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ESSENTIAL FLEET MANAGER *Magazine*

ISSUE 2 2024

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The magazine is available as a 'free' digital edition or can be delivered in 'printed format' for a paid subscription.

If you would like to feature your fleet operations in a future issue of Essential Fleet Manager - get in touch, we would love to work with you on highlighting your achievements.

Regards, **Debbie Cheadle** - Editor



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



‘Periods of grace’ – goods and passenger licencing

Many goods or passenger vehicle operators with operator’s licences stumble over “Periods of Grace”. Some lose their licences by not navigating them correctly. No licence may mean no business.

So, what are they, why are they needed, and what should operators do to ensure they manage them correctly?

Standard licence holders will need to apply for Periods of Grace if they cannot meet one or more of the mandatory elements of their licence.

These are:

- professional competence: there has to be at least one person qualified with a Transport Manager’s Certificate of Professional Competence (TMCP)
- financial standing: access to £8,000 for the first vehicle and £4,500 for additional vehicles – £1,600/£800 for light go0ds vehicles
- a stable and effective establishment: where business documentation is kept and there is access to vehicles

In reality, the main problem areas for which Periods of Grace are required relate to Transport Managers and Financial Standing. If an operator cannot meet what is required, the Traffic Commissioner (the regulator who issues the licences) has to be informed – and if the Traffic Commissioner is not notified, then that is a failure on the

part of the operator to declare this and is a licence breach. Periods of Grace cater for things that will happen to businesses from time to time. If a Period of Grace is granted, then this is a ‘*bridge*’ until such time as the operator can meet the requirement.

Transport Managers

There are a number of reasons why a Transport Manager may no longer be engaged as either an internal Transport Manager or an external one. They may die, be ill, be dismissed, retire, be unhappy with the operator or wish to move on to a new job.

It would be nonsensical if the operator’s licence had to dissolve simply because such a normal event as that might occur. The period of grace provides a solution. However, it must be managed properly by the operator.

When a Transport Manager leaves a business, the operator will remove the Transport Manager from the licence (using the VOL online system), and the Transport Manager will/should likely also notify the Traffic Commissioner of their departure. Either event will automatically trigger a letter being sent to the operator (via the VOL system), setting out what information is required by the Traffic Commissioner. (This assumes there is no remaining Transport Manager on the licence – but even then, there might be a letter asking how the fleet will be managed with one

Transport manager less; however, in that situation, it is not a ‘bare’ licence with simply no Transport Manager at all, of course).

It will not suffice simply to ask for a Period of Grace for a bridging period – this must be requested, of course, but there needs to be substance: a clear path forward that (a) states what arrangements there are for a new Transport Manager and (b) sets out how transport is to be managed without a Transport Manager – or, as the Senior Traffic Commissioner has put it: *“that the continued operation of vehicles won’t compromise road safety.”*

The operator must go through this procedure – if it is simply left undone, the requirements of a Transport Manager will be unfulfilled – and the licence will be revoked if detected.

It is not a given that the Period of Grace will definitely be granted – however, if a proper plan of action is in place, this should not present a problem. It is incumbent on the operator to sort out the recruitment of a new internal and external Transport Manager, and we advise this being evidenced, e.g. copy advertisement, selection criteria, details of a number of applications, interview timetable and dates, etc. The more information provided,



the clearer the picture of a responsible approach being taken.

Operators must keep an eye on the duration of the period of grace and not let it expire. The total cannot exceed six months, save in the event of the death/incapacity of the Transport Manager. Ordinarily, it will be a (hopefully) one or (possibly) a two-stage process with an initial period granted by the Traffic Commissioner, with the leeway of a further extension up to six months.

If the operator lets the period of grace expire, then revocation of the operator's licence may take place due to there simply being no 'professional competence', as happened in a recent case involving a local council that failed to address the requirement to have a nominated Transport Manager, much

to the disgruntlement of local residents whose dustbins could not be collected!

Recent guidance issued by the Senior Traffic Commissioner states that even if there is evidence that the Transport Manager requirements can now be met or if there is an application to extend the existing period of grace, the Traffic Commissioner has to be given sufficient time to consider it.

