ever, it is driver error that increasingly causes accidents. Excessive driving hours can contribute to those errors so the introduction of the video will have a role to play in improving road safety standards.



Some of our current range of educational videos and manuals

Enforcement activities

While we can encourage raised compliance through preventative activities such as testing and increased education and advice, there will always be a need to sanction those who knowingly flout the law. Our enforcement work includes roadside and operator premises checks, the prohibition of unsafe vehicles, and prosecution of 'illegal' operators and drivers through the Courts systems and Public Inquiries held by the Traffic Commissioners.

In 2001/02 we will enhance our enforcement activities by:

- **Delivering against additional resources.** A sub group of the Road Haulage Forum (RHF) was set up late in 1999 specifically to look at HGV compliance and enforcement issues. It includes representatives from DETR, VI, the Traffic Commissioners, Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), Local Authorities Co-ordinating body on Trading Standards (LACOTs), trade unions, Road Haulage Association (RHA) and Freight Transport Association (FTA). The sub group has recommended an increase in HGV enforcement, which has fallen in recent years due to a reduction in traffic policing and some withdrawal of local authority weighing facilities. These recommendations are supported by the trade bodies (RHA and FTA), the Transport Select Committee and CfIT. Additional funding of £3m from central government will be used to deliver a package of measures to increase the levels of targeted enforcement of HGVs.

Road Haulage Forum initiatives generate additional resources. This will provide for:

- Improved roadside facilities and investment in equipment such as mobile roller brake testers, and weigh in motion sensors. *This will improve the quality of tests at the roadside, especially regarding braking effectiveness, which has one of the highest fail rates at the annual test but is difficult to check at the roadside.*
- Improved capability to tackle offending operators and improved education to operators. *This will involve increases in our front-line examiner staff. These projects will help us to improve effectiveness, and allow us to roll-out new equipment, while maintaining a level of roadside check deterrence.*
- Improved access to information provided by our European counterparts. *Access to this information will help us to target our enforcement activity, and also improve co-ordinated enforcement and cross-border checking.*
- Improved post-collision investigation work on fatal or potentially fatal collisions involving HGVs. *Previously, evidence was lost or unobtainable due to the delay in examination. Through our earlier involvement in the process, more evidence can be gathered resulting in the possible increase of corporate manslaughter charges.*

- **Improving the way we use data and intelligence.** Through more effective use of the data resources we currently have (Data Warehouse and Intelligence Unit database), we will increasingly target those operators who consistently breach the rules and demonstrate poor maintenance standards. We will combine intelligence from our own systems with information our Intelligence Unit can access from the police equivalent database. Our examiners can then focus their efforts on applying appropriate sanctions to bring non-compliant operators into line, or remove them from the roads altogether.



Closer working – VI and the police

- **Impounding vehicles.** Compliance surveys over the last three years have shown that between 0.8% and 1.7% of HGV journeys are undertaken by vehicles owned by unlicensed operators. Ministers have decided that a more effective sanction is required for those who decide to operate goods vehicles outside the law. In 2001 new powers will enable VI to target, seize and dispose of vehicles operated illegally, removing the possible road safety risk immediately. This scheme will be a high profile deterrent activity focusing on those who knowingly flout the law and compromise road safety.

Improving the roadworthiness and environmental standard of private motor vehicles

Through our role of supervising the MOT testing scheme for private motor vehicles, we regulate the standards and raise general compliance, making private vehicles on the road safer and less damaging to the environment. Other services that we deliver under this objective are: LGV enforcement; SVA tests; and Accidents, Defects and Recalls activities.

MOT testing scheme

The work we undertake supervising MOT testing includes: the setting of test procedures and standards; the provision of training; delivery of advisory services; and the application of enforcement sanctions. This year, our plans are based on our supervisory activities staying at the same levels as 2000/01. We anticipate demand for MOT certificate pads to rise by 1%, while we expect a 15% fall in demand for statutory training in line with recent trends. This is largely due to a reduction in refresher training, which is now in its second five-year cycle. Participation was low at the start of the first cycle as tester records were found to be out of date. This will be evened out over the coming years with the call-up process for training beginning at four-and-a-half-year intervals.



Following roll-out of the MOT computerisation service, delivery of this scheme will change by:

- improving standards by helping testers to identify correct test standards and procedures through the use of electronic guides, manuals, and vehicle-specific information;
- reducing fraud within the scheme;
- providing essential road safety data to a range of other organisations; and
- contributing to the electronic vehicle re-licensing project and government-wide targets to increase the delivery of electronic services.

