

DVA Business Plan 2026-27



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Chief Executive's Foreword

I am pleased to present the Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) Business Plan for 2026-27, which has been approved by the Infrastructure Minister, Liz Kimmins.

This Plan sets out our strategic direction for the year ahead and reaffirms our commitment to delivering high quality public services. As an organisation operating in a changing environment, we will continue to adapt, innovate, and build resilience so that we continue to deliver vital public services that support road safety, environmental protection and the effective regulation of drivers, vehicles and transport operators across Northern Ireland. This plan outlines our priorities and associated performance targets for the year ahead.

The Agency's work touches on almost every household and business in Northern Ireland. Over the past year, we have successfully managed our capacity and service delivery in order to maintain waiting times for driver and vehicle tests within acceptable levels. We also continued to make progress in developing our infrastructure with the completion of an additional new test centre at Mallusk.

The year ahead presents both opportunities and challenges. Growing demand for our services means we must continue to adapt to maintain the capacity, capability and infrastructure to deliver. In 2026-27, we will consolidate the improvements made in recent years and work to open our two new test centres at Hydebank and Mallusk. This will include installing new vehicle testing equipment at both locations and agreeing a roll out plan for new equipment across our existing test centre network.

Continued investment in our digital services will also be essential to ensure that interacting with the Agency becomes easier and more convenient for our customers. By improving how we work, through smarter processes, better use of data and modernised infrastructure, we will deliver services that are efficient, reliable and sustainable for the future.

Supporting the implementation of the Graduated Driver Licensing scheme will be another major focus as we work to contribute to the Department's wider ambition of improving road safety.

Alongside these key areas, we will continue to invest in our people, strengthen organisational resilience and maintain a strong focus on health and safety for our customers and staff. We will also continue to invest in the health and wellbeing of our staff, through ongoing engagement and the provision of opportunities for growth and development.

We remain committed to delivering value for money and ensuring the financial sustainability of the Agency. Our financial position will be challenging for the year ahead, shaped by rising costs and inflationary pressures. We will

continue to manage our resources carefully while progressing our infrastructure and digital investment programmes, supported by strong governance and robust planning.

I want to extend my gratitude to all our dedicated staff for their continued hard work, adaptability and commitment to public service. Their efforts underpin everything we achieve. With clear priorities, a strong foundation and a renewed focus on innovation and staff engagement, I am confident that 2026-27 will be another year of meaningful progress as we work to deliver high quality, customer focused public services.

Jeremy Logan

Chief Executive

Who we are and what we do

The DVA is an executive agency of the Department for Infrastructure (DfI).

The responsibilities of the DfI are wide-ranging and impact each of us every day. DfI plays a fundamental role as an enabler of the achievement of several of the priorities outlined in the Programme for Government (PfG) and by delivering on the Executive's **Building New Foundations** ambitions.

DfI's responsibilities are grouped into three key delivery areas: Water, Transport and Planning. For Transport, one of the responsibilities is **road safety** and the Agency's overall aim is to deliver improved road safety and better regulation of the transport sector.

Our Vision

“

The Agency's vision is

**‘Safer Drivers,
Safer Vehicles’.**

”

Our vision is consistent with and will contribute to the three strategic outcomes within the Department's **‘Road Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2030’**.

Our Mission is

“To contribute to road safety, law enforcement and a cleaner environment by promoting compliance of drivers, vehicles and transport operators through testing, licensing, enforcement and education.”

Our Strategic Objectives are to:

- improve compliance with statutory requirements;
- improve the quality, integrity and security of our records;
- deliver quality services to meet the needs of customers and other stakeholders;
- apply appropriate quality standards to all current and new processes;
- improve our efficiency, effectiveness and economy; and
- develop the organisation and our people.

We help keep Northern Ireland's roads safe by ensuring drivers are properly licensed and competent, and that vehicles meet strict roadworthiness standards through statutory testing. We also carry out roadside enforcement to maintain compliance and protect the public. At the same time, by regulating transport operators, supporting professional driver training, and providing reliable licensing and testing services, we underpin efficient transport operations and wider economic activity across the region.