The Senior Traffic Commissioner has also made the following position clear: *'... because it is accepted at the outset of granting a Period of Grace that a mandatory licence require it is no longer met, there is no right to a request of Public Inquiry after that time limit has expired.'*

Therefore, it can be seen that not managing a period of grace can be fatal.

Financial standing

We have referred primarily to Transport Managers so far. However, the same applies in relation to financial standing. If an operator cannot fulfil the finance requirements, the Period of Grace has to be applied for in order for the operator to then provide evidence of its ability to demonstrate the financial wherewithal. Then, evidence has to be actually supplied within the period stipulated by the Traffic Commissioner, following the normal finance evidence rules (e.g. three months' bank statements, etc.).●



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



Industry shares its views on the Chancellor's Spring Budget

Matthew Walters, Head of Consultancy Services and Customer Value at ALD Automotive | LeasePlan UK:

With an election looming, the Chancellor would probably have wanted to approach the Budget with more financial headroom for tax cuts. Instead, the announcements have had to consider a weak economy and a cautious approach to measures which could potentially fuel inflation by encouraging people to spend money. At 4.2%, inflation remains stubbornly higher than the government's 2% target.

Although we were not expecting sweeping changes, the Budget confirmed several important policies for fleets:

Capital Allowances for Vans

Full expensing rules were permanent during the Autumn Statement, enabling businesses to invest in equipment and plants and write off 100% of the cost against their taxable profits.

We are delighted that the Chancellor has listened to calls from the industry, announcing a consultation which will extend this scheme to include vans bought for leasing "when fiscal conditions allow". This is an important measure to promote investment, and we are eagerly awaiting further details in the forthcoming draft legislation.

Fuel Duty and Charging

Extending the 5p per litre fuel duty reduction for another 12 months was no great surprise. It's an important measure for controlling inflation and has provided valuable breathing space for households and businesses since it was introduced two years ago. It's claimed this will save motorists around £50 in the next financial year.

However, with energy costs soaring in the meantime, it has also narrowed the business case for switching to electric vehicles – and this was not addressed during the budget. Reducing VAT on public charging, from 20% to 5%, aligning it with plugging in at home, would have been useful. Especially for drivers without off-street parking and fleets who rely on mid-shift top-ups.

2% National Insurance Cut

With household finances under continued pressure, we welcome any policy changes which lighten the financial burden on consumers. Reducing Class 1 National Insurance Contributions (NICs) – paid on income – by 2% points will help employed and self-employed workers keep more of what they've earned.

Although it's true that NIC reforms will reduce the advantages of opting into salary sacrifice schemes, the effects are marginal. These schemes enable employees to lease a new car through

their employer, fund it with their pre-tax income, then pay tax and National Insurance on the remainder, typically reducing their tax bill.

Cutting NICs on income marginally reduces those savings, but the bigger picture is it will leave drivers with more money in their pockets in the first place. With retail demand for new cars waning, that's good news.

A need for stability

Fleets operate the newest cars and vans on our roads. They are facing new technology first and rely on stable fiscal policy to make investments new vehicles with confidence. Changing the 2030 phase-out date for non-hybrid cars, and the more recent U-turn on double-cab pickup trucks, undermine trust in the government's ability to make long-term decisions. Giving businesses time to adjust to new policies is really important during a period of unprecedented technological change.

We would have welcomed additional measures to support fleets:

Vehicle Excise Duty reforms:

Although it was inevitable that electric cars would pay vehicle excise duty ('road tax') eventually, the blanket approach announced in the 2022 Autumn Statement introduces unnecessary penalties compared to some petrol and diesel models.

From April 2025, VED rates will be equalised across all cars, while new registrations priced over £40,000 will also qualify for the expensive car supplement – a £410 charge, applied to the first five annual renewals. In some cases, this will mean drivers are paying three times more tax than they would for an equivalent petrol or diesel car, adding over £1,000 to a three-year lease contract. It sends mixed messages to drivers at a time when the government is trying to encourage them to switch to battery power.

Company Car Tax Bands:

Publishing company car tax bands beyond April 2028 is already important. Businesses are still enduring extended delivery times for new vehicles, and longer lifespans are increasingly common. Some fleets will already have cars on order that will still be on the road after the current tax bands expire.