As the project progresses this year, there will be further development and initial trialing of the system. Development will include the creation of software and infrastructure, as well as training plans, materials and support services. When complete, the system will be tested in a small number of MOT testing stations and VI offices. We will continue to consult with the MOT trade using newsletters and seminars to keep AEs and NTs abreast of the changes that will be happening.

In 2001/02 additional work within the MOT scheme will include:

- **Developing and piloting a training course for new NTs.**
The current course will be enhanced to include training on the new computerised systems and additional practical elements. New centres which offer tester training will also be available from April 2001, giving more NTs access to our training courses while at the same time meeting demand for training in oversubscribed locations.



Practical demonstrations are an important part of the NT training course

- **Changes to meet implications of the Human Rights Act (HRA).** This Act was introduced in the UK in October 2000 and impacts on the work of the scheme in a number of ways. In the coming year we will review:
 - the way in which **investigations** are conducted, ensuring compliance with article 8 of the HRA and also the recently introduced Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act;
 - the existing **disciplinary system**, to ensure it meets the requirements of article 6 of the Act in the way evidence is presented and considered; and
 - the **Appeals Process**. VI will be implementing new procedures in line with the Human Rights Act allowing:
 - a) AEs and NTs, who have been withdrawn from the MOT testing scheme or had their application refused, to attend, where appropriate, an oral hearing; and
 - b) AEs and NTs whose appeal is disallowed, to make a further level of appeal to an independent authority.

LGV enforcement

Although some testing of LGVs is carried out at VI test stations, the majority is done by MOT garages authorised by us to conduct the tests. A recent survey by VI found that a higher level of LGVs were not compliant with roadworthiness regulations compared to other categories of vehicles. We have therefore secured additional funds from the Department to increase our enforcement activities to target these types of vehicles.



There are approximately 415,000 LGVs on the road in Great Britain

Single Vehicle Approval Tests

The SVA scheme provides inspection and certification of non-EU type approved personal and commercial imports, and amateur-built vehicles and motor caravans. It is an important method of maintaining standards in line with vehicles already on the roads in Great Britain.

Following recent changes to the scheme, by lifting quotas and extending the inspection to 3 to 10-year-old vehicles, a further change for 2001/02 will involve a tightening of technical standards known as Enhanced Single Vehicle Approval (ESVA). This more robust inspection is planned to overcome road safety, environmental and car crime concerns and will apply to most commercially imported non-EU type approved vehicles. Model reports will also be developed so examiners can check batches of identical or similar vehicles. The 'enhanced' inspection will be available on a voluntary basis prior to its mandatory introduction anticipated in August 2001.



SVA check on imported vehicle

From early in the financial year we will be deploying VI staff to Cyprus to conduct SVA examinations for a major importer based on the island. We will also be working with UK-based importers to inspect vehicles on their premises in this country.

Accidents, defects and recalls

Further work is to be done to our accident database to improve the quality of the data and make it easier to use. This data is important to assess the influence of vehicle defects on the cause of accidents and injuries. We will continue to make information on recalls available via our website. This has proved a very useful service for the motoring public in a year when there has been the largest number of recalls ever.

Offering modernised and customer-friendly services

The Modernising Government agenda is a major change programme, and as such is a feature in our own five strategic themes. In broad terms, it ensures we work more closely with everyone who has a vested interest in our work, making it easier to access information and services in order to increase our effectiveness and to make a positive impact on road safety. It also ensures that we continue to exploit new technology to deliver more of our services electronically.

Joint working

Through joint working with the DVO group, Traffic Commissioners, and police, we will share information to make more effective use of our resources. We will also work more closely with customers, including drivers, operators and vehicle owners, to provide more effective services to meet the needs of customers, rather than the convenience of the service provider. This joint working also extends across Europe to ensure consistent enforcement activity.

In 2001/02, within the DVO group, we will take part in the following joint projects:

- **DVO Steering Group on Digital Tachographs.** VI will be chairing these meetings, which will also include the police and the Northern Ireland Driver and Vehicle Testing Agency (DVTA), to co-ordinate the introduction of digital tachographs in the UK to meet EC requirements by 2003.