We provide a wide range of services to road users in Northern Ireland, including:

- driver and vehicle testing;
- driver licensing – issuing and, where appropriate, withdrawing licences in respect of drivers of cars, motorcycles, lorries, buses, etc;
- driving and riding instructor registration – assessing the suitability of applicants, checking tuition standards, the delivery

of Compulsory Basic Training and taking appropriate action when instructors fail to meet required standards;

- passenger transport licensing – issuing and, where appropriate, withdrawing licences in respect of bus and taxi operators and taxi drivers and licensing public service vehicles for both the bus and taxi industries respectively;
- compliance audits and enforcement of licensing, roadworthiness and other legal requirements for goods and passenger carrying operators and their vehicles; and
- technical driver and vehicle standards – ensuring the Department fulfils its legal obligations in respect of the provision of statutory driver and vehicle tests; providing technical advice to Driving, Vehicles and Road Safety Policy Division (DVRSPD) to assist in the development of legislation; reviewing legislative changes that may affect the driving and vehicle testing environment; and developing and implementing appropriate standards.

To deliver our services, we will need the help of all our partners. We work closely with these industries:

- driver and rider training;
- road freight and haulage;
- passenger transport;
- vehicle manufacturing;
- vehicle equipment suppliers; and
- information technology.

And, among others, we work with these government colleagues:

- the Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency(DVSA) for the delivery of the driver theory test service;

- the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) – they are responsible for vehicle tax and vehicle registration and for printing driving licences on our behalf;
- the Transport Regulation Unit (TRU) in DfI – they licence and regulate those operating Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs);
- Health and Safety Executive NI (HSENI) – they regulate workplaces, plants and equipment;
- Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) – they work with us on coordinated enforcement operations; and
- His Majesty’s Revenue & Customs (HMRC) – they work with us on coordinated enforcement operations and on interfaces with our taxi licensing system.

Governance

Our Chief Executive, Jeremy Logan, leads the Agency with the support of the Agency’s Strategic Management Board, Audit & Risk Assurance Committee, and other Boards and groups. The Chief Executive is the Agency Accounting Officer and reports through the Permanent Secretary of the DfI to the Minister for Infrastructure, who has overall political responsibility and accountability for all the Department’s activities.