Electric Vehicle Incentives:

Despite repeated calls from the automotive sector, the Budget did not include a 50% reduction in VAT for electric cars. This would have taken thousands off the purchase price and made electrification more accessible for businesses and especially for households.

Fleets would also have welcomed an extension to the Plug-in Van Grant. This is currently scheduled to end on 31 March 2025, which risks creating a cliff-edge for orders.

Adam Hall, Director at Drax Electric Vehicles:

Whilst we weren't anticipating major overhauls from the Chancellor, the Budget missed significant policies to help fleets, drivers, and businesses.

Public EV charging support sorely missed out

The Chancellor's announcement of a continued fuel duty reduction for the next year didn't shock many of us. With the need to curb inflation, it has remained a crucial tool since its introduction.

However, businesses/drivers will be disappointed to hear that the Chancellor hasn't listened to calls for public charging VAT cuts. Decreasing from 20% to 5% would've been a helpful step in the right direction for current and soon-to-be EV owners. We would have liked to see this support from the government to increase the affordability of EV charging across the UK, especially for those who can't plug in

at home or don't have access to charging facilities at work.

While investment packages in cutting-edge technology and manufacturing is valuable, there must be greater emphasis and understanding of the challenges that EV drivers and fleets currently face. With the launch of the Zero Emissions Van Plan, presented to MPs last week, many would've expected further measures to be set that acknowledged electric van concerns. To futureproof the EV transition for commercial vehicles, the government should consider the removal of regulatory barriers for the largest electric vans and a review of public charging accessibility for vans using the Public Charge Point Regulations 2023.

Accessible and convenient charging infrastructure in the right areas is also essential. In the past 12 months, over 18,000 chargepoints have been added to the UK network, but how many are in pockets of the country that don't currently have easy access? It's crucial for fleets/drivers that these areas see an increase in charge point coverage to ensure safe and confident driving across the country.

A lack of support for electric vans

As the EV transition continues, fleet managers and drivers have openly shared their concerns about electric vans, including higher pricing, limited ranges, reduced payloads, and inadequate public charging infrastructure. Operators need critical support to meet the 2030 ZEV target for vans, which is currently 70%. These issues considerably impact EV uptake, with electric van registrations consistently falling behind electric cars. SMMT data from 2023 revealed the electric van market share remained stagnant at 5.9%. Commercial fleet concerns should be a key focus, and overcoming these barriers will significantly boost business and driver confidence in the future of EVs.

The Plug-in Van Grant is a valuable cost-saving measure, yet we have yet to hear of an extension. Fiscal support for businesses is crucial to helping the van market shift from internal combustion vehicles, which still dominate.

Additional barriers must be addressed for fleets to confidently move away from the comfort of petrol/diesel vans. A considerable part of the electrification process relies on workplace charging, so measures to ease the installation process are essential. Where businesses don't

own the land, they can face considerable delays due to landlord permission, and if this is agreed upon, many find the process and cost of infrastructure installation confusing. At Drax Electric Vehicles, we're helping organisations across the UK transition to EVs with a smooth end-to-end solution. However, official guidance and funds to support fleets in navigating the grid connection process would've been/is warmly welcomed.

Upskilling UK technicians for the future of EVs

Addressing the need to upskill UK technicians for the future of electric vehicles is now a need, rather than a desire. The uncertainty surrounding repair, maintenance, and servicing costs is a major concern hindering businesses'/drivers' switch to EVs. By 2030, it's projected that the UK industry will face a shortage of 25,100 EV-trained TechSafe technicians, posing risks to the safety, mobility, and achievement of net-zero targets.

Numerous barriers exist to upskilling technicians, including recruitment difficulties, limited confidence in the plans for EV integration, and the necessity for additional support with apprenticeships. Given these challenges, the Budget presented an opportunity to introduce impactful solutions. So, it's discouraging to hear the Budget hasn't addressed these issues.

Many businesses have already advocated for increased funding and comprehensive support, including financial aid, for green career apprenticeships. Allocating sufficient funds to establish a dedicated, long-term skills system is a futureproofing strategy that should be considered imminently. Learners and employers should be at the centre of this, with extra support for SMEs to offer green apprenticeships, like EV technicians. Enticing and educating national campaigns can also help in attracting young people to green careers. We wish that the Chancellor had acknowledged more solutions like these.