Digital tachograph equipment will replace the current analogue tachograph in new vehicles in approximately 2–3 years

- **DVO Information Technology (IT) and Business Strategy meetings.** We will continue to strongly support the development of DVO strategies that promote more streamlined services across the agencies. This includes the development of a common interface for DVO data management and more user-friendly delivery of key 'life event' services such as personally importing a vehicle.
- **Progression of the MOT computerisation project.** Computerisation of the MOT scheme will provide a critical piece of the jigsaw for electronic licensing which is an important ongoing project for the DVO group.
- **Fee structure review.** This year, we will be working closely with the Traffic Area Network (TAN) and the trade to review our current fee structure for commercial vehicle services with a view to simplifying the structure and number of fees paid (currently three – 'O' licence application, vehicle fee, and testing fee).
- **TAN project on information exchange.** We will continue to develop improvements in data and information links with TAN as they complete development of new IT systems, to administer their licensing and compliance responsibilities. These improved links will give us access to more accurate and comprehensive information, enabling improvement in the effectiveness of our Operator Targeting initiative, and allowing us to better direct our advisory and educational efforts. Joint working is further extended with our finance teams sharing skills and knowledge.

- **Information to car drivers and owners.** There are two pieces of joint work, which will be distributed in the coming year:
 - *Licensed to Drive*, a new video produced jointly by the DVO group, will be given free to successful driving test candidates. It is a comprehensive guide for anyone new to motoring, including information from documentation to basic car maintenance, motorway driving and how to tax and MOT your car; and
 - the DVO joint publication, *Owning a Car*, will go on sale in April. This book is a useful source of road safety information for all drivers. VI has contributed to sections on car safety and MOT standards.



A new free video promoting safer motoring

- **Researching automatic number plate readers.** VI will be working with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) and TAN to identify how best to use camera technology to improve compliance with annual testing, roadworthiness standards and operator licensing.
- **Development of a vehicle identity check.** We will be working with DVLA and the insurance industry to develop a check to verify the identity of vehicles being returned to the road after scrapping.

The customer feedback we have gathered from focus groups, customer surveys and last year's Testing Awayday has been used to implement the following in 2001/02:

- **Revised customer service standards for HGV/PSV testing.** In response to feedback from customers at the Testing Awayday, we will review the existing standards with a focus on:

- working with the Department to review and continually improve current test standards;
- ensuring consistent application of the administrative process, keeping within the current forward booking time target; while
- developing a more meaningful measure of customer satisfaction within this aspect of our work.

- **Extended range and number of consumer focus groups.** Our Consumer Champion will continue to meet and work with our customers. Specifically, we will extend the number of regional focus groups and have specialist focus groups for SVA and Designated Premises issues. We shall also be looking to create a panel of around 500 operators, representing the full range of the transport industry, to use as a sounding board for new initiatives and consultation.



Our consumer champion sharing feedback from recent focus groups

- **More strategy awaydays for 2001/02.** Following the success of the Testing Awayday, we are planning further VI/DETR/customer awaydays to focus on 'O' licensing and MOT issues.

In 2001/02 our work within Europe will include:

- **Membership of the International Motor Vehicle Inspection Committee (CITA).** VI continues to hold the presidency of CITA. In the coming year, we will be reviewing our involvement within the committee in order to maximise the benefits we gain.
- **Participation in the Euro Controle Route. VI will become a full member of the Euro Controle Route in 2001/02.** This is an organisation of enforcement authorities in mainly northern European states, whose aim is to increase co-operation on cross-border enforcement. Our membership will therefore encourage a more consistent approach to HGV and PSV enforcement, through joint working.

New products

We are continuing to extend our package of activities and products to educate and advise our customers about best practice. By these means, we can help them keep within the law and our enforcement activities can be targeted at those who consistently operate outside it. For 2001/02 we will:

- **Publish a newsletter for operators.** To provide a forum to share information, advice and guidance, we will be piloting an operator newsletter, similar to our current *Matters of Testing* newsletter for MOT garages. It will be produced in association with other agencies from the DVO group and will improve communication between all the agencies and operators, ultimately helping them to operate their vehicles in a safe and legal way.



Reviewing an early proof of our newsletter

- **Provide seminars for MOT AEs and NTs.** MOT seminars have now become established as an important method of two-way communication between VI and MOT test stations. The seminars also provide an important educational and advisory role, where changes to methods and standards in the scheme can be highlighted and explained. VI will be holding a further series of MOT seminars around the country towards the end of the financial year, to bring AEs and NTs up to date with the most recent developments.
- **Introduce advanced inspection training courses for PSV.** To build on the basic inspection course which we currently offer, this advanced course will cover higher operating standards and other areas of inspection such as vehicle appearance.

