

EFM

ESSENTIAL FLEET MANAGER *Magazine*

ISSUE 8 2023



In this issue:

Fleet Technology in 2024

Road transport: 2023 Retrospective





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Essential Fleet Manager - Issue 8 (2023)

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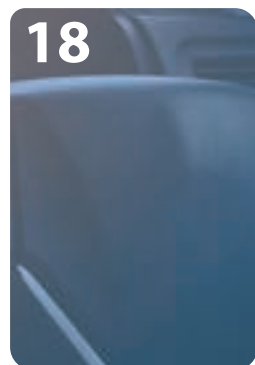
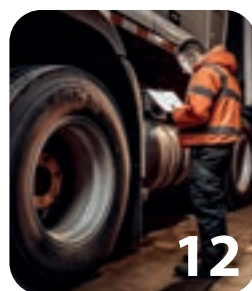


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Fleet industry comments on the Autumn Statement



Alfonso Martinez, UK Managing Director **ALD Automotive | LeasePlan**, has issued the following statement, expressing his **strong disappointment** with the lack of comprehensive policies for the current issues that the fleet industry is facing.

The lack of initiatives and additional funding to tackle the switch to electric vans, chargepoint accessibility, and rising charging costs will continue to affect UK fleets and businesses.

1. Capital Allowances

"Businesses will undoubtedly welcome the Chancellor making the 'Super Deduction' – a 100% capital allowance available for qualifying plant and machinery – permanent. This means that items such as forklifts, tools and computers, as well as vans, trucks and tractors, will be able to be fully expensed against taxable profits for the foreseeable future, instead of the scheme ending in 2026. It's an important step to promote long term business investment with corporation tax rising to 25% in 2024/25.

"Unfortunately, cars are exempt from this scheme, and so are vehicles that are bought with the intention that they will then be leased. This means that leasing companies cannot reduce their tax bills accordingly and pass on the savings to their customers. The BVRLA, along with a working group made up of ALD Automotive | LeasePlan, Lex Autolease and Europcar, has spent most of this year working with HM Treasury to develop a policy solution that closes this

gap. We were hoping for an announcement during the Autumn Statement, but the Chancellor has yet to act.

Reforms are needed urgently, particularly to support the electric vehicle market ahead of the first mandatory registration targets – a 22% share of new cars and 10% of new vans – being introduced next year. Almost half of business contract hire (BCH) vehicles delivered by BVRLA members were battery electric during the second quarter of this year and, although prices are falling, they are still higher than their petrol or diesel counterparts."

2. National Insurance and Living Wage Changes

"Raising the living wage and reducing the base rate of Class 1 Employee National Insurance Contributions (NICs) by 2% points (from 12% to 10%) will be welcomed by households during the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. However, these changes inadvertently affect the salary sacrifice schemes which are making electric vehicles more accessible to drivers.

"Salary sacrifice enables drivers to lease vehicles through their employer and pay for them with their pre-tax income. As long as the vehicle emits 75g/km CO₂ or less (which is true of most plug-in hybrid or electric cars), income tax and Class 1 NICs are based on the remaining salary, while the driver pays Benefit in Kind for the vehicle and their employer pays Class 1A NICs for providing it. With company car tax bands as low as 2% for electric vehicles, this usually helps employers to cut their NIC bill while offering an affordable way for drivers to go electric.

"The Chancellor's decision not to adjust Class 1A rates means employers won't see any reduction in their NICs, which could in turn be passed on to employees – who would normally cover those costs. Furthermore, the increased living wage means some employees will no longer be eligible, as the vehicle payments would take

them below that threshold.

With the latest BVRLA statistics showing 91% of salary sacrifice deliveries are electric, the Chancellor needs to be careful not to undermine the benefits of a system which is enabling drivers to switch to the cleanest vehicles."

3. Incentives for Electric Vans

"Despite recent changes to the 2030 phase-out date for new petrol and diesel cars and vans, the pathway to electric vehicles is clear. The first mandatory EV sales targets – 22% for new cars, 10% for new vans – will be introduced next year, rising annually to reach 80% and 70% by the end of the decade and with large fines for manufacturers who can't meet them. Supporting this fast-growing market is critical.

"The Chancellor confirmed electric company car tax incentives through to April 2028 as part of last year's Autumn Statement, and the transition is going well. It's fuelled a resurgence in company cars and salary sacrifice schemes – which are one of the most cost-effective ways to get behind the wheel of an electric vehicle. One in six new car registrations are battery-electric, according to the SMMT, and fleets are leading that transition. The latest BVRLA data shows almost half of business contract hire (BCH) deliveries and a massive 91% of salary sacrifice cars are electric vehicles.

"However, the business case for electric vans is less clear-cut and – with a stagnant 5.5% share of registrations – this market needs additional support to reach next year's 10% target. Fleets are finding range, charging and vehicle prices challenging, while heavy batteries mean the largest electric vans (over 3.5 tonnes) have to comply with HGV-derived rules including earlier MoT tests, tachographs and speed limiters that don't apply to their diesel counterparts.

...cont'd on page 05

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...cont'd from page 04

(over 3.5 tonnes) have to comply with HGV-derived rules including earlier MoT tests, tachographs and speed limiters that don't apply to their diesel counterparts.

"The Government needs to move quickly to solve those hurdles, as flatlining electric van sales could push OEMs to restrict the supply of new diesel vans – including the latest, most efficient, and cleanest engine technology – to avoid fines."

4. Fuel and charging costs

"The 5p per litre Fuel Duty reduction is in place until next March, and it's an important measure for controlling inflation, so we weren't expecting any announcements during the Autumn Statement. It's given businesses and households useful breathing space but does nothing to address the high energy and charging costs affecting electric vehicle drivers.

"Reducing fuel prices narrows the business case for going electric, especially for drivers who rely on public chargepoints. According to the latest Zap-Map data, drivers would pay an average 79p per kilowatt-hour (kWh) to charge at the fastest 'rapid' chargers, which is almost 20p per mile. To put that into context, a diesel car or van would break even at around 37mpg, based on the latest average pump prices.

"With mandatory zero-emission vehicle sales targets arriving next year, and our recent World EV Day research showing running costs are a top priority for drivers, this needs to change. The Government has ignored industry lobbying to reduce the 20% VAT rate on public charging to match the 5% paid for domestic energy. This would undoubtedly help to stimulate retail demand for EVs, especially in the used market where supply is growing quickly but drivers have few incentives to switch."

5. Vehicle Excise Duty (Road Tax)

"After almost 20 years of governments debating road pricing as an alternative to Vehicle Excise Duty (or 'road tax'), the Chancellor ruled out any near-future changes to the current system in March. Unfortunately, incoming reforms to the VED system are set to add a significant tax burden for electric vehicle drivers from April 2025.

"As it stands, the VED exemption for electric cars (and discounts for hybrids) will end on 1 April 2025. This means all vehicles registered since April 2017 will pay the same annual tax rate, while the Expensive Car Supplement – an additional charge for the first five yearly renewals – will apply to new registrations with a list price of £40,000 or more.

"Electric vehicle prices are falling, but plenty of new models are still over the £40,000 threshold – including the UK's best-selling EV, the Tesla Model Y. As rates rise with inflation, this system will leave drivers with a tax bill of around £600 per year for an electric vehicle, or three times more than the petrol or diesel equivalent. The Chancellor should consider adjusting the threshold to account for the still-higher price of EVs or exempting them altogether.

"It's also worth noticing that, five years after it launched its consultation, the Government has yet to reform the VED system for vans."

6. Chargepoint funding

"A robust charging network is vital as the UK's electric vehicle market gathers pace. While it's true that the number of public charge points is growing (a further 14,255 have been installed so far this year, a 38% increase on the end of 2022), it's also true that the rate of growth isn't fast enough. According to an analysis published by The Times newspaper earlier this year,

the Government is set to miss its target of installing 300,000 new charge points by 2030... by 20 years.

"However, the Autumn Statement offered no additional funding to grow this network – nor any support for home chargepoints, or local authority schemes which are equally vital to help encourage drivers to go electric. With mandatory zero-emission sales targets due to be introduced in 2024, urgent action is needed to alleviate drivers' concerns."

7. Plan for Drivers

"The Government announced the Plan for Drivers in October. This included numerous measures to support motorists, including new traffic light technology, a National Parking Platform, grants for cross-pavement charging solutions and a myth-busting campaign for EVs. We welcome any measures that make life easier for drivers, and hope that question marks about funding will be addressed during the Spring Budget."

8. Tax Tables

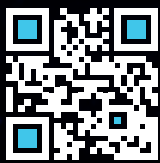
"We are seeking urgent clarification following publication of the Overview of Tax Legislation and Rates (OOTLAR), which includes a company car tax table that contradicts policy laid out during last year's Autumn Statement. This indicates a 7% tax band for electric cars during the 2027/28, instead of the 5% announced by the Chancellor, and appears to have been published in error.

"If this figure is correct, then it undermines the integrity of the process. OOTLA is intended to show the effect of the changes, not to announced policy decisions. Fleets depend on long-term visibility to make investments, and it would be very disappointing to see a U-turn on incentives announced last year."●

"We welcome the permanent implementation of full expensing to encourage continued support for spend on machinery such as vans; this will create a lower cost of entry for enterprises looking to invest. However, the scope of the policy must go further, expanding to cars and leased vehicles that will further promote fleet growth across the UK. We hope that over the coming months the Chancellor will work closely with the industry to develop a policy that broadens fleet support overall.

"While the increase of the national living wage (NLW) is another welcomed improvement for the public, it is also important to acknowledge the impact this will have on salary sacrifice schemes. As the NLW increases, the threshold for salary sacrifice eligibility increases with it, meaning lower-earning employees may not be granted the benefit. With this in mind, it will be important for those who manage fleet to review the schemes they have in place, seeking expertise where needed, to ensure employees' access to benefits such as company vehicles can remain in place without significant disruption."

Caroline Sandall-Mansergh, Consultancy and Channels Development Manager, Alphabet GB●



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Road transport: 2023 Retrospective

By: **Tim Ridyard**, Partner Transport and Regulatory, Ashtons Legal.

So, what major developments have there been in road transport law over the last year? Well, in what is now a long-term pattern, 2023 saw no ‘big-ticket’ changes, such as new laws (no bad thing) but perhaps what might be categorised as a continuation of recurring themes. Any formal legal changes have been more by way of fine-tuning or tinkering.

In April and May, DVSA updated its Categorisation of Vehicle Defects that sets out details of how action is taken for specific roadworthiness defects found during vehicle inspections including annual test.

It also published full guidance with regard to the questioning carried out by examiners during maintenance investigations. This Guide is particularly helpful, setting out exactly what DVSA are looking for in various areas, in considerable detail. This can be used by operators as a self-assessment tool, simulating how they might score, if there

were an actual DVSA investigation. It would be no bad thing for operators to carry out such an exercise, that is perhaps best conducted now and not one resulting from some roadside inspection or where DVSA have been asked by the Traffic Commissioner to review the operator who is seeking to vary the size of their licence.

DVSA investigations assess compliance in terms of Satisfactory, Mostly Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. It is easy to drop into only Mostly Satisfactory, through the absence of even a single criterion expected to be in place. The guidance covers:

- Operator legal entity
- Condition of vehicles examined at the fleet check
- Operating centre
- Inspection and maintenance records
- Driver defect reporting
- Inspection facilities and maintenance arrangements
- Vehicle emissions

- Wheel and tyre management
- Load security
- Security requirements
- Assessment of transport manager (or responsible person in Restrictive licence)

In September and October, DVSA issued updated guidance in relation to carrying out HGV daily walk-around checks, and the new DVSA Enforcement Sanctions Policy was published, to be read in conjunction with the revised Guide to Maintaining Roadworthiness updated in April. That guide has some important revisions.

There is revised guidance in relation to brake testing that appears to be something of a much misunderstood area. It appears commonplace for operators to believe that DVSA and Traffic Commissioner requirements are that four roller brake tests should take place per annum and if this minimum requirement is satisfied, that is sufficient. In fact, this is not the whole approach

or philosophy – the requirement is that in order to comply with Construction & Use regulations every part of every braking system must function. It is not possible for service inspection sheet to be signed off to the effect that the braking system is satisfactory, without a performance assessment at every such inspection (not just four times per annum). A “yard test” or “road test” is not regarded as adequate. Therefore, some assessment has to take place at every service inspection. If the testing format is a roller brake test at every inspection this is ideal – however, there ‘must’ be a minimum of four such laden tests per annum and some form of performance test at the other inspections. By ‘must’ it is the case that in reality a Traffic Commissioner expects this, despite the seemingly more flexible approach set out below. Specifically the Guide says:

Where possible brake testing should be undertaken with the vehicle or trailer in a laden condition to achieve the most meaningful results. A competent person may carry out a risk assessment based on use, working conditions, mileage and the age of vehicle to determine if some of the brake tests carried out in the year can be unladen; however, it is strongly recommended that at least 4 of the brake tests carried out are laden. Risk assessments need to be retained on file and made available for inspection.

From 1st January 2023 vehicles and trailers must be appropriately laden when presented for annual test.

The Guide to Maintaining Roadworthiness also contains requirements in relation to towing of third-party trailers, including trailers pulled by traction-only operators. The position here is that, as is well known, the operator is responsible for any trailer being drawn, whether one’s own or belonging to another. Given this is the case, the Traffic Commissioner’s deem it to be the case that an operator has to have knowledge of when those trailers were last inspected, that they underwent brake performance testing and that they have had an annual test. This area has very much come to the fore over the last couple of years and is a frequent theme at public enquiry hearings involving operators who only haul third party trailers or do so less frequently, for whatever reason.

Traffic Commissioner: Annual Report

The Traffic Commissioner’s Annual Report for 2022 to the end of 31 March 2023 highlights current issues. This includes the current role of Traffic Commissioners and how this area may develop in the right way. The stated aims remain:

- To deliver a modern and effective Operator Licensing regime that ensures Operators are fit to hold a Licence whilst minimising the regulatory burden on the compliant.
- To promote and develop a safe road transport industry which delivers compliance, fair competition and protects the environment

In other words “policing” entry into the sector (the “gatekeeper” role) and addressing those who cannot or will not comply. In addition, safety and fair competition (the basics of most regulatory regimes).

The key figures for the last year within the report are that there are some 69,022 valid goods vehicle operator licences with 379,081 goods vehicles authorised through them. 14,133 operator licence applications and variations were processed.

15,167 vocational driver cases were also closed – these are the cases where vocational driver conduct is addressed and where drivers may have their Cat C or D licences suspended or removed at hearings. They may also receive warning letters

A review relating to Traffic Commissioners took place in 2023 and respondents overwhelmingly supported Traffic Commissioner functions with a reported only 5.14% in any disagreement. There is no apparent likelihood of the role of the Traffic Commissioner coming to an end or other suggested major changes, such as removal of individual traffic areas, to be replaced by one national system.

However, it is clear that there are financial pressures and the review flags up how the current Operator’s Licence fee regime is suspect, since it is based on a single standard fee for all Operators, regardless of their size. It certainly appears to be odd that a multimillion-pound road transport

operation pays about £80 per year for its licence whilst a one-vehicle Operator pays the same. The review concludes that “any substantial improvement to the Traffic Commissioner functions would require fee reform”, unless alternative methods were pursued.

Of course, the Traffic Commissioner regime is somewhat unique – other sectors do not have a body that is a licence issuing authority but also regulates compliance in the same way. For example, environmental permitting is an Environment Agency licensing regime (considerable more costly for businesses than Operator’s Licences) but does not have its own regulatory intervention/hearing system. The Environment Agency intervenes through prosecutions or alternatives to prosecution.

Decisions in 1,347 public inquiries were determined (includes PSV). Highlighted in the Report also is the most common issue faced by Traffic Commissioners at public inquiry. Interestingly it states:

There are rarely any single-issue hearings, but most regulatory proceedings stem from a failure to manage effectively, often where Directors, senior managers, those at the top of the business, lose sight of the need to monitor and manage compliance with the operator licence requirements. We can all appreciate the pressures on businesses as costs rise and margins are squeezed, that puts the very existence of a transport business at loss from the operator’s licence. That means that those in charge need to development management systems (key performance indicators) to manage that risk. They should know their business best but there are a lot of resources available for assistance.

