

## Report from the FBHVC on changes to DVLA services

This note reproduces the report on this news item in the latest FBHVC newsletter released to the V8 Register on 9th February 2012.

### TRANSFORMING DVLA SERVICES

This consultation issued on 13th December was a Christmas present we could have done without – so could staff of DVLA Local Offices throughout the UK, who that morning were told that all LOs would close during 2013. This action will remove all face to face contact by the user public with DVLA staff.

Briefly, the DVLA stance is that the progress of computerisation needs to continue. To quote: 'This means driving forward existing services such as increasing take up of driver services on-line. It also means making other transactions available electronically where this is cost effective and maximising uptake by making them as user friendly as possible'.

The consultation majors on increasing use of their existing vehicle licence transactions on-line (and telephone) services, but their (loaded) figures actually show that more than 50% of private users do not avail themselves of these facilities. Their so-called customer survey was based on on-line users only, ignoring the majority who do not, or cannot, use this facility for their transaction. There are vague promises to engage with 'intermediaries' but whether this is to provide computer access only, or a genuine replacement for end users with queries is also unclear. For individuals who are not computer literate are unlikely to use a DVLA provided facility.

The document then promises at some unspecified time in the future, to simplify other processes to enable additional transactions to be added to on-line facilities, no doubt on a cost effective basis. What they don't mention are various transactions where we all, as old vehicle owners, necessarily have to go to our Local Office.

Examples include:

- Taxing an historic vehicle for the first time;
- Authentication of copy documentation for transmission to Swansea in lieu of valuable originals;
- Same day receipt of replacement tax discs for lost or stolen discs;
- Same day receipt of tax discs for taxing at short notice (including paper MoT and insurance cover notes);
- Taxing vehicles where there is also a change of taxation class e.g. unlicensed to historic, PSV to PLG;
- Taxing a vehicle exempt from MoT (I wonder how long Post Offices will be able to do this?);
- Reinstatement of an original registration number where this had been replaced at some time in the past but has remained dormant;
- Inspection of vehicles which require an age related number or a chassis number;
- Inspection of imported vehicles requiring UK registration.

The FBHVC will be responding appropriately and remind all clubs and individuals that they may also send their own responses to this very important consultation. Hard copies of the consultation are available by writing to Corporate Affairs Directorate, D16, DVLA, Swansea, SA6 7JL. (The consultation did not provide a contact name or phone number.) Or [www.dft.gov.uk/dvla](http://www.dft.gov.uk/dvla) then click on consultation. The consultation closes 6 March 2012.

### DVLA

Nigel Harrison has also contributed a note on some of the above points.

### DVLA LOCAL OFFICE CLOSURES

Further to David Hurley's article on the actual consultation here is a bit more detail on the work of the Local Offices and the possible consequences of their closure.

**Original document certification:** The whole purpose of having a certified copy is that there is then no chance of the original documents being lost in the post. If DVLA Local Offices are to disappear, then there needs to be a system whereby certified copies can be made of original documents which are still acceptable to DVLA Swansea, at a location which is no further away than the DVLA Local Office.

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**Checking of Insurance and MOT:** The common feature of the many transactions is the need to check the MoT and insurance. If a registration number is not yet allocated to the vehicle, the MoT and insurance is recorded under the chassis number, and it is difficult to see how this could be checked electronically. The other option for DVLA is to assume that the vehicle has an MoT and is insured. The onus would then be on the owner to get the MoT and insurance changed to reflect the new registration number before the next Continuous Insurance comparison is done between taxed vehicles and insured vehicles.

**V55/5 Vehicle details form:** Where a vehicle is not actually registered the way of conveying this information to DVLA for historic vehicles is via a V55/5 form: a 'catch all' complicated carbonised three page form, not available for download, where only around a third of the information requested on the front of the form is applicable to an historic vehicle. It is difficult to see how this could be done electronically. Would the substitute be either a walk-in service, or using the post?

**Proof of ID:** Currently when a vehicle is being registered for the first time with DVLA (except for a V765 application), proof of ID is required. Would an electronic check of the proposed keepers driving licence now be sufficient, if a check is still deemed required?

**Application documents:** With some types of applications there will be a dating letter and photographs. Unless there is some form of 'walk in' service where these items can be scanned and sent to DVLA Swansea, it looks as if it would need to be a postal application, causing an extra delay.

**Vehicle Inspection:** DVLA have the option to inspect a vehicle before it is registered. Often this is done at the DVLA Local Office. If an inspection is required, there needs to be some form of 'drive-in' service, which is no further away than the DVLA normal inspection location.

**Applications for non-computer users:** The assumption of DVLA appears to be that if an applicant has no access to the internet at home they can adequately use the on-line facilities of a 'walk-in' service. On the DVLA's V765 list of clubs, around 25% of club signatories don't declare an email address. In one historic vehicle club, only just over 50% of members declare an email address. It is likely that if someone is not familiar with using email, they would struggle with using a keyboard and mouse for an on-line application. DVLA appear to be suggesting that electronic transactions should be used instead of a paper based transaction. Although a high proportion of transactions will be electronic, seeing that a significant minority of individuals are unfamiliar with the technology it is suggested that some kind of paper based transaction needs to remain as a plan B option.

From a DVLA standpoint the number of registration or taxation class changes which relate to historic vehicle is comparatively low. It would not be surprising if some, or all, of these transactions remain paper based.