- **Publish more information in the Welsh language.**

I gynorthwyo ein defnyddwyr a'n cwsmeriaid yng Nghymru ceir fersiwn dwyieithog (Cymraeg a Saesneg) o'r dystysgrif prafw MOT. Cyn hir bydd ein taflenni *Who we are and what we do* a *Your car and the MOT* ar gael yn Gymraeg ar ein gwefan, gyda chyfieithiadau dwyieithog ar bapur ar gael o'n hadran cyhoeddiadau. Mae cynlluniau ar waith ar hyn o bryd i gynyddu nifer y cyhoeddiadau y gallwn eu cynnig yn ddwyieithog.

Electronic government

An important challenge for the agency in the coming years will be to harness the technology that is available to us to maximise our effectiveness and increase access to our products and services. Electronic government (E-government) is a main part of the Modernising Government programme, and in VI our focus is:

- to ensure that we can gather, collate and manage data and information that is of good quality, robust and customer focused; and
- to have in place an infrastructure which can quickly and effectively deliver high-quality information between all our sites, to front-line staff, across all our partner agencies, and to our customers.

Our current projects fall into four categories:

- investment in a VI Intranet (i.e. internal movement of information);
- investment in an Extranet (i.e. secure movement and sharing of information with our partners);
- development of systems which will allow us to deliver services across the Internet; and
- turning data into information and knowledge that will help us use our resources more effectively and give customers the information they need.

To achieve this, substantial investment is required. This is to be supported by Information Age funding from central government, following a successful bid last year with other DVO agencies.



Running an efficient, continually developing and valued business

To address all of our business issues in an integrated way, we use the balanced scorecard system. This ensures that we balance delivery of services with the management and development of our staff, investment in our estate and equipment, and best use of financial resources.

Human resources

Our staff are our greatest asset and we have a Human Resources strategy in place to ensure that they are effectively managed and rewarded, and that their potential is realised. To support the delivery of the additional activities outlined in this plan, we will increase the number of examiners out in the field by 10%. Recruitment is under way to fill these posts. In addition, the first examiners to graduate from our apprenticeship scheme will be ready to join the workforce.

In 2001/02 we will work towards the following:

- **Re-accreditation against the new IIP (Investors in People) standard.** This will involve internal assessment using trained VI staff, benchmarking against other organisations, and establishing action plans to achieve the standard by the end of 2001. Working towards, and achieving, re-accreditation is extremely important to us, as it will enable us to maintain a culture of continuous improvement and development. Coupled with a project to develop a workforce plan (to ensure we have the right people, in the right place, at the right time), we can look at how best to deploy our staff in the most efficient way.



The VI IIP plaque on display at our headquarters

- **Meeting targets in our Civil Service Reform action plan.** We have specific targets to meet on diversity which form part of our key targets and will ensure we spread our recruitment net as wide as possible to get the best people for our business. We will also be benchmarking against a 'Campaign for Racial Equality' standard, to monitor our performance as an equal opportunities employer.
- **Health and Safety Programme.** Reviews of existing work and practices, and risk management assessments of new work, have identified a greater demand than ever next year for resources to meet our Health and Safety obligations to staff and customers. Specific projects will include:
 - the provision of personal alarms for lone workers at our remote test stations;
 - improved supply of high visibility clothing for our front line staff; and
 - new procedures to ensure vehicle defect rectification work at test stations is carried out safely.
- **Ongoing development of training for our managers.** VI Training Services will continue with its new programme of training for managers. This training will ensure that managers have the skills to develop their teams, giving staff effective line management and support.
- **Implementation of a grading and pay system.** Implementing a new system is essential to VI, as it will ensure that we can attract and retain suitably qualified staff, with the skills and competencies to help us achieve our business objectives.

An effective working environment

Sound investment in our infrastructure, estate and equipment will ensure that we can continue to deliver our services well into the future.

In 2001/02 we will make the following planned improvements:

- **Progression of our IS2003 project to replace our existing IS contract.** Our current IS contract will finish at the end of 2002. A project is ongoing to secure a supplier and it is anticipated that prospective contractors will be shortlisted by this summer.