While the current government support towards the future of EVs is valued, we need further policies that support green career apprenticeships. With an anticipated 8-11 million EVs on the road by 2030, it's imperative we ensure a healthy number of skilled workers that meet demand and provide stability in the industry.

Industry comment - Spring Budget

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

We are supportive of the 12-month extension to the historic freeze on fuel duty, providing a degree of assurance for drivers across the UK for the next year. However, at a time when so many are faced with uncertainty around costs rising beyond their control, we expect that drivers will be looking for transparency not only for the future strategy for fuel duty, but more widely on the broader taxation landscape for vehicles and fuel. This is particularly true for individuals who are reliant on vehicles and want to make the necessary plans for the long-term.

The Spring Budget statement has also hinted at a much-needed review of the full expensing policy, by potentially expanding this to leased assets. Alongside many others in the industry, we recognise this change as crucial to ensure the new scope for full expensing is fit-for-purpose for the fleet of today. Many companies are turning to leasing vs. outright ownership of vehicles as a more cost-effective route for investment, and as a result, these businesses will see significant benefit in tax exemption through full expensing. We hope the government will provide further clarity on timelines, and that it will continue to work with leaders within the leasing sector to ensure the reformed full expensing policy meets the investment needs of the modern business.

Though we look forward to seeing more details around the further investment into zero-emission vehicles, we were hopeful that the government would take further action on supporting a low-emission future as we near net-zero deadlines. For instance, the 15% VAT disparity between home and public charging remains unaddressed, making EVs a more considerable investment for those without at-home charging as an option. We are also yet to see the BIK tables for 2028/29, and eagerly await an update from the government to ensure we can factor these into our planning as early as possible.

Fiona Howarth, CEO of Octopus Electric Vehicles:

Salary sacrifice has supercharged the UK's transition to electric driving, making electric cars cheaper than their petrol equivalents. Clarity around low Benefit-in-Kind (BiK) tax rates for EVs beyond 2028 is critical for consumer confidence and to keep up the momentum in the EV roll-out. Not clarifying the rates in the Budget is a missed opportunity.

Following the recent 2035 rollback, drivers need clarity, not confusion, on tax rules to help make the decision to switch to an EV. Salary sacrifice is the most cost effective and easiest way to get a new EV, and demand has been through the roof.

In the last year, Octopus has delivered over 10,000 vehicles, with 4,500 businesses signed up to offer their staff a brilliant sustainable benefit. Leasing through salary sacrifice can help drivers upgrade their cars, improve their driving experience, enjoy the latest tech and save money on fuel, and on top of that they can also switch out after a few years for the latest tech.

We're on a journey to zero emissions transport, and through cost saving schemes like salary sacrifice, we can keep up the pace. ●



No changes to Earned Recognition scheme until further investigations

Reforms of the heavy vehicle testing regime for operators who are part of the DVSA's Earned Recognition scheme will only take place after further work has been carried out, the Government has announced.

It had called for evidence on the testing regime and said as a result, there was moderate support for change to the testing frequency. Some 89% of Earned Recognition members believe the testing regime for those operators should be amended, against 30% of non-Earned Recognition operators.

Earned Recognition is accredited to operators who show excellent standards of vehicle maintenance and driver safety. The Department for Transport (DfT) had laid out four options for reform. It says that two of them – reduction in test frequency and introduction of delegated testing – will be further considered.

A third option of improved service provision is already in hand, it said, while the fourth, which would have reduced test content, appears to have been dropped.

The DfT wants to better understand whether Earned Recognition 'as is' provides the confidence to implement either of the first two options and if adjustments can be made to the scheme to mitigate any risks from these changes. It also wants further insight into how the day-to-day practicalities could be handled, both from a legal and practical perspective.

A final decision on which, if any, option for change is adopted is expected to follow, but the DfT has given no indication on the timeline. ●

Carbon Reporting becoming bigger part of Fleet Management says AFP

Carbon reporting is becoming a bigger part of everyday fleet management, says the Association of Fleet Professionals – with two significant developments in 2024 potentially impacting on fleets.