269 preliminary hearings were also held – such hearings are not public inquiry hearings. They are not advertised and at them no formal sanctions can be imposed. They are often deployed so that a Traffic Commissioner can understand better issues in an operator’s case or review the current state of an operator’s compliance – the Traffic Commissioner will decide whether or not the case needs to proceed at all to a public inquiry hearing. ●

What's the real impact of Vehicle Excise Duty changes for fleets switching to electric?

By Neill Emmett, Head of Marketing at ALD Automotive | LeasePlan (soon to be Ayvens)

Despite the deadline for the sale of petrol and diesel vehicles being pushed to 2035, many fleet-operating businesses are already looking ahead and making the switch to electric. To support them in their journey to greater sustainability, the UK government has implemented financial incentives to help promote electric vehicle (EV) adoption, including tax exemptions and grants.

These include support with EV chargepoint installation, Clean Air Zone (CAZ) and Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) exemption, and a host of tax benefits.

However, at last year's Autumn Budget, the Chancellor announced that one of these tax benefits – an exemption from paying Vehicle Excise Duty (also known as car tax) – will end in April 2025, leading some businesses to question the impact this will have on their fleet savings.

In this article, I'll examine the true impact this will have on businesses and explore the different ways we, as part of the wider mobility industry, can continue to support the roll-out of EVs across the country.

An overview of the current landscape

As previously mentioned, driving an EV in the UK means enjoying certain incentives like tax advantages. This includes lower Benefit-in-Kind (BiK) and company car tax (CCT) rates, as well as an exemption from VED. These incentives make EVs even more financially viable to businesses, making them more likely to prioritise EV adoption at an earlier date. It's an important pull for businesses where budgets may be tight, particularly within the context of rising interest rates.

But, with over 810,000 EVs on UK roads as of June 2023 (source: SMMT), the EV



market is growing rapidly and electric driving now entering the mainstream. As such, the government is reviewing its current policies as it strives for fiscal sustainability.

Naturally, the removal of any financial incentives has the potential to impact public perception and may lead to a slowing down of the current rate of uptake we've been seeing these past few years. However, a recent study from LeasePlan and Deloitte has found that businesses can still make considerable savings for both job-need and perk vehicles when they calculate the Whole Life Costs (WLC) of an EV compared to a petrol model.

Case study:

Our 2023/24 Fleet Funding and Taxation Guide provides an example case study which illustrates the financial implications of introducing VED to battery electric vehicles (BEVs).

A key finding from the case study is that the additional rate VED supplement for cars with a list price over £40,000 will have a material impact on the costs involved. At the time of writing (March 2023), the additional VED supplement adds £355 per annum to the cost of VED starting after the first year. Over a 48-month replacement cycle, this would add at least £1,065 to the overall cost of VED (although this number is likely to be higher after accounting for inflation).

The results for the job-need cars show that the introduction of VED for BEVs will increase the Whole Life Costs (WLCs) of funding these cars, and this will reduce the potential saving these vehicles offer when compared to petrol or diesel alternatives. However, the cost increase is relatively low meaning the saving offered by the BEV modelled would fall from 11% to 10%, which is unlikely to have a material impact on decision making.

The results for the perk cars follow a similar pattern, where the introduction of VED for BEVs will increase the WLC of funding these cars and reduce the potential savings compared to petrol or diesel alternatives. However, the additional rate VED supplement will increase the financial impact of VED being introduced, with the savings offered by the BEV modelled falling from 15% to 10%.

Keeping EVs attractive to businesses

It's worth noting that despite the more material increase in Whole Life Costs for a BEV, it still offers a significant saving compared to the diesel engine alternative modelled. The removal of the VED exemption for BEVs in April 2025 will see costs increase, with a more noticeable impact for any cars attracting the additional rate VED supplement. However, at the same time, the Autumn Statement confirmed that arguably the biggest EV incentive in the form of low company car tax rates will remain in place until at April 2028, meaning these cars can still offer a cost-effective option.

Data from our 2022 Car Cost Index shows that EVs are now more cost competitive than ever before – with EVs in nearly every European country the same or cheaper on a total cost of operating basis than petrol or diesel cars. This means that regardless of changes in incentives, it is still financially beneficial for businesses to make the switch to electric driving.

It's also important to consider the bigger picture. The journey to electric driving isn't just about saving money, it's about protecting the planet. Zero emission vehicles represent a key step in reducing our global carbon emissions – and that's something you can't put a pound sign on. ●



Used vehicle marketplace update

By: **Graham Howes** Head of Fleet at **The Motor Auction Group**

One thing is certain in the current UK used vehicle marketplace; nothing is certain. Since the pandemic, used vehicle supply has been encumbered by the lack of supply in the new arena, which, as we are sure you will know, has driven up used vehicle wholesale prices and subsequently those to the consumer.

However, is the market returning to some sort of normality or what is the 'new normal'?

We have all seen the impact of the current financial crisis which has subdued the retail car/ forecourt footfall - fortunately the volume of wholesale stock entering the market has been low as we stated earlier. But now the volume of stock is increasing and used cars particularly are seeing a value adjustment, so are we entering a period of decline?

Undoubtedly, in our car sales we are seeing there is a variation in demand based upon several factors. The older stock is in demand, they are by their nature less expensive, and buyers see these as good value 'bread and butter'

stock that should turn quickly. Our car sales so far this month have borne this out with mid-range vehicles up to £6,000 selling strongly, cars valued up to £10,000 selling, but are harder work and those above £10,000 the bidding is very specific i.e., if the car is rare or very desirable, they will bid.

Following the price realignment of battery electric cars there is now a stronger desire than previously, however, plug-in hybrids are suffering both with regards their values which are falling and the general desire to bid.

One piece of very clear feedback from buyers is that they do not want to by too much work, and by this we mean body repairs that requires lengthy stays in the bodyshop. To counter this we offer a grade enhancement service for our customers, our team of experts will recommend certain repairs to damage to a vendor which will if completed, improve the NAMA auction grade. This not only enhances the cars' grade, making it more desirable, but will in general increase the sale price. One of our finance company vendors who took advantage of this service saw a return on investment of over 270%.

Light Commercial Vehicle's used sales have been very resilient during this period, values have decreased but only in line with the market seasonality. In general, the conversion rates in our LCV sales have remained strong for good and average condition vans, as with the cars the buyers are not looking to tie up

their money with vehicles that require lengthy repairs. Historically, we have refurbished very few LCVs apart from the deletion of any trade names displayed on the vehicles, however as the market has hardened and with the dealer's feedback this would be an option for our vendors to consider further.

A key element at any time when sending vehicles to be remarketed is to ensure that the vehicles have good provenance. In other words, make sure the vehicle V5 is sent to the remarketer along with any service history, be that an electronic print out from a fleet management system or service invoices if the book is not up-to-date. At a time where the market is declining it is critical that the basics are done right to make your vehicles as attractive as possible as to prospective buyers.

Going back to answering our earlier question "is the market returning to some sort of normality"? well there is no simple answer, the old normality of pre-pandemic depreciation curves and seasonal turn downs we believe have gone. This is relating to the reduced number of new vehicles entering the market over the subsequent years from 2020 and the external pressures on the economy since then. We have a new normal and ensuring you have a flexible reliable remarketing partner is key, someone who will work hard to achieve the best values for you and provide advice as to the best options to dispose of your used vehicles. ●

If you have any specific questions or would like anymore information please email: Graham Howes gh@mag.co.uk.



By: **Tim Ridyard**, Partner Transport and Regulatory, Ashtons Legal.

Driver Defect Checks: HGV daily walkaround checks

The Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has issued an update, reminding drivers of what checks should be carried out inside and outside any vehicle. It is a well-established principle that every driver must carry out a walk-around check before their first use of any vehicle (and any trailer that is part of any combination) on any day, including subsequent vehicles/trailers used after the first ones.

This is not only a formal operator's licence requirement, but part and parcel of proper health and safety systems even where no such licence is required. Hence, this should be the regime for exempt goods vehicles and ones under 3.5t MAM.

Whilst such checks continue to be recorded today in written format on pre-prepared sheets, driver defect apps are increasingly being used so that drivers can carry this out on a smartphone. Deployment of such systems is entirely acceptable, though the DVSA set out what operators are expected to retain and the format of evidence it expects to be able to see. Electronic records of

actual defects still have to be retained for 15 months, together with any repair record in the same way as paper records. Often, records are called in by DVSA for a remote desk-based assessment, so the material has to be capable of being provided properly some way, the onus being on the operator to supply this. This is also true where electronic records are used.

Such electronic systems have distinct advantages: this process records the duration of any check that of itself provides management information as to the time spent by drivers on this – there can be driver follow-up to create more effective defect checks; such apps are able to update the business immediately so a transport manager can check and monitor the drivers, not least where they are away from base; the phone/app be used to take photographs of defects – indeed some resourceful drivers record pictures of their vehicles as a routine, in order to have a formal record of their condition i.e. to positively prove the absence of defects.

The carrying out of a defect check that is properly recorded also creates positive evidence to the police or to any DVSA Examiner that the check took place and that any defect discovered has occurred since the time of the check e.g. a defective bulb. Whilst the condition of a vehicle at any time it is inspected by the authorities is the responsibility of the driver (and operator) no penalty should

be issued where there is good evidence the fault occurred since the check.

For Operator's Licence purposes, records of driver defects form part of maintenance records and hence need to be retained for a minimum period of 15 months. This is a licencing requirement and not a direct statutory requirement as such. Only reports of actual defects need to be retained - however, there is merit in retaining all nil defects as this positively evidences the constant checks being carried out by drivers on a daily basis.

Whilst DVSA suggests 'nil' defects only need retaining for, say, three months, there is arguably merit on retaining them longer – do they not of themselves prove that there has been a constant system in place. In the event of an investigation or Traffic Commissioner hearing, there is clear proof of every driver carrying daily checks. Of course, whilst retention of mountains of paper defect reports is a headache for operators, this is somewhat easier where an app is used and all checks are kept within IT systems.

Operator Responsibilities and Management

Responsible Operators should be monitoring the effectiveness of the driver defect reporting system in a number of ways, including:

- Ensuring all defect reports are fully completed (whether nil defects or actual defects).
- Where there is a defect, there should



be a clear audit trail of the defect, action taken and sign off - (the 'loop' must be closed).

- Random checks of vehicles after drivers have conducted checks but pre-departure; such checks need to be recorded and retained with the maintenance records; this can be a very simple system that does not need to be onerous – but should be in place.
- Close examination of service inspection sheets after Preventative Maintenance Inspections (PMIs) have been conducted, to monitor defects that should or could have been discovered by drivers; it is a good idea to monitor driver trends and if any fault is found on a PMI to track back into previous defect sheets to see what, if any, input the driver has had;
- Evidence of specific types of issues e.g. defective bulbs and tyre problems (low tread, cuts etc.) are examples that may suggest that drivers are not conducting checks properly; some other items may be less safety-critical but may tend to paint a general picture of the

degree of driver diligence e.g. a cracked mirror or broken step;

- Clear written daily driver defect procedures and training (with clear documented evidence of the training carried out by trainers and signed attendance sheets).
- Actual face-to-face follow-up with drivers, with re-training as the starting point and escalated disciplinary action who cannot or will not comply.
- 'Checking the checkers' - ensuring transport management staff themselves are conducting proper policing of this area.

Driver defect issues are a perpetual recurring theme in DVSA investigations and Traffic Commissioner hearings. In our experience, most issues relating to driver defect reporting link back to poor management in the areas highlighted above. Best practice should adopt the following approach (as with other aspects of fleet management): Having the clearest system and procedure in place (simple and documented);

- Clear information and training for all drivers and non-driving staff concerned;

- Clear monitoring systems that constantly manage and monitor driver defect systems;
- Constant review/disciplinary/follow-up and retraining regime where there is non-compliance.

It may seem odd to be revisiting this area yet again – however, as stated, it is this very area that rears its head time and time again because the system an operator may deploy is not sufficiently robust, as the “best practice” approach above is not in place. Poor and persistent mis-management in this area can ultimately lead to the downfall of an operator's licence (and the business), so it is essential to reiterate its importance. ●

Ashtons
LEGAL

Ashtons Legal advice and representation

Should you require assistance in the areas of investigations conducted by DVSA (in-person or desk-based assessments) or Operator Licensing (including Traffic Commissioner hearings) then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Contact: Tim Ridyard, Partner Transport and Regulatory T: 01284 732111 E: Tim.Ridyard@ashtonslegal.co.uk



Supplier Insight: **CheckedSafe** Vehicle compliance for all fleets

As a fleet or transport manager you have a requirement, both legally and financially, to ensure that you are operating a safe, efficient and compliant fleet. The legislative burden has become greater over recent years and 'O' Licence holders, therefore, increasingly seek solutions that not only assist in meeting requirements, but also provide the demonstrable proof that this is the case. Although operating the LCV part of a fleet does not require an operator's licence, the same principles should be applied to your vans to ensure you are meeting your duty of care requirements. Ensuring your vehicles are compliant and importantly 'safe to drive' is essential. Crucially, regimes that are designed to meet legislative demands, should also be followed even when the whole fleet is exempt and no 'O' Licence is required.

Vehicle pre-use checks and defect reporting are an absolutely vital part of a fleet's compliance and safety routine. Thorough checking of all vehicles is essential, with additional challenges presented by the fact that within the Public Sector, Housing and Utilities sector, many van fleets are managed remotely, as drivers may not return to base overnight. Micro-managing these vehicles is almost impossible for a fleet

or transport manager, so there is a heavy reliance on drivers to make sure their vehicles are properly checked before use each day. Equally important is enabling the driver to both carry out these checks and be able to communicate with the fleet department firstly, to confirm that the check has been carried out and secondly, to report any defects. Defects may need immediate attention or be planned into the fleet's SMR schedules. Finally, this reporting must be done in a way that records can be kept in a legally compliant way.

A real innovator in the area of vehicle compliance software is, award winning, CheckedSafe, founded in 2014 by Gary Hawthorne and business partner Darran Harris.

As a company, they have developed products that aid fleet operators, not only to help with operator licence compliance, but to make the management of remote van fleets safer, more efficient and easier.

Gary, with his background in the transport industry, developed the product after identifying issues with other applications. With his business partner Darran a litigation solicitor, he focused heavily on developing a fit for purpose APP that not only helped with compliance but was also specifically designed for the effective management of work-related road safety.

When Essential Fleet Manager spoke with Gary Hawthorne, Director and Co-Founder last year, the CheckedSafe App had already become an essential compliance tool for a great many fleet and transport professionals. Since then, the solution has gone from strength to strength and we were delighted to speak once more and understand developments with the product and with key, customer successes.

Q: Could you explain how CheckedSafe mitigates risk for the operator and vitally, provides a legally defensible position, should there be an incident under investigation?

The CheckedSafe system offers organisations a complete solution, enabling them to manage and protect their workforce and comply with legal compliance requirements, whilst reducing cost and liability. CheckedSafe can provide organisations with a fully integrated solution - so you can be completely paperless. By using our system properly, you will have a legally defensible product. In summary, the legal principals that underpin the requirements for paper records, such as retaining defect reports for 15 months, are the same for electronic systems. CheckedSafe follows all established requirements and at the same time provides huge additional advantages.

Q: Above, we mentioned how the need for remote management of van fleets that do not return to base overnight can be problematic. How can the CheckedSafe App assist with this?

CheckedSafe replaces the paper-based daily vehicle check by allowing drivers to complete a daily vehicle check via an App on their smart phone. The App is compatible with both Android and Apple devices and it improves the overall efficiency of the check process. Therefore, no matter where the vehicle or driver is located the APP gives the driver remote functionality.

Q: You mentioned the App works on most mobile devices, how about connectivity?

With vehicle checks being a vital part of any operation, ensuring reliability is key for CheckedSafe and we use Amazon servers, with eight back-ups via AWS.

The system has also been designed so that it will still function offline, not just in case of server problems, but because we know that sometimes drivers will not have internet access. Drivers can still do their checks, and the APP will synchronise as soon as internet access becomes available.

Q: Although all drivers should take the pre-use checks very seriously, is the system open to abuse? For example, could the driver just carry out a tick box exercise whilst using the APP without actually walking around the vehicle?

The system monitors the driver's behaviour and location to make sure that checks are being carried out, with minimum times for each check.

The APP also tracks the movement of the phone or tablet being used around the vehicle to ensure the driver doesn't just tick the boxes away from the vehicle - this minimises the chances of a false check being submitted.

This is one of the unique benefits of our system.

Q: How easy is the CheckedSafe APP to use and do drivers or operatives need to be 'tech savvy' to be able to use it?