Our new test station, in North Manchester, near completion

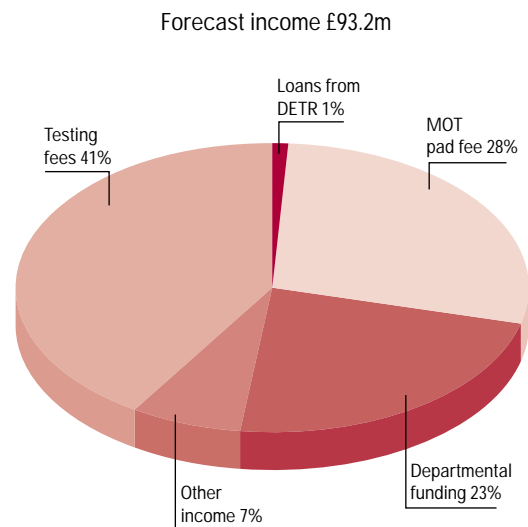
- **Opening of Chadderton Test Station and Training Centre.** This replacement complex, based in North Manchester, will be opened in spring 2001. Chadderton will offer a modern purpose-built test station and training facility. The location, close to the M60, will give easier access to up-to-date facilities and equipment for HGV, PSV, LGV and SVA tests, and associated training.
- **Investment in new equipment and premises.** We have in place a continuous improvement programme of investment in our estate which will include in the coming year: refurbishment of accommodation at five stations; a continuing trial of canopies at two further stations; and ongoing research into energy and water-saving measures. Our programme of investment in equipment will include: at our test stations, the installation of new smoke meters that are more effective, safer and easier to use; and, at the roadside, provision of more roller-brake testing units to carry out brake performance checks.

Financial performance

Trading Account management. As a Trading Fund, the agency must break even year on year. Specifically, the costs incurred in undertaking all aspects of work involved with a particular scheme should be covered by the scheme's fee or payment. 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.

Return on Capital. Another Treasury target the Trading Fund must meet is 'Return on Capital'. This 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. The indicative in-year target is +6%.

Forecast income. The sources of our income are shown in the following chart:

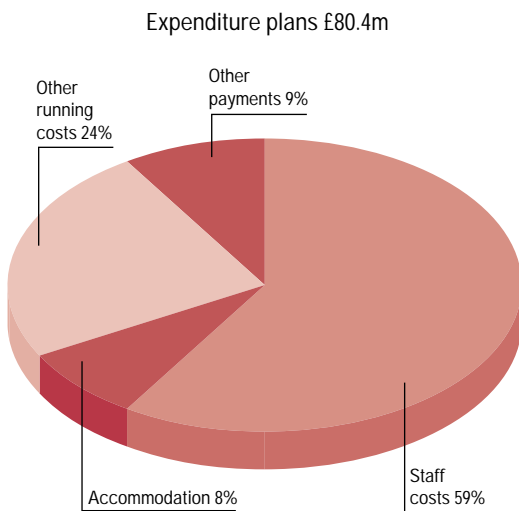


We plan to increase statutory testing fees early in the financial year by an average of 3%. This year's fee increase will enable us to continue our ongoing programme of capital investment to modernise our estate and develop electronic services. The plan includes a £3m increase in funding provided by central government to enable us to undertake further work on enforcement and operator targeting.

We plan to increase the charge for an MOT pad of 100 certificates to £119 per pad from August (currently £94 per pad). This money will cover project costs and the introduction of the MOT computerisation system in 2002.

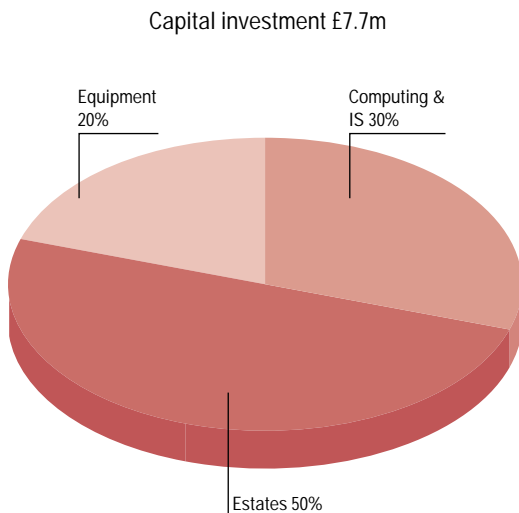
Expenditure Plans. Expenditure plans cover staff, accommodation, other running costs and payments. These include:

- weighbridge capital costs on behalf of DETR;
- MOT computerisation project costs;
- IS2003 project costs;
- research and development investment; and
- interest payments on our loans and dividend payments to DETR and Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT).