First is that some UK companies will be affected by the introduction last month of Scope 3 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol emissions standards across the EU, which stipulate reporting for the first time across the entire value chain, including business travel. The UK government is consulting on whether to adopt similar, compulsory standards more widely here.

The second is the UK's Energy Savings Opportunity Scheme phase three, which applies to large undertakings and their corporate groups. It will extend the amount of energy consumption on which they must report from 90% of each business's carbon output under phase two to 95% later this year, something that could well affect fleets.

Paul Hollick, chair, said: *"Both of these moves represent large and potentially complex reporting tasks and are part of a general environment governance trend that over time is affecting more and more businesses that operate vehicles. It is certainly becoming a more prominent topic of discussion within the AFP."*

"The facts are that reporting of this type is a specialised area and one with which more and more fleets are having to become conversant over time, yet genuine expertise is not that common. It is certainly an area where some fleet managers are looking to plug gaps in their own skills, especially when it comes to greater familiarity with the metrics and reporting formats used, as well as how to gather appropriate data."

He added that carbon reporting so far tended to affect larger and often multi-national fleets but there were signs that the measures would affect more businesses over time, not just on a potential statutory basis, but because larger customers were increasingly demanding it from a supply chain compliance point of view.

"Of course, fleets generally have a very good news story to tell here. With electrification, massive strides in decarbonisation have been made in recent years and there is a clear route mapped out for similar improvements in the future."

"However, in some instances, specific improvements need to be made, especially where fleets are tasked with meeting requirements to satisfy larger clients of their own businesses. This may especially affect commercial vehicle operations, where strides towards decarbonisation have so far been markedly slower than for cars."

"It certainly appears that this is going to be a growing area of fleet management, and one that is only going to become more of a day-to-day issue for our members."●



To find out more, visit: <https://www.theafp.co.uk>

Morris Lubricants launches enhanced Ultralife antifreeze coolant range



Morris Lubricants has upgraded its Ultralife antifreeze coolants range, increasing its coverage to 169 manufacturers' specifications and international standards to cater for most vehicles and static engines used today.

Ultralife antifreeze coolants cover a broad range of engines used in the commercial vehicle sector. They are ideal for fleet managers, dealerships and mechanics that are responsible for a variety of different vehicle technologies, OEM brands and vehicle models.

New antifreeze coolant range with added chemistry

The new range incorporates a variety of additive chemistries that are chosen to further enhance the performance and longevity of cooling system components.

The new antifreeze coolants are based on organic acid technology (OAT) as opposed to old-style products that have used inorganic (mineral) chemistry for rust and corrosion protection. This older chemistry is very active and depletes over a two-year period.

In contrast OAT-based coolants offer much longer service life. The organic acids (carboxylates) only interact when the electrolytic process of corrosion starts to take place. As a result, this technology operates in a more selective way resulting in a longer lifespan of at least five years.

The older chemistry associated with traditional two-year antifreeze still has its place and some of its features can be used with new technologies to provide tailored protection, depending on the mixture of metallurgies used in the engine platform.

For example, silicates can be added to enhance the protection of aluminium, which is a dominant material used in engine construction. Phosphates may also be used to help control cavitation corrosion and maintain a good, slightly alkaline working pH.

These products that make use of a mixture of OAT and inorganic chemistry are referred to as hybrid antifreeze coolants.

Correct specification – don't choose on colour

Antifreeze coolant is often selected based on colour, but this is purely cosmetic and plays no part in performance. Mixing different product types can be highly detrimental, so antifreeze coolant choice should always mirror OEM specifications to maximise protection and efficiency of the engine.



*Adrian Hill, Technology Manager,
Morris Lubricants*

Adrian Hill, Technology Manager for Morris Lubricants explains the development of the new antifreeze coolant range:

"Traditional coolant specifications have relied on products using simple chemistry, typically with a two-year lifespan. As the metallurgies used in engine design continue to develop, alongside changing duty cycles, antifreeze coolant technology has needed to evolve in parallel, to help maximise engine protection as well as preventing freezing and overheating.

"Morris Lubricants has met this challenge head on, with the introduction of a newly improved Ultralife range of antifreeze coolants, providing protection at temperatures as low as -37° C across the entire portfolio."