The app is very user-friendly, with all checks separated into clear categories.

Pre-built templates within the APP can be tailored to meet individual requirements and we will always go to visit a company implementing our system to make sure we offer training and assistance where required.

Drivers can also take photos or make voice recordings to help submit information.

For operators large and small, compliance should never be a chore but is often seen as an administrative burden. A system such as CheckedSafe helps reduce that burden as it is extremely easy to use and streamlines the checking and follow up processes.

Q: How does the fleet or transport manager access the information provided by the driver via the APP?

Once a driver has submitted their check results, they are sent in real time via email and are viewable on the CheckedSafe Workforce Management (CWM) suite. The fleet or transport manager can then access the information and interpret the data - any issues with the vehicle that need attention can then be scheduled for maintenance if required.

Making this process digital ensures any defects are found and the driver can get a quick determination from the office or depot as to whether the vehicle is safe to use on the road or not.

Q: How can the data sent from the APP be interpreted to help with vehicle fleet management?

Comprehensive reporting allows the fleet or transport manager to view details relating to checks and their outcomes, including historical checks.

The system provides full visibility as to the status of each vehicle, its servicing and maintenance requirements and provides an end-to-end compliance audit trail.

The data provided by the system should be interpreted and acted upon. Identifying minor defects early, can save the need for more serious and costly repairs at a later date.

All reports can be viewed online or downloaded for further analysis meaning our system simplifies and digitises fleet management.

Q: Another problem all drivers may face is 'on-the-road' incidents that may involve damage to a vehicle. How does the CheckedSafe App assist with this?

Within the APP we include what we call a 'bump card' which gives prompts on what information to collect in the event of an accident. The back office can then see that data in seconds, as the driver can submit a report straight away.

The first hour is known as the 'golden hour' for insurers and CheckedSafe can help drivers record details while they're still fresh. This sweet spot for information can dramatically reduce the cost of any 3rd party claim.

We did a study with a HGV operator in Manchester and found it had significantly reduced payouts on claims as a result.

We're starting to see the insurance companies take note now and we are partners with the likes of QBE and RSA to name but two.

Q: We have covered how CheckedSafe assists van fleets and many of those features will be applied when managing compliance in larger fleets subject to requirements under the O licence. Increasingly, fleet operating contractors must demonstrate their compliance, health and safety credentials within tender bids in order to win new contracts. How does CheckedSafe help?

Firstly, the DVSA awards the Earned Recognition accreditation to operators who show high standards of compliance. Our system is fully DVSA-compliant, allowing your drivers to prove their vehicle's compliance at the touch of a button.

Operators can use our system to compile and submit vehicle compliance reports directly to the DVSA with ease, and by submitting regular reports, vehicles will be less likely to be pulled over for roadside inspections.

Also, contractors will often need to explain which systems are used to support their legal and safety obligations. CheckedSafe is now proven to be an important part of this and was a crucial consideration in our announcing a partnership with CMAC, a major provider of emergency and diversionary people moving services in the UK and increasingly, throughout Europe. Not only does CheckedSafe provide them with a system that ensures day to day compliance demands are met on existing contracts, but it is also a key part of demonstrating that this is the case when bidding through new tenders. In summary then, with CheckedSafe you will meet your obligations, be able to prove that you do and should the worst happen, be in a legally defensible position.

...cont'd on page 16

...cont'd from page 15

CheckedSafe features include:

- Bespoke Templates – You can have any template you like – think outside of the box if it needs checking talk to us we can create anything not just fleet and plant related
- Full Maintenance/Fleet Management solution – 100% paperless
- Schedules – set up schedules for servicing/PMI
- Cost module – track the cost of your maintenance/spend
- Preference Groups – to enable anyone to see a mixture of vehicles that they may manage across the business
- Countersign - Managers/Supervisors
- countersigning checks
- Unlimited Document Storage either for vehicles/assets or users
- Unlimited Users
- Grey Fleet Management
- Message Service via the App
- Documents-to-App push ANY document to the user via the App
- Reminders/Notifications for ANYTHING
- Daily/Weekly/Monthly push summaries - Emailed to your in-box
- Create/Edit your own templates
- Create and Edit your own Roles
- Multi-Language Checks (including Cyrillic Symbols)
- DVLA V5 vehicle data inc. MOT - we scrape the DVLA data for key V5
- Job Cards - pushing and creating job cards to anyone managed via the app
- Vehicle Cost Recording - record all your costs to a vehicle
- Driver License Checking - on line DVLA driver license checking managed via the same platform with a unique remote process no need to see the driver
- Full Reporting Tools - excel/PDF/CSV and schedule ANY reports
- Trend Report to report on everything
- Cloud Based Solution using AWS Server
- Accredited and Validated by DVSA IT ER Systems Provider
- Endorsed by the Border Force Agency
- Certified to CyberEssentials+, ISO9001, ISO27001
- All our software belongs to us
- 3rd party integration via API
- Lone Worker App
- Geo Location and Tracking
- Risk assessments via the app ●

Eight years ago, CheckedSafe was an idea, that today, has flourished into a fully successful business. Gary and Darran are passionate about what they do and provide a skill set that boasts professionalism and expertise.

*If you would like to find out any further information, please visit: www.checkedsafe.com
T: 01282 908429 | info@checkedsafe.com*

Paperless defect reporting and fleet maintenance all for £1 per vehicle, per week

Try free for 30 days
checkedsafe.com



Ask us about our new License Check service



Fleet Innovation of the Year 2022



Innovative Business of the Year 2022



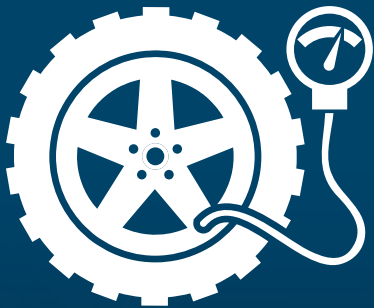
Transport Supplier of the Year 2019

EASY REFERENCE GUIDE

CAR TYRES

CAR TYRES ARE ESSENTIAL FOR KEEPING YOU AND YOUR PASSENGERS SAFE ON THE ROAD. **THE DRIVER** IS RESPONSIBLE FOR TYRE CONDITION.

CHECK YOUR TYRES AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH



AIR PRESSURE

Check your tyres are at the manufacturer's recommended pressure. This may be in the door shut, fuel filler cap or owner's manual



CONDITION

Remove any stones or objects from the tyre's tread. If you spot lumps, bumps or cuts, get your tyres checked by a professional.



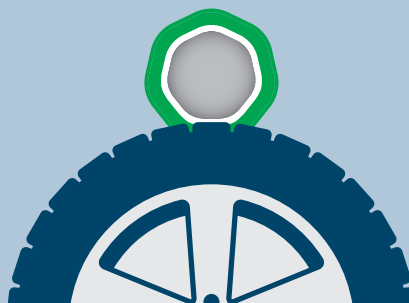
TREAD

The UK legal minimum tread depth is 1.6mm across the central three quarters of the tread. Check you're safe with the 20p test below.



Simply place a **20p coin** into the main tread grooves of your tyres.

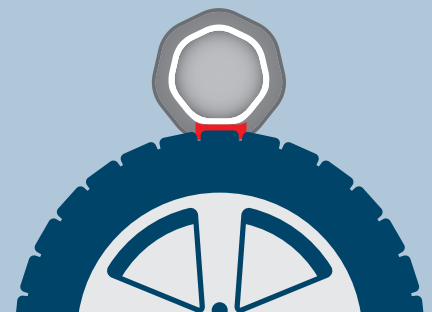
Check at least three locations around each tyre.



If the outer rim of the coin is obscured

Your tread depth is above the legal limit.

Stay safe by checking your tyres at least once a month.



If the outer rim of the coin is **VISIBLE**

Your tyres may be illegal and unsafe.

Get them checked immediately by a tyre professional.

The Brain, Cognitive Distraction and Bridge Strikes

Dr Lisa Dorn

CPsychol CErgHF AFBPS FCIEHF FHEA
 Founder, PsyDrive



The Nonconscious Brain

Humans have thrived on our planet, primarily because we are able to adapt so well to our environment. As we adapt to our environment we learn through trial and error, and so human error is part of the human condition. Whilst most errors are innocuous, the mistakes we make behind the wheel of a vehicle can be lethal. For example, a truck driver may fail to see their approach to a low bridge, and even though they are aware of the height of their vehicle, ploughs through the bridge regardless. Instances of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) and buses hitting bridges in the UK have led to death and injury, and massively disrupted road and rail travel and infrastructure. Despite many signage interventions and even in-vehicle warning systems, bridge strikes continue to take place on a regular basis. We need to understand what's going on in the nonconscious brain to determine how and why bridge strikes happen, so that interventions can be designed to manage the risk.

Basic Neuroanatomy

To date, there has been little attention given to analysing the human error associated with the nonconscious brain that can lead to bridge strikes. A Human Factors specialist might ask: 'What's happening in the brain that might lead

to cognitive distraction? Why do drivers fail to process warning signs and the presence of an impending low bridge?' To understand human error leading to a bridge strike, first, we need to understand how the brain is wired.

As the human species has evolved, so have our brains. The reptilian brain governs our basic instincts and urges, and the later mammalian brain controls our emotions and gut feelings. Today, we have a well-developed rational brain that controls our thinking and planning. The frontal lobe part of the cerebral cortex governs our capacity to plan, organise, initiate, self-monitor and control our responses. The brain operates at different 'processing speeds' like a computer and these are called brain waves. There are 5 different bands that carry information around the brain, categorised in two ways:

- **Delta, Theta, and Alpha** brain waves are "slow" – when activated, the brain is in a more relaxed or quiet state.
- **Beta, High Beta and Gamma** brainwaves are "fast." When they are dominant, the brain is active and engaged.

Beta is dominant for primarily cognitive activities like driving, high beta is dominant when we are under stress and Gamma waves are predominant

when we are anxious. How much our brain is activated and in what regions has important implications for cognitive distraction when driving for work.

Stress and Distraction

In an industry with a shortage of skilled drivers and low profit margins, there may be excessive demands on drivers, who may have little control over the ability to make decisions to cope with the demands of the job. Increased workload has been associated with increased exhaustion and difficulties in unwinding after work. Organisational culture and management practices can increase stress, adding to feeling overwhelmed at work. Safety climate significantly predicts traffic violations, driver error and driving while distracted.

As well as a high workload, drivers can feel stressed whilst driving for other reasons. Firstly, operating trucks in built-up areas and manoeuvring a large vehicle is high on cognitive workload. Drivers may also feel stressed due to problems in their personal life. This could spill over into their working life. Drivers going through a significant life change, such as a terminal diagnosis of a loved one or other major life stressors, like divorce or financial hardships, are especially prone to mind wandering. For survival reasons, we are wired to prioritise emotions over

any other task and our mind may be in a completely different place whilst we're driving.

These various sources of stress can lead to lapses in processing traffic and road-related information as attention is re-directed towards processing emotions. Drivers may be looking but failing to 'see' the bridge as their mind's eye is focused on stressful events and feelings.

Amygdala Hijack

The way our brain works can help to explain why stressful emotions can lead to cognitive distraction. The amygdala is two small kidney-bean structures, and they are responsible for processing emotions. During stress, beta sends messages to the amygdala and hijacks the brain's resources to process emotions. The brain produces high beta making brainwaves fast and active for fight or flight. The amygdala hijacks attentional and perceptual resources away from the planning executed by the frontal lobe. The brain has evolved to prioritise information bombarding the senses, it must decide what to filter in or out. If something is going on in a driver's life or at work that's stressful, energy will be diverted towards whatever feels more threatening.

Employers are often mystified about the behaviour of professional drivers in large vehicles that head straight into a low bridge despite multiple advance road sign warnings and high visibility signs on the bridge itself. However, driving on autopilot can occur when attention is re-directed towards processing emotions and the mind can wander away from processing safety-relevant information.

Researching Driver Behaviour

Travis Perkins plc is the UK's largest distributor of building materials and a leading partner to the construction industry. With one of the largest fleets in the UK and a driver base of around

3,000, drivers are at the forefront of the Travis Perkins plc business. They deliver building materials to customers across all segments of construction and are often required to drive specialist vehicle types including LCVs and HGVs.

As part of the Group's commitment to continuous improvement, the business decided to commission a study which involved a comprehensive literature review of existing research and took into consideration studies in other industries, such as aviation, blue light (emergency services), marine, military and the rail industry to review their learnings and adapt them for use with the Travis Perkins plc's fleet, and potentially also with a wider driver community to improve safety.

The two-year research project concluded that without practice, people experience skill decay, and cognitive skills like decision-making are particularly vulnerable. This has implications for safety when driving for work.

Key findings from the study were first presented at the recent Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) Annual Safety Forum Conference, in the company of CILT patron, Her Royal Highness Princess Royal, and other distinguished guests, where Karl Wilshaw, who is Travis Perkins plc's Policy and Engineering Fleet Director, explained: *"We will use these findings to guide our driver strategy; informing areas, such as policies, intervention, training, recruitment and wellbeing. Nothing is more important to us than safety, and so as members of several key transport forums, and the leading partner to the construction industry, we will also consider how we can share these learnings more widely, to breed best practice and encourage a cultural shift where drivers feel able to come forward to discuss any life challenges they may be going through, and promote more regular training beyond compliance requirements."*

PsyDrive's Proposed Next Steps

To manage distractions at work, employers should consider a thorough review of policies and procedures to manage workload.

Care must also be taken to identify those drivers undergoing significant stress factors in their personal lives and provide support.

A Human Factors analysis can address mind-wandering and driving on autopilot and provide new ways of tackling the problem.

Cognitive skills training can increase alertness and awareness levels to monitor both the external environment and the internal one.

Self-regulation of attention involves a deliberate, focused awareness of one's moment-to-moment experiences comprising the ability to:

1. **anchor** attention to objects for prolonged periods (i.e. sustained attention);
2. **intentionally** switch attention between objects or mental sets (i.e. switching)
3. **suppress** secondary elaborative processing of thoughts, feelings, and sensations (i.e. cognitive inhibition).

These attributes of attention are necessary for driving large vehicles in built-up areas in which vigilance, rapid and frequent switching of attention, and avoiding distraction is essential.

Cognitive skills training can buffer individuals against the negative consequences of stress, increasing emotion regulation and metacognitive awareness. Studies have shown how this approach develops a more adaptive rather than reactive approach to driving and increases situational awareness. ●

About Travis Perkins plc

Travis Perkins plc is a leading partner to the construction industry and the UK's leading distributor of building materials to trade customers. The Group operates market leading businesses, including Travis Perkins Builders' Merchants, Toolstation and a number of specialists in the civils market (Keyline), heating and ventilation (BSS) and drylining and insulation (CCF), and many more. The Group employs nearly 20,000 colleagues across the UK, but also in France and Benelux through Toolstation. The company has a proud heritage that spans over 200 years.

For more information, please visit: www.travisperkinsplc.co.uk

About PsyDrive

PsyDrive is a specialist provider of accredited training for road safety professionals, research, assessment, and interventions for improved road safety. PsyDrive has developed a new approach to training the nonconscious brain, by enhancing perceptual awareness while building a structured mental framework to better process sensory information.

For more information, please visit: www.psydrivegroup.com



Fleet Technology predictions for 2024

Next year promises to be another big year for technology innovation, so in this issue of Essential Fleet Manager we are highlighting some of the excellent advice that the leading suppliers within the industry are giving, about what the sector can expect from the year ahead and what this may mean for essential fleet operators.

From improvements in road safety to helping to reduce rising insurance premiums, technology is at the heart of all aspects of fleet management and should be embraced and utilised, not only to improve efficiency, but safety and compliance.



Driving road safety improvement with AI camera innovation

Sam Footer, Partnership Director, SureCam

With documented road deaths involving commercial vehicles on the rise and changes to the Direct Vision Standards (DVS) requirements planned, 2024 is going to see the acceleration in the development and adoption of AI-powered camera systems. Drivers need more support than ever in the cab to ensure they are aware of nearby and at-risk road users. The evolution of AI is making it entirely possible for the latest cameras to effectively eliminate blind spots, avoid false alerts and protect vulnerable road users such as cyclists and pedestrians. We should also see advances in AI video telematics next year that will help fleets better combat illegal and dangerous mobile phone use while driving.