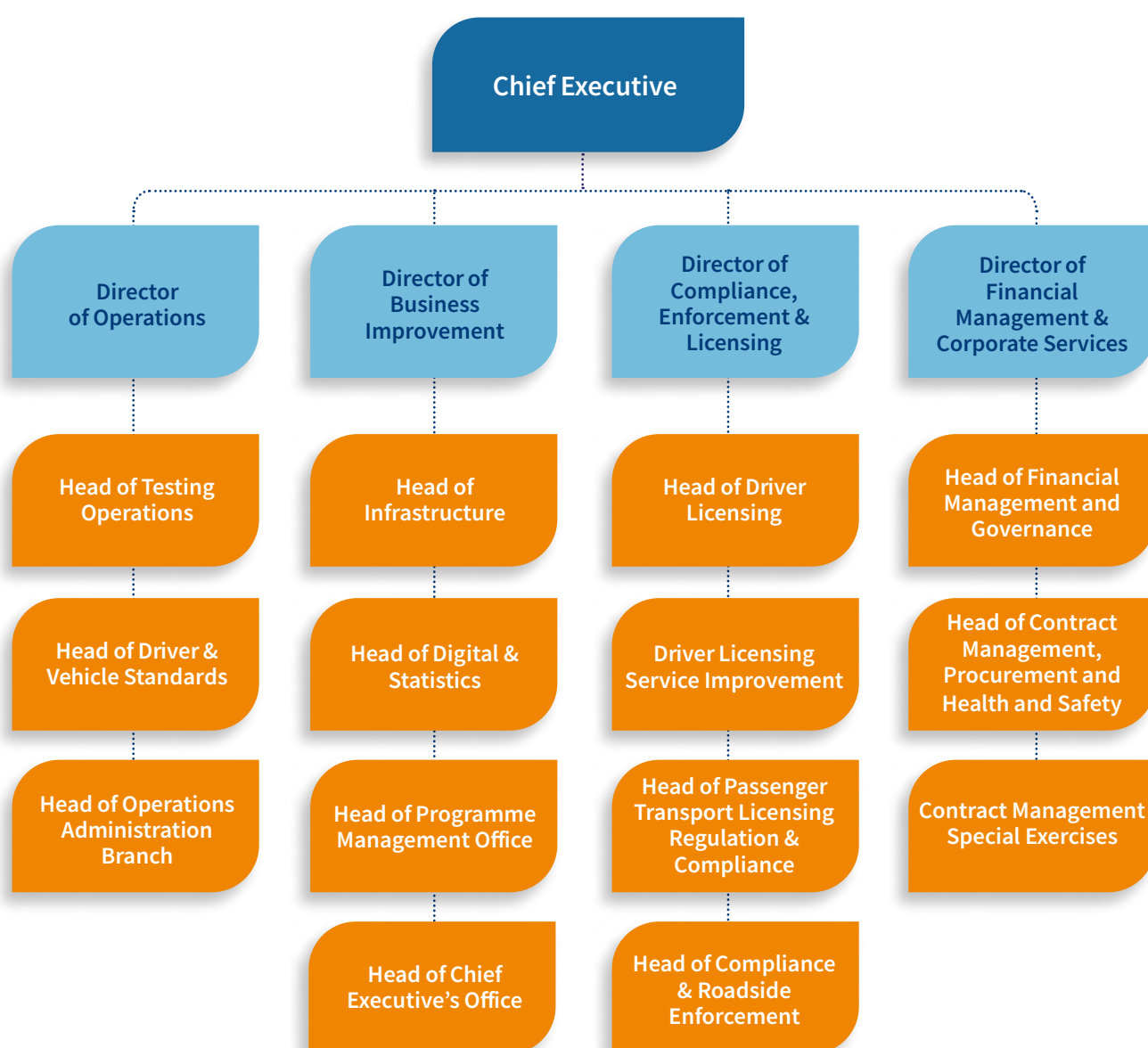
Management and control of our risks

Risk management is an integral part of our work, from how we manage our services, programmes, and our finances, to how we develop our plans and work with our partners.

We follow the DfI Risk Policy and Framework for Risk Management and review and set risk appetite on an annual basis. We are subject to internal and external audits, which ensure that our processes and procedures are robust.

Our Organisational Structure

We deliver our services through teams of dedicated and committed people located throughout the region. Our organisational structure is shown below:



Our Values

We are committed to improving the quality and delivery of public services for everyone in society. Respecting and valuing differences will help to ensure that our services reflect the needs and experiences of the people we serve. Our values describe how we should behave and how we should treat each other, our customers and our stakeholders.

They are:



Integrity

putting the obligations of public service above personal interests;



Honesty

being truthful and open;



Objectivity

basing advice and decisions on rigorous analysis of the evidence;



Impartiality

acting solely according to the merits of the case and serving equally well governments of different political persuasions;