Adrian Hill concludes:

"Historically, antifreeze coolants may not have been viewed as integral to overall engine performance and longevity, but operators are now realising the benefits of investing in an antifreeze coolant that can contribute to improved efficiencies and reduced environmental impact. That's why we are launching such an extensive new range, providing optimised coverage."

The new Ultralife products

Ultralife 1: Employs the latest OAT inhibitors and provides a wide specification profile for passenger cars, trucks, coaches and buses and static engines, as well as for the agriculture and off-highway sectors.

Ultralife 2: A hybrid antifreeze coolant with phosphate technology to manage cavitation corrosion and maintain pH level. It is preferred by Asian and some European passenger car OEMs to protect water pump seals for example.

Ultralife 3: A hybrid antifreeze coolant that

uses silicate and phosphate technology to enhance corrosion protection and maintain pH control. It is preferred by German OEMs across the passenger car and heavy-duty sectors.

Ultralife 4: Satisfies the needs of many OEM specifications across a broad range of market sectors in the professional workshop. With established OAT coolant technology, it provides five years of engine protection under a wide variety of workloads and operating conditions.

Ultralife Red: An entry-level, five-year antifreeze coolant using OAT technology with

a basic range of specifications and standards across multiple market sectors - ideal for older vehicles.

MEG Antifreeze Coolant: To ensure it can continue to service the needs of older vehicles that were designed to run on mineral-based antifreeze coolants, Morris Lubricants is retaining its two-year, MEG (Monoethylene Glycol) antifreeze coolant with mineral technology.

Product sizes include 5 litre, 20 litre, 205 litre and IBCs. ●

To view the Ultralife range of antifreeze coolants, or if you need technical advice, please visit morrislubricants.co.uk

Measures introduced for **MOT Testers** who fail to complete their **MOT annual training and assessment**

As an MOT tester, it is your responsibility to stay up to date with your annual training and assessment. Not only is this a legal requirement, but it also ensures that you have the knowledge and skills to perform your role to the best of your ability and maintain the safety of road users.

As of January 2024, new measures have been introduced for MOT testers who fail to complete their annual training and assessment within the training year. If you fall into this category and later wish to be reinstated as an MOT tester, you will need to fulfil a specific set of requirements.

Firstly, you will need to undergo a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check to ensure that you are a suitable person to carry out MOT testing. This check is necessary to ensure that you have no previous convictions that may impact your ability to safely conduct MOT tests.

Additionally, you will be required to undergo a DVSA (Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency) demonstration. This involves demonstrating your knowledge of the MOT testing process and showing that you can complete an MOT test to the required standards.

Finally, you will also need to complete the annual training for the following year to ensure that you are up to date with

changes in legislation, vehicle technology, and testing standards.

It is important to note that failing to meet these requirements will impact your eligibility for reinstatement as an MOT tester. If you have any convictions that the DVSA do not allow, this could prevent you from testing again.

At Autotech Training, we encourage all MOT testers to seize the opportunity to complete their training and assessment well ahead of the deadline. By doing so, you can ensure that you remain eligible to carry out MOT testing and that you are fully equipped to meet the needs of the role.

So, if you want to ensure that you are fully compliant with MOT testing requirements, book your IMI Annual Training and Assessment 2023/2024 with Autotech Training today.

If you have any questions, please contact us and our experienced team will be able to provide guidance. ●





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How feasible is Vehicle-to-Grid charging for fleets?

By Adam Hall, Energy Services Director at Drax Electric Vehicles

With the 2035 petrol and diesel ban on the horizon, electric vehicles (EVs) are likely to become a normal occurrence across UK households and businesses. EV sales and registrations are already climbing year-on-year, with this forecasted to continue.

While EVs offer an opportunity to shift to cleaner transport for environmental reasons, Vehicle-to-Grid (V2G) charging could change the way organisations think about electricity.

With the first consumer V2G tariff announced last week, Adam Hall, Energy Services Director at Drax Electric Vehicles, explores the future of V2G charging and the opportunity it offers fleets.

What is V2G charging?

V2G is another phrase for bi-directional charging, the two-way flow of energy from the grid to vehicles and vice versa.