For more information visit: <https://surecam.com/>



Automating driver communication and engagement

Steve Thomas, Managing Director, Inseego UK

There are some exciting developments around automated driver communication, which will reduce the burden on fleet managers. Ultimately, telematics is about altering behaviour, but historically this has been the responsibility of the fleet manager to use performance data to directly engage with the driver. From their perspective, the amount of data can become overwhelming, so the next step is to have a system that analyses all the available vehicle and driver information and automatically take steps to encourage change. This is already happening around driver behaviour monitoring and training, but moving forward we will see the technology handle other aspects of fleet management including compliance, vehicle usage, and working hours to take on much more of the hard work.



For more information visit: <https://inseego.com/>



Developing driver risk strategy to become proactive not reactive

Nigel Lawrence, Director of Client Partnerships, Applied Driving

Technology is playing a crucial role in providing organisations with valuable data to identify potential driving risks. Taking telematics and cameras as examples, the emphasis is often placed on key metrics such as excess speed and harsh driving events, with support and training typically offered to those displaying risky behaviours. However, the true potential of leveraging this data lies in going beyond individual incidents and examining broader patterns. We will increasingly see a shift towards a proactive approach – underpinned by advances in technology – where fleets can identify underlying issues and implement targeted measures to minimise the occurrence of incidents. This will become central to an effective driver risk strategy.



For more information visit: <https://www.applied-driving.com/>



Driver protection inside and outside the vehicle

Naz Dossa, CEO, Peoplesafe

Attention is often placed on the value of protecting the vehicle and the load, but more needs to be done to support the person behind the wheel. Incidents of aggression, road rage and hijacking have increased due, in part, to the heightened levels of stress caused by macroeconomics. With this unlikely to significantly change in the short-term, we are expecting to see greater integration of lone working technology with complementary fleet management systems to ensure drivers feel safe when they are both on the road and outside the vehicle. The added functionality will help fleet managers to develop processes and policies that deliver a culture that prioritises people safety and encourages hazard reporting, enabling proactive action to be taken.



For more information visit: <https://peoplesafe.co.uk/>



Smoothing the transition to electric vehicles

Barry Monks, Sales Director, The Miles Consultancy Limited

The switch to electric vehicles (EV) will continue apace as organisations increasingly prioritise sustainability and decarbonisation. While improving vehicle range and charging infrastructure expansion will support uptake, there is a growing realisation amongst fleets that there are other considerations that need to be addressed to allow a smooth transition to EVs. How employees are reimbursed, for example, represents a major challenge, with so many cost variables and differing driver profiles. There is no silver bullet, or a one size fits all solution as yet, even without the impact of regulatory uncertainty, but we will see increasing collaboration within the marketplace to drive change and help fleets transition to electric with confidence.



For more information visit: <https://themilesconsultancy.com/>



Harnessing the power of fleet data with unified and cloud software

Jason Laight, COO, Pocket Box

The fleet management software sector is poised for significant changes in 2024, with a focus on driver and fleet compliance, decarbonisation, road safety and streamlined operations. We will see a continued move towards a unified software ecosystem, minimising the need for multiple management platforms and using cloud-based technology to bring together data from numerous driver, vehicle and fleet related sources. This consolidation will help reduce the complexity associated with day-to-day fleet management and deliver valuable insights that support data-driven, strategic decision-making and optimised performance.



For more information visit: <https://pocketbox.co.uk/>



Rise of insurance claims costs will require fleets to improve safety

Ben Allen, Senior Customer Success Manager, Flock

In the face of rising insurance premiums forecasted for 2024, fleets are increasingly seeking innovative insurance products that offer more than just coverage. The market predicts a shift towards insurance models that leverage real-time data to offer personalised premiums, reflecting the actual risk profile and incentivising safer driving behaviour. With factors like global economic pressures, supply chain disruptions, and increased repair costs influencing rates, these data-driven insurance solutions will be crucial in managing expenses. Such products, which reward fleets for their safety records with premium reductions, align financial incentives with safety outcomes, thus providing a dual benefit: enhanced road safety and controlled insurance costs. This approach not only promises a proactive stance in risk mitigation but also ensures that insurance costs reflect the true risk, rather than a one-size-fits-all rate.



For more information visit: <https://flockcover.com/>



Venson arms fleet managers with insight to help them keep pace with autonomous driving technology

New free white paper empowers fleet teams to drive the next company vehicle advancement

With incredible new technologies now very close to being market-ready, and the legislative framework taking shape, Venson Automotive Solutions is urging fleet managers to future-proof the sector just as it is currently with electric vehicles. Its latest free white paper - The Journey Towards Full Driving Automation – aims to aid businesses in keeping track of Connected Autonomous Mobility (CAM) developments and ultimately, recognise that the self-driving revolution is already here.

“CAM will have a significant impact on fleet managers and only by horizon-scanning, adapting and developing the fleet management role will UK businesses and vulnerable road users be able to benefit from it,” said Simon Staton, Client Management Director at Venson Automotive Solutions.

“Just as the fleet industry is taking the reins and steering electrification in the UK, the importance of the fleet manager cannot be understated as we journey towards full

driving automation. As fleets juggle lagging service, maintenance and repair (SMR) and elastic lead times on new vehicles though, CAM may seem too far into the future. However, driving learning and CPD on CAM is fundamentally important to our ability to steer development of the fleet function,” continues Simon Staton. *“Whether it is keeping tabs on UK self-driving regulation, the impact of CAM on the Highway Code or how connectivity, already enabling remote diagnostics, will empower prognostics - the ability to fix things before they go wrong, it is up to us as a sector to keep one step ahead.”*

With human error being the causal factor in 90-95% of all road traffic accidents, vehicle manufacturers and UK Government are keen to bring the safety element of CAM front and centre. Yet along with promise of an improved environment for vulnerable road users, decreased traffic volumes, improved safety and more shared mobility, come a number of hurdles for those responsible for mobility within organisations.

Indeed, on-going consultation on self-driving regulation by the Law Commission outlines a new Automated Vehicle Act with totally new language and driver concepts which will have a direct impact on fleets. These concepts range from an ‘Authorised Self-Driving Entity’ (ASDE) – the manufacturer or developer that puts the vehicle forward for authorisation and takes responsibility for its actions, to ‘No User-in-Charge’ (NUIC). To obtain a NUIC operator licence fleet managers of passenger service and freight companies will need to meet certain requirements including ‘be of good repute’, and ‘have appropriate

financial standing’.

Along with a new administrative framework, the C in CAM, Connectivity, will also bring significant benefits. Connected vehicles will offer massive safety and efficiency improvements, for example, by warning about stopped vehicles, or advising on speed to get through traffic lights on green. The benefits of keeping up to date with such technology and the time and money saving knock-on effects are clear.

When it comes to insurance, if autonomous vehicles deliver on their promise, they will significantly reduce risk, however, as technology progresses a question mark remains as to what point liability is attached to the vehicle rather than the driver. With some models likely to have the self-driving technology as ‘optional’, or as a ‘connected update’, it would be possible to change a vehicle’s capabilities in real-time. So, it will be imperative that fleet managers and drivers have a full and clear understanding of the vehicle’s limitations before and after an update.

Simon Staton concludes, *“There has been much talk about the dawn of fully autonomous vehicles. However, many of the vehicles we drive today already encompass this technology, Safe self-driving will change the world for the better and fleet operators will be in the vanguard, taking on vital new responsibilities and reaping the commercial benefits. For this to be the case though, we must keep pace with the developing technology, so we can help steer the changing role of fleet management into the future.”* ●

For more information visit: www.venson.com/white-papers/



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Activa supports Peel Ports with its sustainability goals

Peel Ports, the second largest port group in the UK, is taking a significant step towards environmental sustainability with the recent acquisition of four cutting-edge electric pickup trucks, supplied through its leasing partner, the Contract Hire specialist Activa.

This investment underscores Peel Ports's commitment to reducing its carbon footprint and embracing eco-friendly solutions in its day-to-day operations.

The four Police electric pickup trucks, Maxus P90's, are an addition to the port's security in conjunction with the police and represent a pivotal shift in Peel Ports's vehicle fleet strategy. These eco-friendly Police vehicles offer numerous advantages, including reduced emissions and lower operating costs.

Activa offers industry leading fleet management services allowing customers to fully rely on its highly experienced support teams and range of services including telematics, rapid provision of cars and breakdown cover.

"We are thrilled to announce our latest investment in electric vehicles," said Malcolm Oliver White – Group Head of Asset Management at Peel Ports. He added, "These Police vehicles align perfectly with our environmental responsibility goals and demonstrates our commitment to a more sustainable future. We believe that by integrating the police electric pickup trucks into our fleet, we can set an example for others in our industry and contribute to a cleaner environment."



Key features of the newly acquired police electric pickup trucks include:

Impressive driving range on a single charge, ensuring that Peel Ports Police can meet its operational needs without compromising productivity.

Rapid charging capability, reducing downtime and maximising efficiency.

Advanced safety features, including collision avoidance and driver assistance systems, ensuring the well-being of its valued employees.

Sales Resources Manager, Russell Horscroft at Activa commented, *"We are delighted to be able to support Peel Ports, knowing these vehicles we have supplied are part of a larger sustainability initiative reinforces our commitment to the business and we look forward to taking on more vehicles and running the account for Peel Ports."*

Peel Ports looks forward to reaping the environmental and economic benefits of

its investment in electric vehicles, setting an example for other companies in the sector and beyond.

"The Port of Liverpool Police are pleased to be taking possession of 4 new fully electric, police liveried Maxus pickup trucks, the first police service in the UK to do so. In addition, we fully support the aims and environmental goals of Peel Ports and are confident that the vehicles will enhance our work to ensure the port remains a safe and secure environment."

Martin Humphreys, Chief Officer, Port of Liverpool Police. ●

Have a **safe TRIP**

National Highways has launched a road safety campaign to help road users to stay safe on the UK road network this autumn and winter. The campaign includes tips for drivers on how to prepare for long journeys during holiday periods.

Drivers are being encouraged to plan their journey in advance. This includes ensuring all necessary vehicle checks are conducted, as well as factoring in rest stops before they set off on any long journey.

The **TRIP** elements of the campaign are:

- **Top up** – fuel/battery, oil, and screen wash
- **Rest** – plan your rest stops every two hours
- **Inspect** – tyre pressure and tread
- **Prepare** – for all weather conditions.

TRIP Resources and more information on the National Highways website. ●

For more information visit: <https://nationalhighways.co.uk/road-safety/trip/>

CTS Hire granted O licence for vehicle delivery & collection service

Municipal vehicle rental company CTS Hire has been granted an Operator's Licence by the Traffic Commissioners Office and has already invested in a new tractor unit to extend its vehicle delivery and collection services.

Until now CTS Hire has required two drivers to deliver or collect its rental vehicles. The new service will enable the company to increase capacity as well as schedule deliveries and collections more efficiently.

The new service will also benefit CTS Hire's parent company, contract hire and fleet management providers Specialist Fleet Services Ltd (SFS), by supporting the delivery of replacement vehicles to customers and the collection of end-of-life vehicles.

CTS Hire is based in South Gloucestershire close to the M5 and the company's extensive fleet includes 3.5t-26t Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCV), specialist recycling vehicles, caged tippers, and hook loaders all available for short to long-term hire.



"As an owner-operator we can expand our capabilities and provide a more efficient service to our customers. Not only can we deliver refuse vehicles more quickly we can support our nationwide mobile engineer network by transporting vehicles in need of maintenance or mechanical work to one of our depots."

Bob Sweetland, Managing Director, CTS ●

For more information about CTS Hire: Tel: 01453 511 050; email info@ctshire.co.uk; visit www.ctshire.co.uk.

Leicester City Council has become the latest UK local authority to join the ECO Stars Fleet Recognition Scheme

The voluntary scheme encourages and supports operators of HGVs, buses and vans to run their fleets more efficiently and help improve air quality.

The city council has teamed up with international transport consultancy TRL to encourage more local fleet operators to sign up to the scheme. Funding for Leicester's ECO Stars scheme comes from the Government's Joint Air Quality Unit and joining is free of charge.

By signing up, organisations will receive an expert appraisal of their fleet along with practical advice about

how to improve efficiency and cut fuel consumption.

So far, over 30 local fleet operators have joined the city council in signing up to Leicester's ECO Stars scheme.

Samworth Brothers are one of the organisations who have already signed up to ECO Stars, and are in the process of converting vehicles to become more fuel efficient and environmentally friendly.

Paul Marrow, Samworth Brothers Supply Chain Operations Director said: *"This scheme has been of great use for Samworths. We are doing our bit for the city by lowering the emissions our vehicles produce and are grateful of the support ECO Stars has offered our organisation."*

Deputy city mayor Cllr Adam Clarke, who leads on climate, economy and culture, said: *"We're pleased to be bringing ECO Stars to Leicester. The scheme offers practical help and advice to local fleet operators on how to operate more efficiently and reduce fuel consumption. This can help local business bring down their running costs and do their bit to cut emissions and help improve air quality."*

"We've had a really good response from local operators so far, but we want to make sure as many local operators as possible have the chance to benefit from this free, voluntary scheme."

Leicester City Council is following industry best practice by managing its own fleet for efficiency and safety, and is adopting a move to electric vehicles where possible as part of its overall renewal programme.

Jim Chappell, fleet efficiency principal consultant at TRL, said: *"For over 10 years the ECO Stars scheme has provided commercial vehicle operators with individually tailored practical help to reduce their emissions through the sharing of industry best practice and providing independent advice on new technologies. TRL is delighted to role the scheme out in Leicester as part of the city's actions to improve air quality, reduce carbon emissions and improve the quality of life for local residents."* ●



To find out more about Leicester's ECO Stars scheme, visit: www.ecostars-uk.com

Tracker applauds new laws that will clamp down on tech-savvy car thieves

Government calls time on criminals by combating keyless compromise of vehicles

As a longstanding campaigner against the sale of readily-available technology exploited by thieves to compromise vehicle security, stolen vehicle recovery expert Tracker Network U.K. Limited, hails a proposed new law to combat the problem.

Overall, 93% of all stolen vehicles recovered by Tracker in 2022 had been taken without the key present. King Charles III announced in the State Opening of Parliament speech, Government plans to make it a criminal offence to possess, make, modify, supply or import technology used to steal cars with a maximum jail sentence of five years. This includes devices that intercept keyless car fob signals and tools that jam GPS tracking technology.

Relay attack is an extremely common keyless car theft technique. This is when two criminals work together using an electronic relay to intercept a short-range key fob signal, usually when the key fob is within the victim's home. Another relatively new method is the hacking of a vehicle's CAN bus or circuit board to disable locking and alarm systems. Both methods enable thieves to gain entry to a vehicle and drive off within seconds. GPS jammers are also frequently utilised by thieves. These inexpensive devices are used to disrupt signals to and from GPS satellite devices, essentially allowing a stolen and tracked vehicle to disappear off the radar. Thankfully, Tracker's unique VHF with GPS/GSM technology makes its stolen vehicle recovery units immune to GPS jamming.

Tracker is the only stolen vehicle recovery expert that works in partnership with every police force across the U.K. to assist in the unrelenting battle against organised vehicle theft rings. As an exclusive partner to the police, Tracker supported the National Police Chiefs'



Council's (NPCC) announcement earlier this year that it was working with the Home Office to identify ways in which legislation can stop the sale of devices that are assisting thieves to make keyless thefts. The new law outlined in the King's Speech recognises the collective voices and concerns of the U.K.'s motorists and law enforcers.

Working like an electronic homing device, Tracker's stolen vehicle recovery devices boast a covert transmitter hidden in

vehicle, with no visible aerial. With a 95% success rate of recovering stolen vehicles, Tracker is the best defence against determined thieves.

Plan for the worst: Take car security measures to protect your car from being stolen in the first place, such as installing security lighting where you park your car and using a steering wheel lock. If criminals find a way to steal your car, having a vehicle tracker fitted can help the authorities to recover your vehicle.

Tracker's top tips for vehicle security

Protect your key fob: Keyless car theft works through a relay-style electronic device tricking your key fob signal into thinking the key is near to the car and then the device can assume all key fob power. To prevent this, keep the key – and the spare too – away from where the vehicle is kept when not in use, and block the signal by keeping the key fob in a closed tin or Faraday bag.

- **Switch off and lock up:** Never leave your car running idle and unattended, even when defrosting windscreens and windows on a cold morning.
- **Make life difficult:** Fit security posts or a substantial gate if parking on your drive, physical barriers will make thieves think twice.
- **Don't advertise your stuff:** Never leave your belongings on show, lock them in the boot or take them with you.
- **Keep paperwork indoors** – Don't store car documents or spare keys inside the car as it makes it easier for thieves to sell it on.