Capital investment. This year's planned investment includes:

- continued investment in the estate;
- a continued programme of replacing equipment for use at testing stations and at the roadside; and
- a rolling programme for replacing pool cars and vans for mobile enforcement (to transport IS weigh-pads and emissions equipment).



Performance improvement

VI uses Total Quality (TQ) to bring about improvements and share best practice across the organisation. On an organisational basis, corrective action teams (CATs) focus on national issues while continuous improvement teams (CITs) operate on a local basis to identify and deliver service improvements.



Trained facilitators support TQ activities across the organisation

Our internal audit team is also responsible for introducing improvements by auditing individual systems, operating centres, and reviewing our internal controls. It has a programme of work agreed by VI's Audit Committee, and liaises with the National Audit Office (NAO) who are our external auditors.

The Better Quality Services (BQS) programme will review present supply arrangements. The focus is on improving what is delivered, whatever the means of delivery: public, private, or partnership solutions. All services and activities, including policy and headquarters functions, will be reviewed by March 2004. In implementing our BQS programme, we will be working closely with the DVO group to ensure a joined-up approach with the expectation that the recommendations made will reflect a seamless provision of service to our customers, and not the most convenient working practice for ourselves as service providers.

Evaluating our performance

We evaluate performance against our four objectives through a package of key targets and supporting key measures. In 2001/02 a new measure of effectiveness, Performance Gain, will be a feature of these targets.

Beneath the key targets and supporting key measures, a range of performance indicators provide more detailed evaluation of our performance. These are fed into our internal monthly performance reports, reports to Department and customers, and our annual report and accounts.

Performance Gain

– Measuring the value of our organisation's work

VI has been developing a performance measure which embraces the quantity, quality and cost of what we do. The resultant measure, Performance Gain (PG), objectively measures changes in the value of VI's outputs delivered. Value is allocated to outputs based on their relative contribution to improving road safety and environmental standards. PG therefore looks at both the effectiveness and efficiency of delivery against the organisational aim.

The measure has been successfully piloted in 5 of VI's 23 enforcement areas since April 2000. Measuring performance based on the value delivered rather than the amount of work undertaken has encouraged positive changes in working practices, with resultant increased effectiveness and improved staff morale.

VI plan to introduce PG as a Key Target for enforcement areas from April 2001.

Key targets for 2001/02

We have seven key targets which are agreed annually with the Secretary of State through DETR. These are broad and strategic and are supported by 22 measures that we can use to evaluate more specifically our performance over the coming year.

The key targets and supporting measures are supported by a range of performance indicators and service standards, which look in more detail at aspects of customer service and delivery. These are published in separate leaflets and detailed in Memoranda of Agreement between VI and the Department. In addition, we are tasked by the department to meet Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets which are published in conjunction with the Spending Review.

Together, these give a more rounded picture of the health of the business than the key targets alone.



Preparing a presentation to staff on the implementation of PG

Key Target 1

To deliver against an effectiveness and quality improvement programme.

Key measures:

- Implement Performance Gain practice and performance measurement across all enforcement areas.
- Develop and implement a traffic casework assurance measure.
- Complete 1,700 random re-examinations of recently tested vehicles at MOT stations.
- Consult the trade on a package of quality improvements for testing in Designated Premises.

Key Target 2

To deliver effective road safety and environmental standards activity as agreed with DETR.

Key measures:

- achieve at least 6,697,770 PG outcome points. Note: this figure reflects a 2% increase in points. It does not take account of the points that will be generated as a result of increases in front-line staff numbers due to RHF funding and additional LGV funding yet to be determined.
- achieve a 2% increase in educational and advisory PG outcome points.
- carry out 104,924 emissions checks.
- carry out 1,400,000 HGV and 145,000 PSV tachograph chart checks.

Key Target 3

To continue to improve customer focus across VI and DVO through the implementation of initiatives in line with the Modernising Government agenda.

Key measures:

- Set up a further three regional consumer focus groups, continue to use existing ones, and establish specific groups for the SVA scheme and the users and providers of Designated Premises.
- Deliver against the internal electronic services programme, in order to achieve the PSA target of 25% electronic service capability by 2002 and 100% by 2005.
- Develop a new customer service measure in respect of test bookings.
- Chair the DVO steering group for the introduction of digital tachographs.

Key Target 4

To break even year on year and achieve a 6% real rate of return on capital, over the period 1 April 1998–31 March 2003.