We're in a transformative time where electric vehicles are integrating into our energy ecosystem. In one of National Grid's Future Energy Scenarios, V2G charging could provide up to 38GW of flexible power from 5.5 million EVs. That extra electricity would cover all the extra peak power the UK needs in the highest-demand scenario for 2050.

At Drax Electric Vehicles, we see EVs as assets that can transform how organisations use energy and supercharge sustainability agendas through V2G technology. Historically, fleet vehicles have generated revenue only while operational. What V2G offers, in principle, is the opportunity for fleets to generate revenue in their downtime, too.

As EVs draw power from the UK energy network, they can also send power back if the grid needs it. This effectively means EVs can act like mobile power stations.

Renewable generation now makes up a greater share of the energy mix; the network has a higher percentage of clean and low-cost electricity available. It's possible for EVs to act as stationary batteries, storing this power before sending it back to the grid. This means EVs can offer grid and energy price stability.

What could V2G mean for fleets?

Alongside wider electrification, we know that EVs will create extra demand for power. This rise in demand is likely to affect the price of electricity, but price volatility creates an opportunity for businesses to profit through optimising bi-directional V2G charging.

Most cars, including fleets, tend to be unused for over twelve hours a day. V2G technology means that fleets can charge when energy prices are low, either overnight or when there's a surplus of renewable energy available on the network.

When the grid is under stress with high energy demand, a bi-directional charger can send power back to the network from fleet vehicles. Businesses may also be able to generate additional revenue by providing grid stability services, like V2G opportunities.

As an EV partner and energy supplier, we're set up to provide EV charging, energy, and asset optimisation for businesses across the UK. With our EV insights, we can optimise fleets' charging schedules, so you charge at the best time for the lowest cost. While our energy background enables us to explore the commercial viability of system stability services, like demand flexibility schemes and V2G technology.

How feasible is V2G technology?

Currently, bi-directional charge points are available but they're not yet at a sufficient scale or an appropriate price to be viable. However, V2G technology will soon become more affordable, and organisations with EV fleets will be in a key position to benefit.

We're helping organisations across the UK transition from internal combustion engine vehicles to EVs and develop a reliable, future-proofed electrification strategy. By trialling technologies like V2G, we're beginning to understand how they can work in tandem and the future of commercial energy. Everything we learn will help us support businesses - now and in the future. ●

For more information please visit: <https://energy.drax.com/electric-vehicles/>



Rollout of electric vehicle chargepoints to be accelerated

The government has announced new measures to support electric vehicle (EV) drivers as part of its 'Plan for Drivers'. These measures include grants for schools, cash for councils, and proposals to increase the number of charging points.

Technology and Decarbonisation Minister, Anthony Browne, launched the support for greener schools in Nottinghamshire in early February. The new grant provides up to 75% of the cost to buy and install charge points, up to £2,500 per socket, an increase from the previous £350. This grant is available for state-funded schools, colleges, nurseries, and academies to improve their charge point facilities for staff and visitors. It may also help schools generate revenue by making their charge points available to the public. Applications can be made online, and independent schools can apply for funding through the Workplace Charging Scheme and the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Grant for SMEs.

The government is also delivering the £381 million Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund to local authorities across the country. The first capital payments for charging projects have been approved for three local authorities from East Sussex to North Yorkshire, and two London boroughs, bringing the total funding for these areas to more than £14.2 million. The funding will support the installation of thousands of new chargers, ensuring the rollout continues at pace to support drivers in every area of the country.

Through the LEVI capability funding, almost 100 dedicated EV officers have been newly recruited to support

charge point procurement. To aid local authorities in building a skilled workforce and delivering their charging projects, the government is also launching the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (EVI) training course for their officers, which will open to all local authorities in mid-March following a successful trial.

Anthony Browne, the Technology and Decarbonisation Minister, said, "We're getting on with delivering our Plan for Drivers, and this latest set of measures will mean EV owners everywhere benefit from easier and more convenient access to charge points. This government has already spent over £2 billion to ensure a smooth switch to EVs, and we're committed to supporting drivers as we transition towards net zero in a proportionate way that doesn't burden working people."