For more information visit: www.Tracker.co.uk



Fleets need to work with Insurers on Electric Vehicles

Fleets and insurers need to collaborate to ensure the degree of risk surrounding electric vehicles (EVs) is understood, says the Association of Fleet Professionals.

The industry body says that evidence from its members indicates that some insurers have recently been increasing premiums for EVs, based on what appears to be incorrect and, in some instances, irrelevant information.

Paul Hollick, chair, explained: "We're hearing of issues in certain areas. The first is the repair data that insurers employ to calculate premiums. Many are using information based entirely on experience with Teslas and applying this across the board to all EVs, even to vans.

"Clearly, this is problematic. The repair profile of Teslas is applicable only to Teslas, in the same way as any other manufacturer, and has very little relevance to commercial vehicles. Fleets and insurers need to be working together to create a situation where premiums can be calculated based on much better and directly applicable data."

A second issue, he said, was that insurers seemed unsure of the value of an EV that had been written off in an accident.

"This is especially the case where the battery may have been damaged as part of the write-off. Some insurers seem to be working on the incorrect basis that the battery has no market worth. Again, this needs to be included in the maths behind premiums."

Finally, there appeared to be an undue amount of worry about the possibility of EV fires and the potential for damage to then spread beyond the vehicle itself to other cars and vans, as well as surrounding property.

"EV fires, when they occur, are a serious

issue, but experience so far shows that they are very rare – substantially less likely than fires in ICE vehicles – and we are unaware of cases where there has been a fire and a significant amount of harm has been caused in the immediate vicinity. The risk is just not that high."

Paul said that the AFP was keen to work with insurers to share their experience of EV operation and provide the information needed to calculate more precise premiums.

"At this point, it's very much about opening a dialogue that will probably continue over some time. We understand that insurers want to be conservative when it comes to new technology and that this approach applies to EVs but we also believe that fleets are in a position to provide the operational evidence to show that the risks and costs associated with EVs are much lower than many appear to believe." ●

We have been reporting on the increase in keyless car thefts for many years, but more so recently as the frequency has been accelerating at an alarming rate. In the first half of this year, we recovered nearly 40% more stolen cars than in the same period in 2022, with almost every vehicle having been taken without the criminals having possession of the car keys. It's fair to say that keyless car theft is now an everyday occurrence, with thieves using multiple means to overcome the very technology meant to protect vehicles from being stolen.

"This is because the tools used to do this have become incredibly easy to obtain and can be operated by even the most inexperienced thieves. Robust laws that crack down on people supplying and buying these devices is long overdue. If this new legislation makes it harder for thieves to get hold of the technology in the first place and sees those caught possessing them being given a jail sentence, it should go a significant way in tackling the problem."

Mark Rose, Managing Director of Tracker. ●



Association of
Fleet Professionals

For more information visit: <https://www.bvrla.co.uk/>

Fleet electrification: how biographite can secure the World's clean transport future

By: *Ivan Williams, CEO at CarbonScape*

More and more fleets around the world are making the switch to electric vehicles (EVs) due to their excellent performance, lower carbon emissions, and tax incentives. In fact, the SMMT reported that in September 2023, growing demand for Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) in the UK was being driven entirely by fleet purchases.

As EV uptake accelerates around the globe, we're seeing industry turn its attention toward one key component of our transition to clean transport in particular: the battery.

Every lithium-ion battery has a cathode and anode (the negative and positive sides respectively). EVs are propelled by the electrochemical reactions that take place as electrons move from one side to the other. Comprising up to 50% of a battery's weight, graphite is of tantamount importance, which is why it has been defined as a critical raw material by both the European Commission and the US government.

Experts have long expressed concerns over the critical material supply chains that the modern-day EV boom is dependent on. These concerns are finally beginning to receive the attention they deserve as the world's top producer and exporter of this critical material (China) recently announced plans to restrict graphite supply.

The challenge

If EV manufacturers cannot obtain critical raw materials like graphite, current procurement challenges will pale in comparison to future roadblocks, and countries will be unable to transition to clean transport.

Graphite's supply chain risks can be broken down into the following categories:

1. Supply
2. Geopolitical issues
3. Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) concerns
4. Price

Filling the rapidly growing supply gap

Overall, we have seen demand for graphite explode in recent years: there is a forecasted shortfall of 777,000 tonnes by 2030. It's clear that we're going to need immediate solutions, and innovative new materials to bridge this gap.

As a carbon-negative alternative to this critical material, biographite represents a solution to this challenge. Produced from forestry by-products such as wood chips, it can be created almost anywhere there is a forestry industry, and production can then be rapidly scaled to meet demand – securing graphite supply chains using low-cost, sustainable, and readily available local feedstocks.

CarbonScape's research has shown that, as we achieve scale, we could effectively produce enough biographite to fulfil over half the projected global demand for graphite for lithium-ion batteries by using less than 5% of the forestry industry's annual by-products



in Europe and North America.

Geopolitical tensions

China currently produces over 90% of the world's graphite anodes for lithium-ion batteries and has recently announced export controls – so countries need alternative sources now.

Because it can be produced anywhere with a forestry industry, biographite represents an opportunity for nations to onshore and localise production, delivering a host of wider economic benefits while securing supply.

As supply chains mature, OEMs and battery manufacturers will look to better control the supply of critical materials through vertical integration, that is, taking ownership of additional stages of their supply chains. The ability to produce biographite near battery production plants, will enable OEMs and battery manufacturers to further shorten supply chains, maximising the business potential of such efforts.

ESG concerns

Graphite procurement should raise concerns for anyone who cares about our planet or people. Mining for natural graphite often degrades landscapes and entails human rights abuses, while 'traditional' synthetic graphite production depends on fossil fuel-based feedstocks and involves highly polluting manufacturing processes.

Biographite, on the other hand, is created from a sustainable feedstock via a carbon-negative process, meaning every tonne produced is planet positive.

The price of electrification

Making electrification more affordable will accelerate fleet electrification. With batteries typically representing the most expensive part of an EV and given the cost of these batteries depend "to a very large extent on the price of the raw materials", deep-tech innovations like biographite represent huge opportunities to continue driving EV momentum while simultaneously delivering a climate positive impact for the world.

Produced at half the cost of traditional synthetic graphite – which is preferred by EV manufacturers, due to its higher performance characteristics – biographite enables the production of cheaper EVs, spurring on fleet electrification in the UK and beyond – supporting countries' net zero ambitions.

CarbonScape partnering for the future

CarbonScape remains open to working with additional strategic partners, such as cell and battery manufacturers, and EV manufacturers, to help secure supply chains while decarbonising production. ●

You can reach us at: www.carbonscape.com/contactus

Rightcharge unveils cutting-edge electric fuel card for seamless EV charging

Leading EV charging company, Rightcharge, is set to transform the landscape of fleet management with the launch of the UK's most comprehensive electric fuel card. Fleets will be able to manage their employees' electric vehicle charging at home, work and on the road with payments for all drivers bundled into a single bill. This cutting-edge solution is designed to simplify the transition to electric vehicles and save fleets over £1,000 per year per driver through integrated tariff intelligence.

Public charging payments

Fleet drivers will be able to tap a Rightcharge card and pay with company funds at 30 different public charging networks, including Osprey, Shell Recharge and Ionity, thereby unlocking access to more than 34,000 public chargers. For comparison, the well-known Allstar One Electric card offers fleets access to around 13,000 chargers.

Home charging payments

Crucially, Fleet Managers can also pay for their employees' home charging so drivers are never out of pocket. Rightcharge makes payments directly to an employee's energy supplier to cover the electric vehicle charging portion of their bill, regardless of which energy supplier the employee is with. Importantly, this avoids the 'bill shock' problem, which employees experience when they have to pay up-front for home charging.

Furthermore, Rightcharge has overcome the EV-tariff problem for fleets. A common challenge to date has been that

fleets can't ask employees to switch to an EV-friendly home energy tariff because the significant EV charging savings often come with a slight increase in the cost of powering the home. To overcome this, Rightcharge splits the savings between the driver and the business, meaning fleets can now save over £1,000 per year per driver. Tariff comparison intelligence will be integrated to identify the best deals as well as Rightcharge's home and workplace charging point installation services.

Workplace charging

Drivers will also be able to tap the Rightcharge card on their workplace chargers so that Fleet Managers get a holistic view of every driver's charging.

Benefits for Fleet Managers and drivers

Rightcharge simplifies charging by eliminating the need to track and reconcile multiple receipts from various public charging providers and energy suppliers, saving time for both the business and drivers. Fleets get

access to cost and carbon analytics at a company-wide level, allowing businesses to seamlessly align their fleet with sustainability and budget objectives. To ensure a smooth process, Rightcharge assigns a dedicated account manager to support businesses throughout the process.

How does it work?

Fleet managers will be able to create an account on the Rightcharge website and invite their drivers to join. When the drivers sign up, they get access to a personalised portal. The fleet managers can then make monthly payments that cover all their drivers' charging expenses for home, public and workplace charging. For drivers who claim back via expenses, fleet managers can specify that payment comes from personal funds and Rightcharge exports simple receipts.

The waiting list is open now, with the launch planned for early 2024. Businesses will be onboarded on a first-come-first-served basis. ●

Fleets can find out more and pre-register here: www.rightcharge.co.uk/electric-fuel-card

GEM supports National Highway's blind spot campaign

Road safety and breakdown organisation GEM Motoring Assist is supporting National Highway's HGV blind spot safety campaign, which aims to improve safety when overtaking lorries

Lorry drivers have four areas of limited visibility, located at the front, rear and each side of their vehicle. Although a lorry's line-up of extra mirrors and sensors can vastly improve driver visibility, they cannot eliminate blind spots altogether.

This means a lorry driver won't know if someone is immediately behind and could easily miss an overtaking car driver in the blind spot below the cab.

A recent survey commissioned by National Highways showed that, while nearly three quarters of drivers said they take extra care when overtaking a lorry, 36 per cent said they did not know how many blind spots a HGV had.

If you decide to overtake...

Use GEM's HGV overtaking checklist:

- Know the lorry's 'zones' of limited visibility. Keep out of the driver's blind spots and position yourself so that you can be seen easily.
- Leave plenty of space between you and a lorry in front. The extra weight of a lorry means its stopping distances could be 50 per cent more than a car's.
- Lorries are restricted to 50mph on single carriageway roads and 60mph on motorways and dual carriageway,



so be patient and adjust your speed accordingly.

- If planning to overtake a lorry, consider that it will be several times longer than your car, so be absolutely sure you have enough time and space to complete the manoeuvre in safety. Drop back initially, for a better view ahead.
- When overtaking, avoid driving in a blind spot danger zone for longer than necessary.
- Be extra careful around left-hand drive trucks, as they have different blind spots which means their view of the road is even more limited.
- At the end of your overtaking manoeuvre, move left carefully.

Don't cut back in too suddenly as this could cause the lorry driver to brake hard. ●

"We all have a responsibility to use the roads safely. By understanding the difficulties faced by lorry drivers – particularly in terms of their restricted view of other vehicles – we can play our part in reducing collisions, improving safety for all."

James Luckhurst, Road Safety Adviser, GEM ●

Protection from conversion fraud

Over half a million vehicles have been found for sale online while already having live finance agreements in place.

Commonly known as 'Wrongful Conversion' or 'Conversion Fraud', the practice sees vehicles bought and sold when there is no legal grounding to do so.

The figures were uncovered by Auto Trader, who conducted vehicle provenance checks on vehicles advertised on its platform over the course of 12

months. The research spanned private and trade adverts and found over 600,000 vehicles – funded via 240 different lenders – that were fraudulently being sold while still in existing finance agreements. The small sample suggests a much higher number of fraudulent adverts are being placed across the UK.

Financial pressures and tough economic conditions – as the UK is currently experiencing – always correlate to fraud rising.

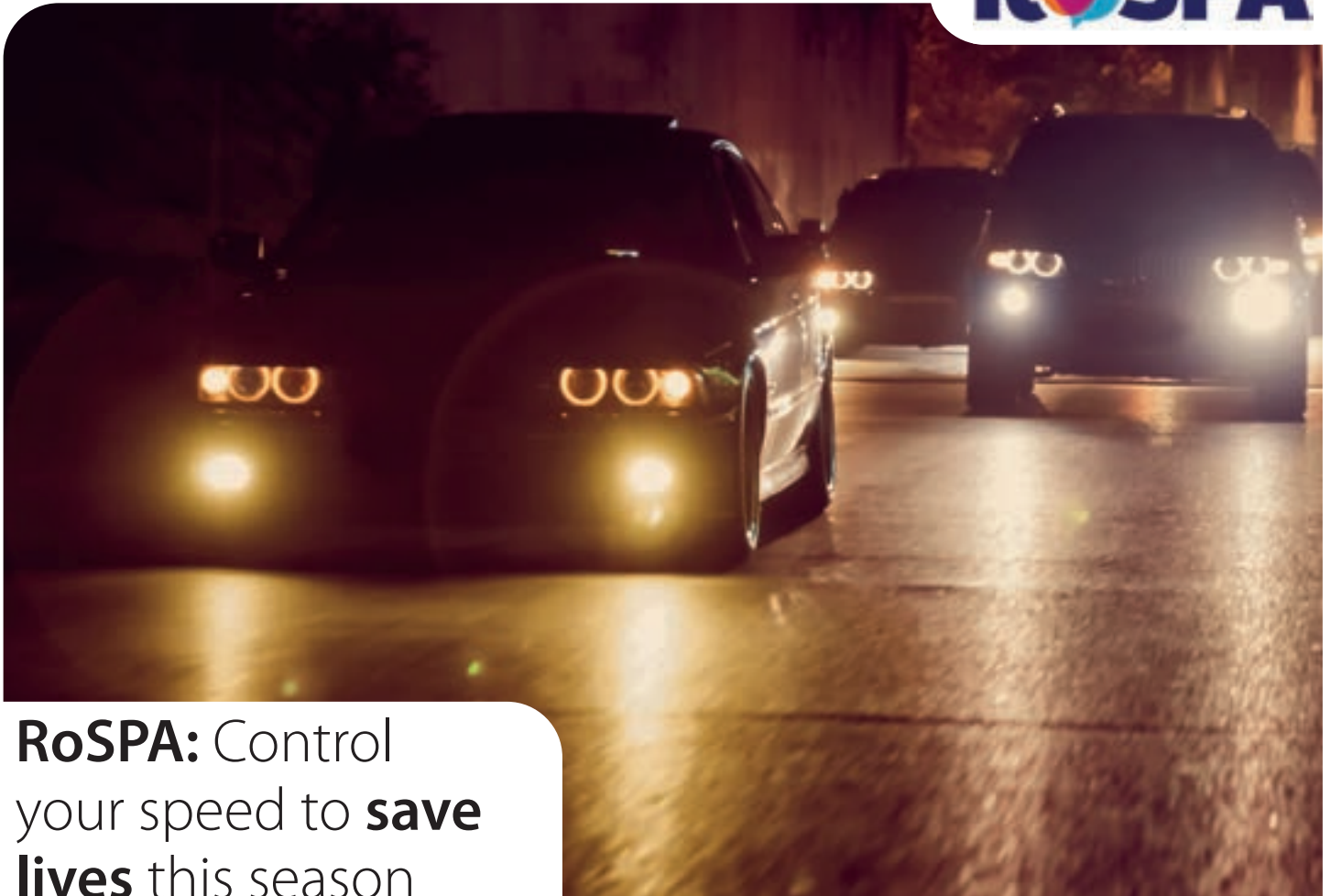
While most prevalent on vehicles under hire purchase agreements, BVRLA members are urged to take steps to protect themselves. Members could be at risk on both sides, either by customers

fraudulently selling member-owned vehicles or by purchasing used vehicles from illegitimate sellers.

Victims of conversion fraud typically face costly and time-consuming processes to repossess their vehicles. As with all fraud, prevention is always better than reaction.

As part of the research, Auto Trader is offering BVRLA members access to its free vehicle check service. The service enables checks to be conducted on member-operated vehicles that prevents them from being sold via the Auto Trader platform. ●





RoSPA: Control your speed to **save lives** this season

Reduce your speed to save lives, that's the message from The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) as we head into some of the darkest months of the year.