Valuing people

leading and empowering, listening and responding, recognising success; and

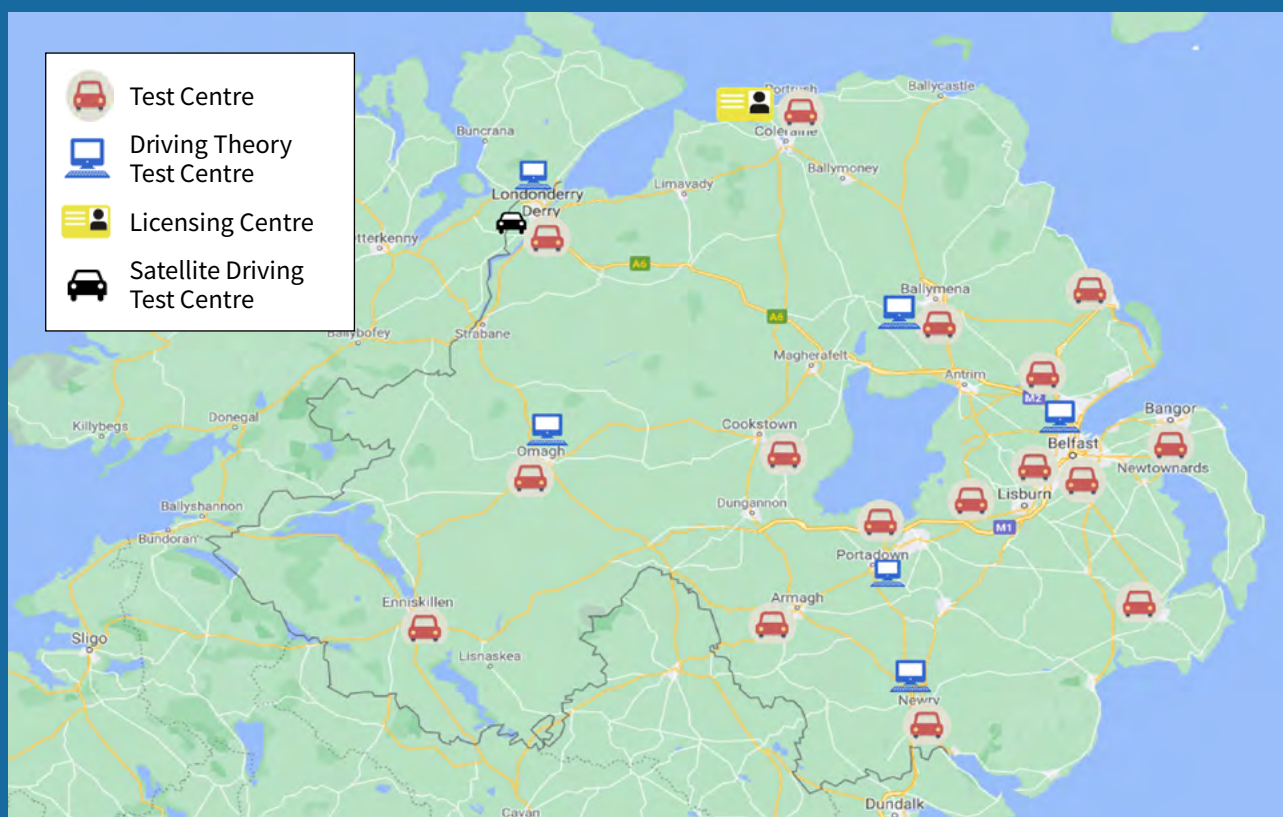


Excellence

a focus on customer service, inspiring creativity and innovation, striving for excellence.

Our Locations

We currently deliver our services from 16 test centres, one satellite driving test centre and a licensing centre in Coleraine, where driver and passenger transport licensing are administered. In addition, there are six locations across Northern Ireland where customers can sit their driving theory tests. Our plans for 2026-27 include opening our recently constructed test centre at Hydebank for vehicle testing and preparing to open our new Mallusk test centre.



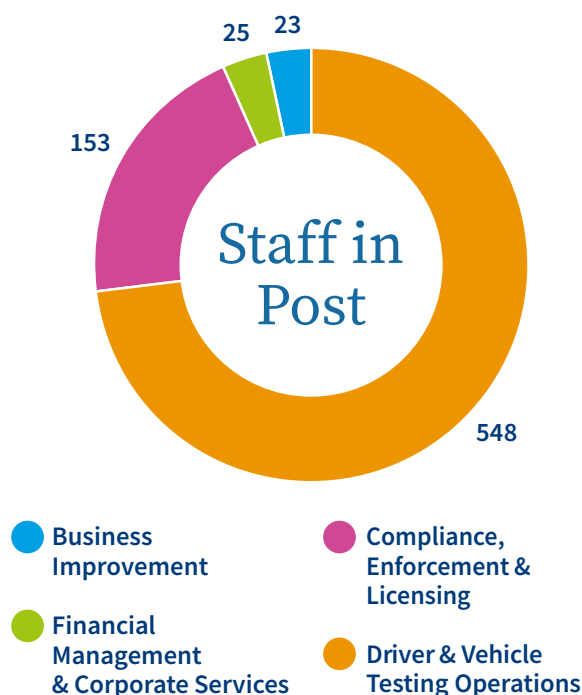
Our Resources

People

Our services are delivered through teams of dedicated and committed people located throughout Northern Ireland. As at 1 April 2026 we had 749 permanent staff in post (1 April 2025: 757).

Our people are central to delivering high quality public services and achieving our priorities as set out in this business plan. As part of the Northern Ireland public sector, we remain committed to building a skilled, motivated and resilient workforce that reflects our values of integrity, impartiality and excellence.

Over the coming year, we will continue to invest in developing the capability and capacity of our staff so they can respond effectively to organisational priorities and increasing service demands. This includes strengthening leadership at all levels, promoting a culture of continuous learning, and ensuring colleagues have access to the tools, data and technology required to perform their roles effectively and efficiently. To support long term workforce sustainability, we will work with the Department to prioritise strategic workforce planning to ensure we have the right skills in the right place at the right time.