Key measure:

- Achieve an in-year indicative measure of +6%.

Key Target 5

To increase value for money.

Key measures:

- Deliver +2% Performance Gain in enforcement.
- Deliver +2% Aggregated Cost Efficiency (ACE) in vehicle testing.

Key Target 6

To improve performance management across the business.

Key measures:

- Implement a revised grading and pay structure.
- Retain accreditation against the Investors in People national standard following reassessment in 2001.
- Deliver a diversity awareness programme for all staff.
- Reduce the sick absence rate to an average of 7.4 working days per full time equivalent by the end of 2001.

Key Target 7

To secure the long-term development of the organisation.

Key measures:

- Complete the development stage and commence trials and testing stage of MOT computerisation project by the end of July 2002.
- Appoint a preferred supplier of IS and integrated business processes by March 2002.
- Develop an action plan for a network/estates strategy taking into account DETR and DVO estates strategies.

Performance monitoring

The Agency provides the VI Advisory Board and Departmental customers with performance monitoring information, in the form of reports and formal in-year statements that include comments on progress and performance against our key targets and PSA targets.

We also produce a monthly performance report that includes: projected key target outturn; financial performance; and scheme performance, in addition to the performance indicators and internally produced action plans and project milestones.

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



Where to find out more

The VI website

The website contains a vast array of information about VI and its business including:

- test standards and fees for all vehicles;
- mandatory test requirements;
- details of enforcement activity;
- news, including press releases and VI in the media;
- publications (manuals, videos and CD-ROMs);
- educational and development information;
- employment opportunities and recruitment; and
- links to the DVO group.

Our website address is: <http://www.via.gov.uk>

Telephone enquiries

VI now offers a central number for all enquiries. Operators will be able help the caller with:

- MOT enquiries: for your general MOT and appeals questions;
- vehicle importing information;
- information on test standards;
- bookings;
- publications;
- Smoky Vehicle Hotline: where you can report any commercial vehicles with excessively smoky exhausts;
- Intelligence information: do you know of someone who is forced to break the law?
- general VI queries.

National number 0870 6060 440 (national call rate)

You can also send this information electronically to:

General Enquiries enquiries@via.gov.uk

By post

VI has two main centres, in Bristol and Swansea. If you have any specific queries, you can contact us at the addresses below.