The most recent Department for Transport (DfT) data revealed that in 2022, there were around 40,000 people injured on our roads during hours of darkness. This included 8,780 people who were seriously injured, and 737 who sadly died.

RoSPA advises the following when driving in darker periods of the day:

- **Be prepared:** As the UK experiences shorter days and longer nights, it is crucial for motorists to adjust their driving habits. The decreased visibility during early mornings and evenings demands heightened caution. RoSPA urges drivers to use dipped headlights, ensure clean windshields, and to be extra cautious when navigating poorly lit roads.
- **Control your speed:** Darkness amplifies the risks associated with speeding. The lack of visibility, compounded by higher speeds, can lead to devastating collisions. The DfT reports that in 2022, exceeding the speed limit was deemed a contributory factor for 19% of all fatal collisions. In 9 per cent of fatal collisions, driving too fast for the conditions was deemed a contributory factor. RoSPA emphasises that adhering to speed limits and driving to the conditions is paramount, especially when daylight hours are limited.

"This time of year sees a worrying combination of darker skies and poor weather conditions, which can pose unique risks to motorists and pedestrians and cyclists – these risks are amplified if someone is speeding.

"Higher speeds mean that drivers have less time to identify and react to what is happening around them, and it takes longer for the vehicle to stop, removes the driver's safety margin and turns near misses into collisions.

"Driving at 30mph, vehicles are travelling at around three car lengths a second - one blink and the driver may fail to see the early warning brake lights; a short glance away and the movement of a child behind a parked car could be missed.

"With that in mind, and the poor visibility this season poses, it's clear to see the tragic consequences speeding could have."

"If you must travel in the dark, I suggest leaving ample time for the journey, ensuring you can travel within the speed limit, and maintain a safe distance behind other road users.

"As we age, our ability to adapt to changing light reduces, which impacts how we see colours and contrasts in low-light conditions. It also takes longer for the eyes to recover from glare – from one second at age 15, to nine seconds at 65."

Rebecca Guy, Road Safety Manager, RoSPA ●

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde green transport investment

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC) has taken a major step forward on its road to net zero, with the arrival of NHS Scotland's first fully electric 16.7-tonne truck and a full fleet of electric smart cars.

The truck – a Volvo FL Electric – is the first of its kind to be used by any health board in Scotland, and is one of two joining the NHSGGC fleet. Alongside the delivery of the 17 smart e-cars, it represents an investment of more than £760,000 in green transport, and marks a significant milestone in

the health board's commitment to sustainable transport.

The latest arrival of electric vehicles is part of a wider five-year Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy which was officially launched last month.

The strategy, which was endorsed by the Board of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde last month, sets out in detail its plans to tackle the climate emergency and its pathway towards net zero heat Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by 2038 and an overall position of net zero GHG emissions by 2040.

The strategy will be reviewed every five years so that it can evolve to reflect NHSGGC's progress and changing national and international priorities. It sets out a range of objectives covering all areas of national policy requirements, with a particular focus on five key areas – Transport Fleet Energy and Transport, Waste Management, Energy, Green Theatres Project, and Environmental Management.

"The delivery of these new e-vehicles is a great moment for NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. The e Volvo trucks will be used to transport laundry between our hospital sites and the health board's central laundry unit in Hillington, Glasgow, while the new smart cars will replace a range of existing pool cars that are used in a number of roles by our staff. The smart car comes with a range of 260 miles from full charge which will help of staff carry out community-based patient care in a zero emissions car. The significance of this latest procurement by NHSGGC cannot be underestimated and, as well as being a considerable financial investment, it represents a huge step forward in our sustainable transport goals."

Paul Reid, Head of Transport. ●




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Toyota bZ4X makes “blue light” debut with London parks police team

The Toyota bZ4X has taken on its first “blue light” public service role, joining the fleet of one of London’s busiest parks police teams.

The all-electric SUV proved the ideal choice as a response car for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the fully liveried vehicle is now patrolling more than 28 parks, open spaces and cemeteries and providing community support at events such as the Notting Hill Carnival.

The Toyota’s environmental credentials were a prime consideration, the bZ4X producing no tailpipe emissions from its battery electric powertrain. Previously, the parks police used a diesel-powered car. The bZ4X also met the size requirements for the job, being able to manoeuvre comfortably through gateways and along routes in the borough’s public parks and it has all the load space necessary to carry the team’s kit and equipment.

The police team has accessed the vehicle through Toyota’s KINTO Leasing and Vehicle Management

business. Its home base is Holland Park and it is used exclusively for operational purposes.

Councillor Emma Will, Lead Member for Parks and Leisure said: “We are committed to becoming a greener borough and being net zero as a Council by 2030 and the new car for Parks Police is another step in the right direction. All our vehicles in our parks are now electric and we’re looking to expand our fleet elsewhere. Toyota has worked closely with our Parks Police team to ensure we got exactly what we needed.”

“With its high quality, versatility and strong environmental credentials, we’re confident the bZ4X will prove its worth with the borough’s parks police and with many other public service fleet customers in the future.”

**Neil Broad, General Manager
Toyota One Fleet Services.**





Firefighters set to trial two new 999 response vehicles

West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) have added an IVECO and Mercedes to its operational fleet on a six month trial. They will be used by fire crews to respond to incidents and when they undertake fire prevention and protection work in their communities.

Crews based at Coventry, Highgate in Birmingham, and Walsall fire stations will take part in the trial.

It's part of WMFS's drive to ensure that its blended fleet remains as flexible and future-proof as possible.

The trial vehicles, both C1 class, will rotate between Walsall, Highgate and

Coventry and be tested alongside the stations' current vehicles. They can both carry crews of three and four, which mirrors current crewing levels at the stations.

They also carry more water and equipment than WMFS's existing BRVs, and offer alternative ways of stowing breathing apparatus equipment.

Firefighters' feedback will be captured throughout the six-month trial, before a full evaluation takes place and future fleet decisions are taken.

"Since 2013 we've operated 4x4 brigade response vehicles – BRVs – alongside our traditional fire engines. These two vehicles provide an opportunity to explore how we can further diversify our fleet and our responses to incidents.

"They will respond to 999 calls, such as road traffic collisions and fires. They will also be used by our firefighters when, for example, they're undertaking community safety work."

"The vehicles provide an opportunity to explore how we can further diversify our fleet and our responses to incidents"

Steve Ball, Area Manager, WMFS

G.Network boosts fleet with 100 Electric Vans from Maxus

G.Network, London's full fibre broadband provider, has purchased 100 commercial vehicles from Harris MAXUS.

100 per cent of the MAXUS vehicles purchased by G.Network are from MAXUS' EV range with 80 eDELIVER 3 and 20 eDELIVER 9 vehicles joining the G.Network fleet. The deal was struck through MAXUS dealership, HTC Van Centre.

Aaron Cartey, Fleet Manager at G.Network commented: "Every day, G.Network Field Engineers travel around the heart of London connecting homes and businesses to our



100% fibre network. It is our priority that we work safely and sustainably, so we are delighted to partner with MAXUS to bolster our fleet of electric vans. Our fleet is a key

part of our carbon reduction plan, which not only improves our business productivity, but the customer experience of the Londoners we serve." ●



Cutting-edge **hybrid cars** helping to improve London's air and provide **excellent patient care**

New hybrid cars are driving forward London Ambulance Service's ambition to provide care for patients using the greenest fleet of response vehicles anywhere in the country.

As well as being greener the 65 hybrid vehicles, which run on both petrol and an electric motor, come with modern features to help improve care for patients. These include the ability to charge medical equipment like defibrillators and suction units on the go, and motion sensors which remove the need for keys to open the boot to reach medical kit.

The new vehicles – a mixture of Volvo XC90s, XC60s and Ford Kugas – are part of the Service's £31 million investment programme which has already seen the roll out the biggest fully electric fleet of

fast response cars anywhere in the UK.

Daniel Elkeles, Chief Executive at London Ambulance Service (LAS), said:

"We're continuing to modernise our fleet and improve the health of Londoners with these new hybrid electric vehicles, which are better for the air in our city, our medics and our patients."

"We want to be a greener and more sustainable organisation and that's why we're scaling up our fleet of green and energy-efficient vehicles. We are making great progress on the road to zero emissions with value for money."

Of the new response cars, 51 will be used by clinical managers to get to incidents. The remaining 14 vehicles are being rolled out for advanced paramedics and Emergency Preparedness, Resilience

and Response teams (EPRR), who treat patients at major incidents and in dangerous environments.

Over the last few years, LAS has taken action to reduce the environmental impact of its operation and now has the largest fleet of fully-electric vehicles in the country, with a total of 42 fully-electric fast-response cars and three electric motorcycles.

In April, the Service started rolling out 128 new ambulances, which are greener and more efficient than the Service's current ambulances and meet the clean air zone targets in London.

All the fleet are part of the Service's efforts to comply with the ultra-low emission zone (ULEZ) in London and to reach its zero emission goal by 2030.

"Every second counts in an emergency and energy-efficient technology will make it even easier for our responders to reach patients faster whilst helping to make the capital a greener and healthier place for Londoners."

Greener vehicles are vital for our staff and communities and we have already invested £31 million to introduce brand new low-emission vehicles, create electric charging points, upgrade our infrastructure and recruit more mechanics to maintain these vehicles as part of our mission to move to a net-zero emissions fleet by 2030."

Rob Macintosh, Head of Fleet at LAS. ●

Altrad takes delivery of replacement LCV fleet

Altrad, the leading provider of support services, is beginning to receive its first replacement vehicles into its fleet following a substantial order of 150 light commercials (Ford Transits).

The company, in partnership with vehicle leasing partner ALD Automotive | LeasePlan UK (soon to be Ayvens), vehicle supplier Ford, and supplying dealer TrustFord, has made substantial moves in modernising its fleet with an order including:

- 50 x Transit Connect 240 L1 DCIV 1.5TDCi Leader
- 50 x Transit Connect 220 L1 1.5TDCi 100 Leader
- 30 x Transit Dropside 350 L4 C/C Pr/ Dp 2.0TDCi 130 FWD

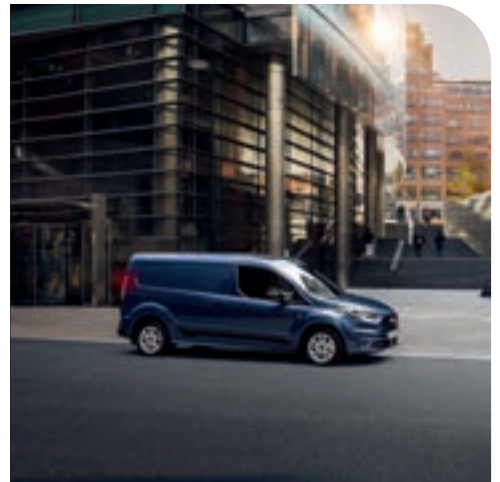
- 20 x Transit Dropside 350 L4 C/Db Pr/ Dp 2.0TDCi 130 RD

The new fleet of vehicles will play a vital role in supporting Altrad's diverse services by facilitating people, plant and materials movements, efficiently and sustainably.

Altrad took delivery of the first 75 Transit Connects in September 2023, with the remaining vehicle being delivered shortly thereafter.

Mark Wilkie, Fleet & Commercial Vehicle Director, TrustFord, added: *"We are proud to have been able to support Matt and his team at Altrad with this order. As well as vehicle supply, we look forward to supporting them with our fleet aftersales proposition, including our industry leading Mobile Service offering."*

Alfonso Martinez, Managing Director at ALD Automotive | LeasePlan UK, said: *"At ALD Automotive | LeasePlan UK, we're committed to supporting businesses across the UK in transitioning to cleaner fleet vehicles and embracing more sustainable business operations. Altrad Services is a long-standing partner, and we look forward to working closely with them during this exciting chapter as they modernise their fleet vehicles."*



About Altrad:

Altrad is an international group headquartered in France. Altrad is located in more than 50 countries, has over 60,000 talented people and in 2022, it had annual revenues of over €3.8 billion.

Altrad supports its clients in some of the most challenging environments, from offshore oil and gas installations exposed to weather extremes, to onshore petrochemical plants and nuclear facilities. Altrad support these assets 24 hours a day, every day.

Altrad's highly skilled teams provide a range of solutions, either individually or as part of multiskilled offering, to ensure our nation's vital assets, deliver the critical services upon which our modern, daily lives rely. ●

"It's great to continue our partnership with ALD | LeasePlan and TrustFord. The arrival of the new fleet will help us support our operational business to continue to deliver a first-class service for our clients."

Matt Hammond, Altrad Head of Fleet

Find out more at: uk.altradservices.com

Balfour Beatty secures funding to drive innovative hydrogen retrofit project

Back in September Balfour Beatty announced that it has become the first construction company to secure funding from the Scottish Government's Emerging Energies Technology Fund to retrofit carbon intensive vehicles to run off both hydrogen and diesel, also known as dual fuel.

As part of the innovative project, the Scottish Government has provided over £240,000 with Balfour Beatty match-funding the scheme. The funding will allow Balfour Beatty to retrofit two gritters and two operations and maintenance vehicles. Once retrofitted, the vehicles will

be trialled on the Connect Roads M77/ Glasgow Southern Orbital project.

The trial is expected to deliver a 40% reduction in carbon emissions from each of the four retrofitted vehicles, with the aim of providing a blueprint for the conversion of all Balfour Beatty owned fleet in the future.

The Connect Roads M77/GSO depot in East Renfrewshire will also become Scotland's first 'Hydrogen Construction Hub', where Balfour Beatty will facilitate quarterly sessions during the first year of the trial to allow customers, supply chain partners and other key stakeholders to hear about the progress and performance of the four retrofitted vehicles and see them in action.

Hector MacAulay MBE, Balfour Beatty Regional Managing Director of Scotland, said: *"Reducing emissions from plant on sites is a key challenge faced by the entire*

construction and infrastructure industry. It is a challenge that must be faced collectively if we are to drive down our emissions and play our part in reaching the Scottish Government's net zero by 2045 target.

"Whilst electric solutions are starting to enter the market, they are not yet a realistic option for heavy plant. Dual fuel represents an alternative solution, and we are looking forward to seeing the benefits that this trial will deliver, as we look to develop a practical solution for our industry, alongside the Scottish Government."

The hydrogen retrofit project will support the bold targets and ambitions set out in Balfour Beatty's sustainability strategy, Building New Futures, and is aligned to the company's recently published fuel hierarchy, which looks to educate people on the most appropriate, sustainable energy sources for plant, equipment, vehicles and buildings. ●

Wales' first-ever renewable biomethane refuelling station for HGVs opens, capable of cutting over 60,000 tonnes of CO2 every year

ReFuels N.V., one of Europe's leading suppliers of renewable biomethane (Bio-CNG) for the decarbonisation of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs), today announces the opening of its 13th low-carbon refuelling station – the first station of its kind to open in Wales.

The new site, with 12 pumps capable of refuelling over 500 HGVs daily and cutting over 60,000 tonnes of CO2 annually, makes low-carbon deliveries a reality for the hundreds of fleets travelling through North Wales every year.

HGVs account for 4.2% of UK carbon emissions, making the sector a key component of the UK's goal to achieve net zero by 2050. In Wales, transportation has been the slowest sector to cut pollution over the last 30 years[i] and is responsible for 15% of Wales' total emissions. The Freight Transport Association has long called for more public refuelling infrastructure for alternative fuels in Wales to support the country's planned phase-out of diesel HGVs by 2040.

Renewable biomethane – derived from food waste and manure – is the lowest carbon, most cost-effective alternative fuel to diesel available to HGVs today, cutting emissions by over 90% whilst providing up to 40% lifetime fuel cost savings.

The site in Bangor will play a fundamental role in addressing emissions from the heavy goods sector. Located in Parc Bryn Cegin, just off Junction 11 on the North Wales Expressway, it is ideally situated to serve major trucking routes connecting North Wales to England and opens up routes to Ireland through the nearby Holyhead Port.

The new station is a joint venture between CNG Fuels, the infrastructure arm of ReFuels, and sustainability-led investment management company, Foresight Group.

Growing demand for the lowest carbon, most cost-effective alternative fuel to diesel today

Demand for Bio-CNG from fleet operators is skyrocketing. In July 2023 alone, ReFuels saw an 80% increase in fuel dispensed compared to the same period in the previous year. The company supports over 80 major fleets, including DHL, Royal Mail, Warburton's, Lidl, Amazon and Waitrose to make immediate cuts of over 90% to fleets.