Financial

We operate as a Trading Fund under the provisions of the Driver & Vehicle Agency Trading Fund (Northern Ireland) Order 2016. This means that all expenditure must be recovered from the fees charged to customers or centrally funded by the Department to match the costs incurred for defined activities. As a Trading Fund, we can increase our expenditure in response to increases in demand and conversely, we are expected to reduce our expenditure in response to falling demand.

Our driver and vehicle test fees were last increased during 2023-24 due to the increasing cost of delivering these services. This has allowed us to continue to deliver and invest in our services. We are committed to reviewing our fees on a regular basis and to seek to increase them, if necessary. During 2025-26 we conducted a review of the fees we charge

for our driver licensing service, and we will continue to engage on this to agree an approach that supports service delivery and the wider financial position of the Department.

We continue to operate in an increasingly challenging financial environment, shaped by rising costs, inflationary pressures, and heightened demand for essential services. Like many public facing organisations, we are experiencing cost escalation across key areas including staff costs, energy and digital infrastructure. These pressures are amplified by the ongoing need to maintain high levels of service reliability. During 2026-27 we will take forward a review of driver and vehicle test fees with a focus on maintaining financial sustainability and value for money for our customers.

We are projecting to earn in the region of £64m from fees collected for our services during 2026-27. In addition, some of our activities are funded by Department, where fees do not enable recovery of the costs of delivering the service.

We begin this year with a level of cash reserves which are being held for investment in our infrastructure and assets. These investments will allow us to improve our services by increasing our capacity to deliver those services and by enhancing our online and digital provision. Investment is also needed in our existing infrastructure and assets to ensure continued delivery of our services in a safe and effective working environment.

Our Priorities

Our priorities are shaped by our commitment to delivering high-quality services, ensuring value for money, and meeting the needs of our customers. This section outlines the strategic areas we will focus on to enhance service delivery, strengthen organisational resilience, and support policy objectives.

In 2026-27, we will continue to focus on our three priorities:



Our Services:

deliver high standards of service to our customers;



Our Infrastructure and Assets:

improve our infrastructure and maximise our assets; and



Our Organisation:

manage our organisation safely and efficiently.

We have made great progress during 2025-26, achieving positive results against our priority to reduce waiting times for driver and vehicle testing. Maintaining this performance will remain a priority for 2026-27, during which we will strive to deliver all **our services** to the highest possible standard and at maximum capacity.

We will take forward a number of actions to help us achieve our targets for waiting times, including the recruitment of more examiners to increase our capacity, issuing temporary exemption certificates for specific groups of vehicles, which will reduce demand to a manageable level and help maintain waiting times within an acceptable timeframe. In addition, we aim to open to the public, our two new test centres at Hydebank and Mallusk, which will provide significant additional capacity.

During this year we also plan to develop further **our infrastructure and assets**. Our estate is ageing, and we need to provide fit for purpose workplaces where our people have access to up-to-date equipment and facilities, to deliver our services and make the Agency a better, safer place to work.

The completion and planned opening of test centres at Hydebank and Mallusk, represents a key part of our plans to reduce waiting times for vehicle tests. Our new test centres will also support our ambition to become a more sustainable organisation and contribute to the government's commitment to reduce its impact on the environment. We will also progress plans for the roll out of new vehicle testing equipment across our network of test centres.

We will continue to develop our IT systems and modernise our customer-facing services to make it as easy and as straight-forward as possible for customers to interact with us. Enhancing and

delivering more of our services online will be a key focus in 2026-27. Our business improvement programme reinforces our determination to support our staff and to adjust and adapt to the changing needs of our customers.

One key area of work we will take forward this year is to progress the work necessary to enable the introduction of Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL). GDL is a phased approach to driver licensing designed to improve road safety for new drivers, particularly young drivers aged 17-23 who are disproportionately represented in fatal road traffic collisions. We have commenced work on the development of the digital Programme of Training and Logbook, which will be completed during 2026-27.

The security of our IT systems and customer information is of the utmost importance. We implement a comprehensive array of measures to proactively safeguard our IT infrastructure and ensure the protection of customer data. One of our key targets for 2026-27 is to achieve risk management approval for our external facing IT systems.