Headquarters and Training Centre

Vehicle Inspectorate
Berkeley House
Croydon Street
Bristol BS5 0DA

Headquarters: 0117 954 3200
Training Centre: 0117 954 3291

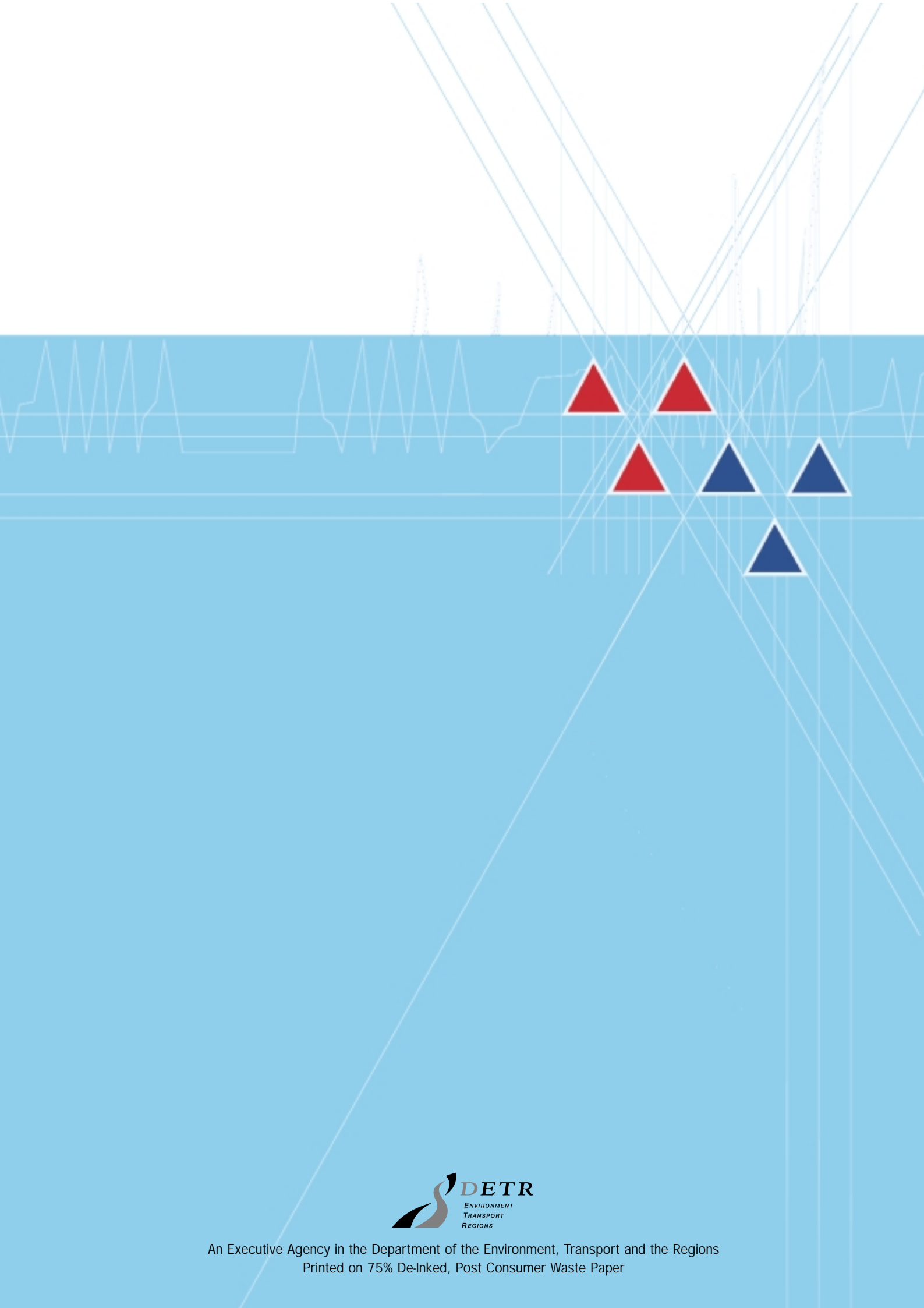
Operations and Distribution Centre

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

Tel: 01792 458888

Abbreviations and definitions

Abbreviation	Definition	Abbreviation	Definition
ACE	Aggregated Cost Efficiency Index – a measure of efficiency	LGV	Light Goods Vehicle
ABRO	Defence logistics organisation	MOT	Annual statutory test for cars and motorcycles
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers	NAO	National Audit Office
AE	Authorised Examiner – an individual, person in partnership or company meeting requirements (premises, equipment, personnel and good repute) to carry out MOT testing	NAQS	National Air Quality Survey
BQS	Better Quality Services	NT	Nominated Tester – a qualified mechanic who has been nominated by an AE to carry out MOT tests
CATs	Corrective Action Teams	'O' licence	Operator licence issued by Traffic Commissioners which permits the commercial operation of HGVs and PSVs
CfIT	Commission for Integrated Transport	PG	Performance Gain
CITA	International Motor Vehicle Inspection Committee	PSA	Public Service Agreement
CITs	Continuous Improvement Teams	PSV	Public Service Vehicle – a vehicle licensed to carry (normally 9 or more) fare-paying passengers
COIF	Certificate of Initial Fitness – the certification of PSVs as fit to carry passengers before use	RHA	Road Haulage Association
DETR	Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions	RHF	Road Haulage Forum
DSA	Driving Standards Agency	SVA	Single Vehicle Approval scheme
DVLA	Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency	TAN	Traffic Area Network
DVO	Driver, Vehicle and Operator group	TE	Traffic Examiner – VI employee responsible for front-line enforcement of safety and licensing provisions on HGVs and PSVs
DVTA	Driver and Vehicle Testing Agency	TQ	Total Quality
E-government	Electronic government	VCA	Vehicle Certification Agency
ESVA	Enhanced Single Vehicle Approval scheme	VE	Vehicle Examiner – VI employee responsible for front-line enforcement of roadworthiness of HGVs and PSVs, and standards control of MOT testing stations
FTA	Freight Transport Association	VI	Vehicle Inspectorate
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle – goods carrying vehicle over 3,500kg design gross weight	VSB	Vehicle Safety Branch
HMT	Her Majesty's Treasury		
HRA	Human Rights Act		
IIP	Investors In People – accreditation of personnel and business management		
IS	Information Systems		
IT	Information Technology		
<i>Italics</i>	Title of a publication/document – unless otherwise stated		
LACOTs	Local Authorities Co-ordinating body on Trading Standards		



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