Glen Morgan, Operations Manager at Dixon Transport – one of the companies planning to use the new station – said: "Already, a number of our HGVs have travelled over a million kilometres on low-carbon, 100% renewable biomethane and thanks to CNG Fuels' growing network of public access stations, we'll be going even further.

"CNG Fuels' newest station in Bangor brings far more than convenience - it is a strategically important location, opening up



routes to and from Holyhead, for both Irish and UK fleets. We now have a fleet of 22 bio-CNG trucks, operated by both Dixon Transport and Carna Transport, and they have been an invaluable addition to our fleet, helping us to slash emissions by up to 90% versus our comparable diesel HGVs."

To meet the growing demand for low-carbon, renewable Bio-CNG, ReFuels is aiming to open between 30-40 new stations by 2026, with a total capacity to refuel 15,000 HGVs every day, and dispense more than 600,000 tonnes of renewable biomethane annually – equivalent to cutting the UK's HGV emissions by 8%.

The company is also preparing for a multi-fuel future, with plans to host hydrogen trails across CNG Fuels' sites, to ensure that when different technologies develop and become commercially viable, the infrastructure is ready to support. As part of the HyHAUL consortium, CNG Fuels is working alongside industry to deliver the largest hydrogen mobility corridor in the UK.

The group has one more station under construction in Aylesford in Southeast England and expects two further stations to commence construction during the financial reporting year ending 31 March 2024.

"From Inverness to Cornwall, Bangor to Ireland, our network of renewable biomethane refuelling stations is making low carbon logistics a reality right across the British Isles. As the first station to open in Wales, our Bangor site serves a critical transport route for fleet operators, enabling low-carbon deliveries between Wales, England and Ireland for the first time.

"Every day, fleets – spanning major brands to local hauliers – are slashing emissions by over 90% using our fuel. Our nationwide network of refuelling stations has turned net zero ambition into a reality for fleets across the UK, and with our plans for 30+ new stations by 2026, we're just getting started."

Philip Fjeld, CEO & Co-Founder of ReFuels. ●



Nissan is charging ahead with its vision for a zero emissions future, with confirmation that all three models **made at its UK plant** will go 100% electric.

The EV36Zero hub in Sunderland, Nissan's blueprint for future manufacturing, will consist of three electric vehicles (EVs), three gigafactories and up to £3bn investment – great news for Nissan's 7,000 UK employees and the 30,000 jobs supported in the UK supply chain.

Not only does the transformational project include future all-electric versions of Nissan's flagship Qashqai and JUKE crossovers, but Nissan is also confirming today that the third vehicle

planned for UK production will be next-generation Nissan LEAF, the car that dared to spark the electrification of the automotive industry.

Both vehicle and battery manufacturing will be powered by the EV36Zero Microgrid, which will incorporate the wind and solar farms at Nissan and will have the capability to deliver 100% renewable electricity to Nissan and its neighbouring suppliers.

Announcing the plans today to colleagues at the Sunderland plant, Nissan President and CEO Makoto Uchida said: *"Exciting, electric vehicles are at the heart of our plans to achieve carbon neutrality. With electric versions of our core European models on the way, we are accelerating towards a new era for Nissan, for industry and for our customers."*

"The EV36Zero project puts our Sunderland plant, Britain's biggest ever car factory, at the heart of our future vision. It means our UK team will be designing, engineering and manufacturing the vehicles of the future, driving us towards an all-electric future for Nissan in Europe."

The announcement this month (November) follows Nissan's confirmation that all its new cars in Europe from now will be fully electric, and that it expects its passenger car line-up in Europe to

be 100% electric by 2030. It also builds on Nissan's Ambition 2030 vision to become a truly sustainable company, driving towards a cleaner, safer, and more inclusive world.

Three new electric vehicles

Nissan's latest investment includes up to £1.12bn into its UK operations and wider supply chain for R&D and manufacturing of the two new models announced today, including facility and manufacturing process improvements, skills training, and tooling for suppliers. This follows the £423m investment announced by Nissan in the first phase of EV36Zero for the first future EV.

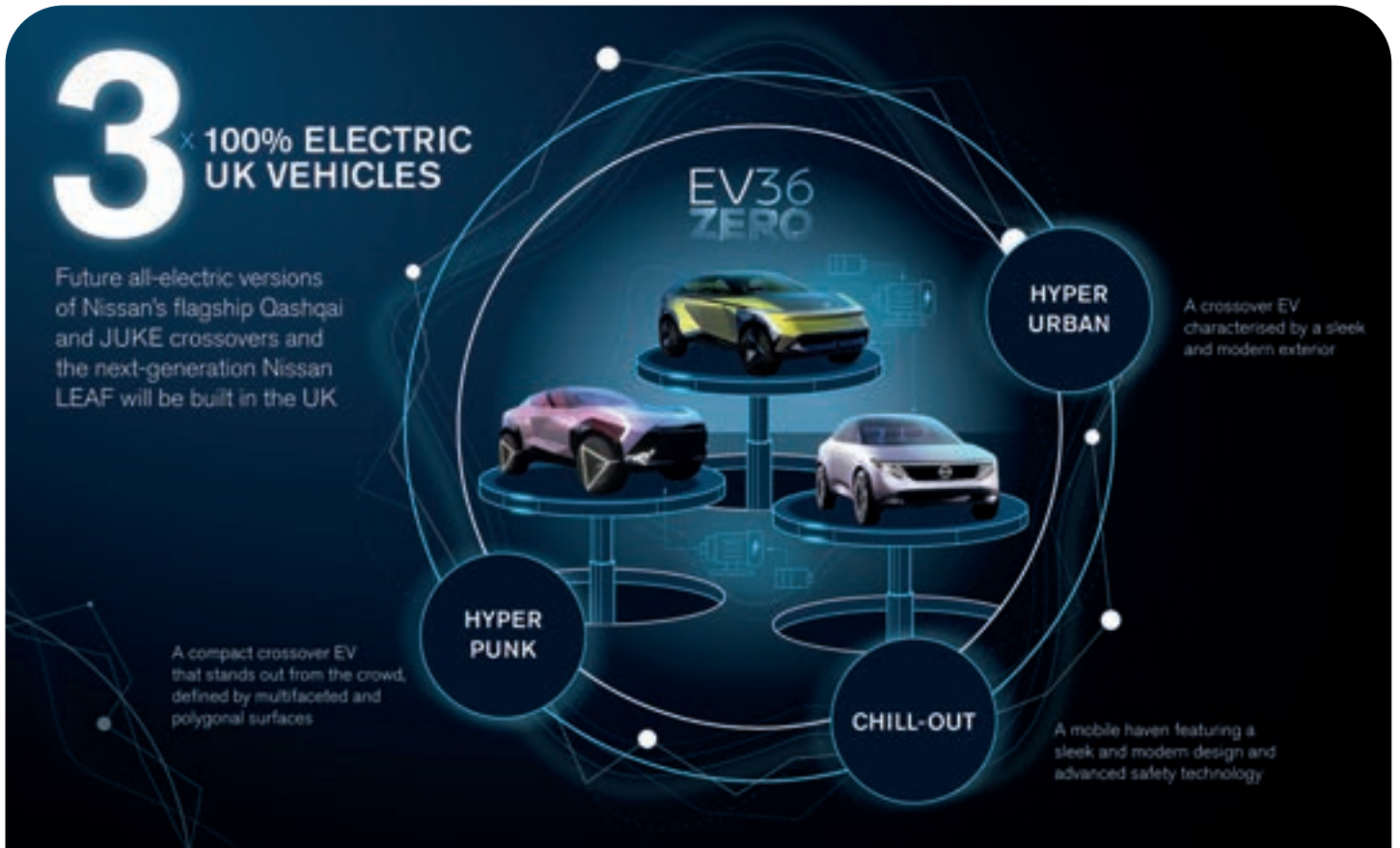
These three new electric vehicles represent the future for all three models currently manufactured in Nissan Sunderland Plant:

- Nissan Qashqai – the original crossover, the UK's best-selling car of 2022 and which represents one in five of all cars built in the UK.
- Nissan JUKE – the rule-breaking compact crossover which has sold more than one million units.
- Nissan LEAF - the world's first mass market EV, of which more than a quarter of a million have been built in Sunderland.

"Nissan's investment is a massive vote of confidence in the UK's automotive industry, which already contributes a massive £71 billion a year to our economy. This venture will no doubt secure Sunderland's future as the UK's Silicon Valley for electric vehicle innovation and manufacturing."

"Making the UK the best place to do business is at the heart of our economic plan. We will continue to back businesses like Nissan to expand and grow their roots in the UK every step of the way as we make the right long term decisions for a brighter future."

Rishi Sunak, Prime Minister.



EV36ZERO

The news builds on Nissan and partners' initial £1bn investment to create EV36Zero, transforming its Sunderland manufacturing facility and creating a world-first EV manufacturing ecosystem.

Complementing vehicle and battery production is the Sunderland City Council-initiated Microgrid project, which will have the capability to deliver 100% renewable electricity to Nissan and its neighbouring suppliers, incorporating the existing Nissan wind and solar farms, including Nissan's brand new 20MW solar farm.

The additional two models, alongside an additional gigafactory and further investment for infrastructure projects, will result in an investment of up to £2bn. It means Nissan's plans for the future electric versions of Qashqai, JUKE, and the replacement for LEAF, will enable up to a £3bn investment in the UK.

In addition, the UK Government has awarded £15m of funding for a £30m collaborative project led by Nissan. It will strengthen the technical expertise and R&D zero emission vehicle capability of the Nissan Technical Centre (NTCE) in Cranfield, Bedfordshire, increasing opportunities for securing additional UK R&D investment in future vehicle models.

The announcement comes as a new Investment Zone (IZ) was confirmed for North East England. The North East Investment Zone will focus on Advanced Manufacturing and Green Industries, building on the Arc of Innovation running from Northumberland down to Sunderland and Durham with opportunities along the Tyne Corridor and benefits felt across the wider region.

UK Business Secretary Kemi Badenoch said: "The investment by Nissan in Sunderland shows once again that the Government's plan for the automotive sector is working.

"The forthcoming Advanced Manufacturing Plan will build on this deal and other recent big investment wins for the UK car industry, helping to support thousands of jobs and drive growth across the UK."

Cllr Graeme Miller, Leader of Sunderland City Council, said: "Today's announcement is fantastic news for Sunderland, the North East and the UK – building on our world-leading strengths in automotive and advanced manufacturing, creating high quality jobs, growing our low carbon economy and further positioning us at the heart of electrification on a global stage. It is a huge vote of confidence in the city and region – and our people – that Nissan has again chosen to invest here.

"The strength of our partnership with

businesses like these alongside our ability to work with Government is essential to the continued success of the sector, and the Investment Zone for the North East announced today means we can build on our track record by attracting further investment of this scale and significance."

EV36Zero is a key part of Nissan Ambition 2030, the company's long-term vision to become a truly sustainable company, driving towards a cleaner, safer, and more inclusive world. In this period Nissan will deliver exciting, electrified vehicles and technological innovations while expanding and transforming its operations globally. The vision supports Nissan's goal to be carbon neutral across the lifecycle of its products by fiscal year 2050.

"Nissan has a proud history in car manufacturing in Sunderland and their continued commitment to the UK shows how our support for business is getting results – helping create thousands of jobs and solidifying Britain's place as the world's 8th largest manufacturer."

Jeremy Hunt, Chancellor of the Exchequer. ●



More **miles**, **power** and **speed**; improved comfort and tech – upgraded Volkswagen **ID.4** and **ID.5**

Volkswagen has upgraded its award-winning ID.4 and ID.5 electric models, with both available to order now from Volkswagen UK Retailers. Prices start from £46,035 RRP on-the-road.

The two electric SUVs now feature a new-generation infotainment system, complete with a larger 12.9-inch screen and intuitive menu structure and controls – including illuminated sliders for cabin temperature. The optional augmented-reality head-up display has been enhanced, and Volkswagen has moved the driving mode selector to the steering column – as in the ID.7 – to create space for the larger infotainment display.

Operation of the ID.4 and ID.5 is made easier by the new IDA voice assistant, which responds even more precisely to natural voice commands and offers new functions, including cloud-based weather information and the status of sporting events or stock market prices.

The previous Volkswagen Digital Sound

Package with subwoofer has been replaced by a premium sound system from Harman Kardon, featuring 480 Watts of music output and 10 speakers (including centre speaker and subwoofer). The Harman Kardon sound system is optional on the rear-wheel-drive Pro trims and standard on the 4MOTION GTX versions in the UK.

All ID.4 and ID.5 versions are powered by Volkswagen's new APP550 drive unit. Introduced for the first time for the ID.7, it offers significantly more power together with reduced energy consumption. The unit delivers 286 PS (210 kW), and gives the vehicles an impressive 75-per-cent more torque than previously, jumping from 310 to 545 Nm.

The sporty and all-wheel-drive ID.4 GTX and ID.5 GTX now deliver a system power of 340 PS (250 kW), equivalent to an increase of 41 PS (30 kW). The sprint from 0 to 62 mph for these models is now just 5.4 seconds.

Improved efficiency means the combined WLTP range of the ID.4 has increased to up to 337 miles (10.5 miles further than before) while the ID.5 SUV coupé now has a range of up to 339 miles (an extra 11.8 miles). Faster charging is also possible: thermal management makes sure the battery is pre-conditioned while driving, before the next DC charging stop, and the all-wheel-drive models now offer 175 kW DC charging (previously 135 kW). With the maximum charging capacity, these ID.5 versions can take on enough energy for a further 110 miles in about 10 minutes.

Volkswagen has refined the Dynamic Chassis Control (DCC, optional on GTX only; not available on Pro) and designed the Vehicle Dynamics Manager for an even greater spread between comfort and dynamics.

Last, but not least, a new striking optional paint colour is available for all models apart from GTX: Costa Azul blue metallic. ●

For more information visit: www.volkswagen.co.uk

New entry-level 'Design' trim for **Vauxhall Astra Electric** and **Mokka Electric**



Vauxhall has announced the introduction of new Design entry-level versions of the Astra Electric and Mokka Electric, making Vauxhall's electric range more accessible than ever. Order books are open now, with deliveries for the Astra Electric Design and Mokka Electric Design starting from January 2024.

The new Design versions of Astra Electric and Mokka Electric makes Vauxhall's electric range more accessible to consumers looking to start their electric journey, whilst continuing to deliver a high level of specification. Both models come with a comprehensive suite of driver aids and safety technologies as standard, including lane departure warning, speed sign recognition, driver drowsiness alert and forward collision alert.

The Mokka Electric Design is equipped

with 17-inch alloy wheels and features a seven-inch touchscreen with Android Auto™ and Apple CarPlay™ compatibility. For added convenience, this trim also features rear parking sensors, a panoramic rear view camera and automatic lights and wipers.

The Astra Electric Design is fitted with 18-inch bi-colour alloy wheels and benefits from Vauxhall's Pure Panel interior, which features a 10-inch touchscreen with voice-activated satellite navigation and a 10-inch digital instrument cluster. Rear parking sensors, keyless start and automatic lights and wipers further enhance ease of use.

As with all electrified Vauxhall models, the new Design versions are also available with Vauxhall's 'Plug & Go' offer, allowing customers to choose a wallbox from one of Vauxhall's three

approved national suppliers and spread the

cost across the length of their finance agreement. Other Plug & Go benefits include eight years' roadside assistance, an eight-year battery warranty, and an Octopus Electroverse card, providing access to over half a million public chargers across the UK and Europe.

As the best-selling small electric SUV in the UK, the inclusion of the Mokka Electric in Design trim will open up the popular model to even more UK motorists, who are looking for zero-emissions style and practicality. The Mokka Electric Design is available with an electric motor which delivers 100kW (136PS) and 260Nm of torque, and a 50kWh lithium-ion battery which delivers range of up to 209 miles (WLTP).

The Astra Electric Design is powered by a 54kWh lithium-ion battery and 115kW (156PS) electric motor for improved performance, with up to 258 miles of range between charges (WLTP). ●



For more information visit: www.vauxhall.co.uk



Guide to Fair Wear and Tear

If you drive a lease vehicle as part of your employment, or through private arrangement you may well be subject to end-of lease charges. Keeping these charges to a minimum therefore makes financial sense, for you and the organisation you work for.

Most leasing companies follow the BVRLA's guide to fair wear and tear. All vehicles will have the odd scratch here and there on return but it is important to note what is considered fair wear and tear and what isn't.