Improving **our organisation** will remain a focus for us. From a health and safety perspective, we will ensure our people work in a safe and positive environment and our customers are safe when physically interacting with us in the delivery of our services. We will continue to engage with staff to identify areas within the working environment that can be improved to make the Agency a better and safer place to work.

A strong health and wellbeing culture within the Agency is essential to supporting a resilient, engaged and productive workforce. By proactively promoting physical, mental and emotional wellbeing, we aim to help staff feel valued and supported, and to foster a healthier workplace culture where people can perform at their best. As a responsible and people-focused organisation, we will continue to invest in and promote good health and wellbeing practices and engage with our colleagues to ensure these are meaningful, useful and of real value.

We will also continue with the work already commenced on our organisational development. This is a key piece of work which will contribute directly to developing our organisation, our people and to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our services.

Outlined at Annex A are our 16 key performance targets which have been set to deliver against our priorities for 2026-27.

Monitoring of our Business Plan

An update on our performance against targets for the 2025-26 business year is available in the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026.

Performance against the targets outlined at Annex A will be monitored by our Strategic Management Board and our Annual Report for 2026-27 will include a Performance section showing the extent to which the targets in this plan were achieved.

Regular updates on progress will also be provided to the Department, our Minister and the Committee for Infrastructure.

Equality

We are committed to complying with statutory obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the Rural Needs (NI) Act 2016 in all that we do.

The Department's Equality Scheme sets out how we will ensure equality of opportunity and good relations when carrying out our functions. An equality screening and rural needs impact assessment have been completed for this Business Plan, and the published screening form can be found [here](#).

Annex A Key performance targets for 2026-27

Priority	Target Ref	Target for 2026-27
 Our Services: Deliver high standards of services to our customers	1	For vehicle testing , the average waiting time for an MOT appointment (private car) will be 5 weeks (35 days) or less.
	2	For driver testing , the average waiting time for Category B (private car) practical test will be 5 weeks (35 days) or less.
	3	For commercial licensing , we will dispatch 95% of taxi driver badges within 10 working days of receipt of all documentation.
	4	For commercial licensing , we will dispatch 95% of taxi plates within 5 working days of receipt of all documentation.
	5	For driver licensing , we will issue 90% of driving licence applications made by post within 10 working days of receipt.
	6	For driver licensing , we will issue 95% of online driving licence applications within 5 working days of receipt.
	7	For compliance and enforcement, we will achieve the following 8 targets: • Conduct a minimum of 1,000 roadside safety inspections of HGV units (tractor or trailer) to identify and remove unsafe vehicles from operation. • Carry out at least 165 roadside safety inspections of buses, including those used for dedicated home to school transport, to ensure passenger and pupil safety. • Carry out a minimum of 5,000 online licensing checks on goods vehicles, buses and taxis at the roadside to verify operator and vehicle compliance. • Conduct at least 30 taxi enforcement operations within the night time economy to enhance passenger safety and deter illegal and unsafe taxi activity. • Complete safety inspections on at least 98% of all taxis presented for a taximeter test to ensure vehicles meet legal requirements and improve overall vehicle safety. • Conduct a minimum of 300 roadside safety inspections of private cars to ensure vehicles meet roadworthiness requirements and improve overall vehicle safety. • Carry out a minimum of 75 multi-agency operations to improve road safety and compliance with statutory requirements. • Deploy On Board Diagnostics (OBD) test equipment on a minimum of 50 occasions to check for emission control and speed limiter manipulation across Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) and buses.
	8	For our customers , we will implement a new complaints handling procedure, in line with guidance provided by the NI Public Services Ombudsman.

Priority	Target Ref	Target for 2026-27
 <i>Our Infrastructure and assets:</i> Improve our infrastructure and maximise our assets.	9	We will open our new test centres at Hydebank and Mallusk for vehicle testing.
	10	We will complete our digital work programme for the year.
	11	We will progress enabling work and seek approval to proceed with two new test centres at Campsie and Enniskillen.
	12	We will achieve risk management approval for our external facing IT systems.

 <i>Our Organisation:</i> Manage our organisation safely and efficiently.	13	We will deliver our health and safety work programme.
	14	We will achieve the trading fund financial target to break even taking one year with another.
	15	We will generate a return on capital employed greater than 3.50%.
	16	We will take forward a review of driver and vehicle testing fees.



Safer Drivers, Safer Vehicles

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