Defining Fair Wear and Tear

Fair wear and tear occurs when normal usage causes deterioration to a vehicle. It is not to be confused with damage, which occurs as a result of a specific event or series of events such as an impact, harsh-treatment, or a negligent act.

End-of lease charges

These charges will occur when the vehicle, its equipment or accessories are not used, maintained or looked after as originally agreed at the start of the contract. The charges compensate the leasing company for the cost of rectifying damage or replacing missing items such as keys.

Service History

Many vehicles have set servicing intervals, while others have variable intervals that flag up on the car's trip computer, as and when needed. Ensuring that you get the vehicle serviced on time and in accordance with the manufacturer recommendations will help to ensure you have a full service history and that your vehicle is maintained correctly.

Preparing for the end of your contract

Before handing your vehicle back it is advisable to carry out an appraisal yourself, this should be done 10-12 weeks before contract end so that you can arrange for any repairs for unacceptable wear and tear to be rectified.

Appraise the vehicle as honestly as you can and be objective. Choose place with good light, this is how the leasing company will examine your vehicle. Appraisals carried out in poor light invariably miss some faults.

Before appraising the vehicle, make sure that it has been washed and is thoroughly clean but remember to allow time for it to dry. Water on the paintwork can mask faults.

To establish the best option, you may want to ask your leasing company how much they'd charge for a scraped alloy wheel or a big dent – or whatever damage your car may have – so you can compare that with getting it repaired yourself.

Your contract length will influence any inspection and what is considered to be acceptable fair wear and tear. If you're returning it after a two-year, 5,000-mile-per-year contract it should still look pretty new. If, however, you are handing the car back after a four-year, 80,000-mile contract then wear to the seats from years of use are likely to be perfectly acceptable.

In most cases the collection agent is not a qualified vehicle inspector and will not be able to tell you if damage falls outside the BVRLA *'Fair Wear and Tear'* conditions, so it is important for you to point out any damage you have noticed and to keep your own record of this for reference.

Customers are not charged at end of lease for any refurbishment that arises from normal wear and tear.

Returned vehicles must have a current MOT certificate.

A charge will be levied for vehicles returned without a current MOT certificate.

Lastly before collection remove your personal items from the vehicle and ensure all personal data is wiped from any on-board systems. Ensure you hand back the keys and that all accessories that were included and fitted within the vehicle are back in the correct place.

The following page provides examples as a guide.

Examples of what is **acceptable** and **not acceptable**, Fair Wear and Tear



Bodywork and Bumpers

Walk all the way around the vehicle and examine closely each panel including the roof, bonnet, doors, and body for significant damage. Observe where the light is reflected differently from dents and scratches.

NOT ACCEPTABLE: Large stone chips or scratches.

ACCEPTABLE: Small areas of chipping. Light scratches up to 25mm in length, relative to the vehicle's age. Dents up to 10mm providing paint is not broken.

NOT ACCEPTABLE: Dented or cracked areas on bumper. Deep scuffs where paint surface has been broken.

ACCEPTABLE: Minor scuffing up to 25mm in length on the bumper.



Windscreen, Lenses and Mirrors

Inspect lamps, lenses, windows and mirrors for chips, cracks and holes.

NOT ACCEPTABLE: Any damage to the windscreen within the driver's direct line of sight.

ACCEPTABLE: Small scratches to the windscreen outside of the driver's line of sight.

NOT ACCEPTABLE: Door Mirrors missing, cracked or damaged

ACCEPTABLE: Door Mirrors with minor scuffing, providing paint is not broken



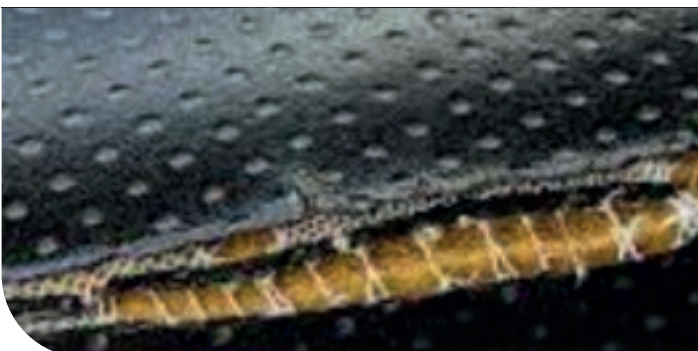
Wheels and Tyres

Check the tyres (including spare) for damage. Check that the wear on the tread across each tyre is even.

Inspect wheels, wheel trims and wheel spokes for scratches and deterioration.

NOT ACCEPTABLE: Scoring and other damage to wheel surface. Damage to side walls or uneven tread wear.

ACCEPTABLE: Minor scuffing is acceptable up to 25mm in length. Tyres must meet minimum legal requirements.



Upholstery

Clean and valet the interior and check upholstered areas for odours, tears, burns, stains and wear.

NOT ACCEPTABLE: Burns, tears or permanent staining. Any damage caused by fitting of equipment such as mobile phones.

ACCEPTABLE: Appearance should be clean and tidy with only slight wear and soiling through normal use. ●

For more information and to download the latest guides visit www.bvrla.co.uk



The All-new Renault Master

The All-new Renault Master's high-grade interior mirrors that of a passenger vehicle.

The S-shaped dashboard facing the driver adds to the air of spaciousness. The steering wheel is from the Renault passenger vehicle range, and is adjustable for height and reach. Automatic versions now have the transmission controls on the steering wheel, opening up even more space in the centre console. The materials have a premium feel and the 10-inch screen – which comes as standard across the line-up. Dark upholstery enhances the contemporary, ultra-modern style.

The 135 litres of total storage space – a 25% increase – ranks this generation as the market leader. The available space is spread across the dashboard, side cupholders, glove-box drawers, cab-ceiling slot and two storage tiers in the doors.

The new Master effortlessly turns into an office on wheels. The back of the middle seat folds down into a desk, the base houses a slot to store a laptop, and there are USB-C ports to power devices. Every detail is intended for intensive everyday use. The non-abrasive and sturdy TEP-lined seat edges, for instance, make it easier to get in and out of the van and are highly resistant to wear. The ample choice of seats includes suspension and swivelling variants, individual seats and three types of benches (two fabric and one TEP).

Its aerodynamics ensure it is at the top of

its class in terms of efficiency, regardless of how it is powered. Its CO2 emissions are 39g/km lower, and now below 200g/km. Its aerodynamics also contribute to considerably lower energy consumption in the electric versions with a 20% improvement on the previous Master, helping to lower fleet operating costs.

Four diesel Blue dCi powertrains, delivering 105, 130, 150 or 170hp, are available. They consume substantially less fuel (1.5 litres less per 100km on average) and emit less CO2. Depending on the version, the engines can be paired to a 6-speed manual gearbox or a highly efficient new 9-speed automatic gearbox.

The fully-electric Master is powered by a 105kW motor, delivering 300Nm of torque. It benefits from a 87 kWh battery that provides a WLTP range of more than 255 miles.

As a result, it boasts record-high payload capacity (1,625kg in a van requiring a B-category driving licence), range and towing capability (2.5 tonnes). Its consumption remains reasonable, at a WLTP standardised 21 kWh/100km with the large 87 kWh battery, thanks to the battery heat management system. A 130kW DC fast charge adds 229km of range in just 30 minutes. A 22kW AC home charger tops up the battery from 10% to 100% in just under four hours.

The new Master is also designed to accommodate a hydrogen engine and fuel cell in future.

The novel power-assisted dynamic

braking control system in the keeps braking effectiveness and pedal feel the same regardless of how much weight the van is carrying. It also triggers the automatic emergency braking system sooner (response time has been halved) and enhances regeneration, extending the range of the electric versions.

Its set of 20 driver assistance systems maximises safety for the people in and around it. Active safety features include; lateral stability, automatic emergency braking and trailer stability assist systems. It also comes with Intelligent Speed Assist, to help the driver stay within the speed limit.

The new vans will include Vehicle-to-Load (V2L) and Vehicle-to-Grid (V2G) capabilities. These include charging other devices from an outlet in the interior or load area, as well as adaptors to plug power tools, computers and other devices into charger outlets. You can also power custom-built body parts (refrigerated compartments, automatic tailgates, extra heating or air-conditioning systems, etc.) directly from the battery.

The new Master will also be able to feed energy from its battery to the grid (V2G) using a bi-directional charger.

In terms of technology it provides all the connectivity that today's van users require. The OpenR Link multimedia system – the most intuitive on the market – comes as standard with every model. It includes a 10-inch screen and wired and wireless Android Auto and Apple CarPlay connections to replicate a smartphone



screen. This system is also smart and scalable: it will grow to encompass new functionalities over time, with free over-the-air updates (like smartphone updates) for more than 20 apps, for five years.

To take interaction and proaction to the next level, you can also connect remotely to the All-new Renault Master using the My Renault app, for a variety of reasons:

To locate your van on a map or, if it is in a large car park for example, make it flash its lights or make a sound

To keep track of its maintenance schedule

To receive a warning if the vehicle is unlocked

The pure-electric Master comes with exclusive functions which provide a user experience that looks and feels like that of a smartphone. This will make the transition to electric mobility simpler than ever.

Google Maps considers your preferences and optimises itineraries accordingly. And you can use an Electric Route Planner to plan journeys, filter charging stations according to your preferred payment method or power rating, set your home and workplace as charging points, and decide when the battery charges and the air conditioning switches on and off, according to your schedule for the week, to optimise costs and keep the temperature just right in the cockpit.

The My Renault app and its electric vehicle-only remote services ensure the Master is a high-tech vehicle that is highly connected and always ready to help:

- It displays remaining range, to track charging in real time
- It displays charging stations near you or near a selected location
- You can schedule charging remotely (for example to only charge the van during off-peak hours)
- You can set preheating times, so the cockpit is at the right temperature when you start your day (without affecting range if the van is plugged in)
- It displays charge status and a charging date log

As it includes Mobilize Charge Pass, you can pay for charges without having to carry a large number of cards, across Europe's largest charging network (over 500,000 charging points in 25 countries, half of which charge at 22kW). Passholders can also enjoy preferential rates at motorway-side Ionity stations (more than 2,600 charging points) if they take out an optional subscription. The Master will launch with a full line-up covering all professional requirements. It will comprise 20 derivatives ranging from 11 to 22 cubic metres, with a 40mm wider opening at the sliding side door and 100mm longer load areas – the longest in the category. Its greater payload capacity, length, width and volume make it the ideal van and redefine convenience in its class.

There are 20 derivatives available across the chassis cab and platform cab ranges that offer a basis for conversion, where

workshops can handle several alterations directly (adding tippers, deepening interiors, adding volume, etc.). This catalogue of factory-mounted kits also shortens turnaround times and simplifies transport logistics.

The shorter wheelbase and redesigned front axle provide unprecedented manoeuvrability, including an outstanding 1.5 metre shorter turning diameter. The All-new Renault Master takes handling in cities to new heights of convenience. Customers can even choose an L3 version for city driving (L2 is the base vehicle, L3 is available with front-wheel and rear-wheel drive, and L4 has rear-wheel drive).

As with all the electric vehicles in the range, the All-new Master incorporates elements of Renault's human first program, designed to help emergency teams work on the vehicle in the event of an accident:

- A QR code for firefighters is integrated into the bodywork to guide them as quickly as possible in their response
- The fireman's access allows the high-voltage battery to be accessed by the emergency services to minimise any risk of fires starting
- The SD switch disconnects the battery so that work can be carried out on the vehicle in complete safety
- The battery is housed in a special, reinforced frame that protects it from all types of impact ●

For more information visit: <https://business.renault.co.uk/>



Updates made to Vauxhall Combo, Vivaro and Movano models, alongside fully-electric equivalents

Vauxhall has announced a series of updates to its latest generation of light commercial vehicles (LCVs). With new versions of the compact Combo, mid-size Vivaro and large Movano vans, the updated models offer a new exterior style and redesigned cockpit, while the battery-electric versions will continue to offer class-leading driving range. In addition, Movano will also be available as a hydrogen fuel cell vehicle in the near future.

Vauxhall's LCV models will feature a new 'Vizor' front-end, mirroring the latest design found across the latest generation of passenger models. The Vizor integrates the Griffin brand emblem with the signature front lighting systems, creating a single visual unit that stretches fully across the face of the vehicle.

Inside, a refreshed cockpit will provide drivers with an upgraded infotainment

system that includes a new 10-inch touchscreen featuring wireless Apple CarPlay™ and Android Auto™.

The updates to Vauxhall's LCV range will be available across diesel and electric models of each van.

The battery-electric versions of the new Vauxhall Combo, Vauxhall Vivaro and Vauxhall Movano will continue to offer uncompromised usability similar to that of the respective combustion engine variants. Thanks to state-of-the-art battery technologies and enhancements such as further improved drivetrain efficiency, all three will therefore continue to offer class-leading, locally emissions-free battery-electric range.

The new range of Vauxhall light commercial vehicles will carry over all the strengths of their predecessors. These include a wide range of advanced driver

assistance systems to make journeys and manoeuvring more comfortable and above all safer. Furthermore, the trio will be available in various lengths, heights and body types to meet all professional needs, and they will maintain their convincing load volumes, payloads and towing capacities. Vauxhall will reveal more details about the individual vehicle lines in the coming weeks.

Vauxhall, along with its sister Stellantis brands, is the only manufacturer to make vans in the United Kingdom and proudly does so at its Luton and Ellesmere Port plants – the latter having recently been upgraded to be the UK's first electric-only vehicle plant, manufacturing the Vauxhall Combo Electric.

Vauxhall is one of few brands to offer a fully electric variant across its entire LCV line-up. ●

For more information visit: www.vauxhall.co.uk



Growth driven by doubling of demand for medium-sized vans

Britain's new light commercial vehicle (LCV) registrations increased by 17.7% in October with 26,342 of the very latest vans, pickups and 4x4s joining Britain's fleets, according to the latest figures published today by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT).

The growth is some 3.8% above pre-pandemic 2019 levels¹ and rounds off 10 consecutive months of rising demand this year, totalling 284,321 units. This is the highest volume for two years as the easing of supply chain disruptions means that more operators can more readily renew their fleets.

New van buyers continue to opt for payload and fuel efficiencies, with large vans – weighing greater than 2.5 tonnes to 3.5 tonnes – up 5.3% to 18,176 units last month, representing 69.0% of the market. Demand for medium-sized vans drove growth, however, with deliveries

BEST SELLERS LCV <3.5 tonnes

OCTOBER 2023

Ford Transit Custom	2,841
Ford Transit	2,148
Mercedes-Benz Sprinter	1,743
Volkswagen Transporter	1,658
Vauxhall Vivaro	1,527
Ford Ranger	1,416
Renault Trafic	977
Toyota Hilux	869
Maxus Deliver 9	783
Citroën Berlingo	760

YEAR-TO-DATE

1 Ford Transit Custom	34
2 Ford Transit	23
3 Vauxhall Vivaro	16
4 Ford Ranger	15
5 Volkswagen Transporter	14
6 Renault Trafic	13
7 Mercedes-Benz Sprinter	13
8 Citroën Berlingo	11
9 Ford Transit Connect	9
10 Peugeot Partner	9

more than doubling, up 106.1% to 3,801 units. There was also a jump in demand for 4x4s and pickups, up 61.4% and 41.1% respectively, while registrations of the smallest vans continue to fall, -20.4% below last year at 438 units.

Following a glut of new battery electric van (BEV) registrations in September, uptake was slower in October, down by a fifth (-20.2%) to 1,362 units – skewed in comparison with a particularly large fleet order in the month last year. In 2023 to date, BEV demand has risen by 19.8%, with 15,658 units registered since January. These greenest vehicles represent one in 20 (5.5%) new LCVs so far this year as manufacturers continue to make net zero investments, having already delivered 27 different all-electric

van models to market. Uptake rates will need to accelerate, however, and as the Zero Emission Vehicle Mandate comes into effect in less than two months, government must pull every lever to stimulate demand.

With the van market enjoying 10 consecutive months of growth, the outlook for the year has been revised upwards to 332,000 units, a 1.4% rise on July's outlook. However, anticipated BEV registrations have been cut by -9.0% on the previous outlook to 21,000 units – still 26.8% above 2023 – to a 6.3% market share. Looking further ahead, 2024 is expected to see 334,000 new van registrations, with 34,000 BEVs exceeding 10% of the overall market. ●



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