Industry statistics show that more and more drivers are making the switch to electric vehicles, with fully electric vehicles accounting for over 16% of the new UK car market in 2023. The number of plug-in vehicles in the UK has also risen to over 1.2 million, of which 770,000 are fully battery-electric, meaning more and more drivers are making the switch.

The government is investing alongside industry in EV infrastructure to ensure we meet our climate change commitments while charting the fairest path to net zero, which does not unnecessarily burden families. To provide EV drivers with easier and more reliable public charging, new laws recently came into force mandating that prices across charge points are transparent, easy to compare, and that large proportion of new public charge points have contactless payment options. Over 53,000 public charge

points have been installed across the UK, demonstrating the progress that has been made in the switch to electric.

In addition, the government is launching a consultation to look at ways to speed up charge point installation across the country. The proposals would give EV charge point operators the right to carry out street works using a permit rather than a license. Permits can be issued much faster, taking days instead of months, and are significantly cheaper to obtain than licenses, reducing costs for operators and speeding up the charge point rollout for drivers.

These are the second package of measures delivered from the government's Plan for Drivers and follow last month's announcement of a crackdown on disruptive roadworks and better digital information to boost sat-nav accuracy.

"This is an exciting opportunity for schools across the UK to become part of an ongoing move towards a greener public sector. Schools engaging with this grant will be supporting the development of green infrastructure, helping to improve their local environments. Developing a greener education estate is a key element of our sustainability and climate change strategy. The expansion of this grant supports our ambition to improve the sustainability of our schools in the ongoing move towards net zero."

Baroness Barran, Minister for the School System and Student Finance at the Department for Education. ●

A united industry brings e-vans centre stage

With the UK van parc growing rapidly, Venson Automotive Solutions shares what needs to be done to support businesses making the switch to electric



The recent publication of a Zero Emissions Vans Plan from the BVRLA and other industry players has brought long overdue focus onto the potential – as well as the challenges – for e-van fleets.

While there are less than five million vans on UK roads, compared with 35 million cars, each van covers far more miles than each car, meaning they have a greater environmental impact than cars. In the road to zero emissions, vans must become a higher priority as a matter of urgency.

As the BVRLA plan spells out, significant change is required to get the van market from its current 5.9% electric to meet the 70% zero emissions target for vans by 2030.

Great strides have been made towards zero emissions mobility in recent years, and the vehicles are now more able to meet the needs of many businesses. However, barriers remain for many businesses and the BVRLA plan calls for important changes that will help sole traders, SMEs and larger businesses convert to a lower and eventually zero emissions fleet. The rate at which businesses switch continues to fall short of what is required to meet the net-zero target by 2050.

Meeting the zero emissions vans target

As explained in our report, 'The road to tomorrow starts today', when the ban on the sale of ICE vehicles from 2030 – later shifted back to 2035 – and the intention

to become carbon neutral by 2050 were announced, there was very little public acceptance, poor infrastructure, and few ICE alternatives. The targets were therefore met with alarm and confusion among drivers and the industry alike. In the years since the announcement, drastic change has taken place and public opinion and appetite for non-ICE cars and commercial vehicles is changing.

With a slew of manufacturers now producing electric vans, a lot of progress has been made in a short space of time. Such progress supports the viability of a carbon-neutral future. Unfortunately, though, electric vans remain far more expensive to purchase and lease than their ICE alternatives and they incur greater regulatory barriers than ICE vans the same size - the weight of their batteries takes e-vans into the 4.25t category.

Subject to more regulation and limitations than a diesel equivalent of the same size, e-vans incur increased down time and costs, and the business impact is too great for many fleets. 4.25t vans need MOTs from the first year rather than a third like diesel vans, and EU drivers' hours rules limit the distance vans can travel and the time they spend on the road.

Removing these regulatory barriers by aligning 4.25t e-vans with 3.5t ICE vans is one of three 'key asks' included in the BVRLA Zero Emissions Vans Plan. The plan also requests grants be made available for both new and used e-vans, as well as regulatory and fiscal support for a charging network that is affordable and

accessible to commercial vehicles.

Vans are the fastest growing part of the UK vehicle parc, and, as we have already established, they account for disproportionately high mileage and therefore emissions, against their percentage of the UK car parc. Yet the average e-van costs 50% more than diesel options, and charging infrastructure is not always suitable for vans and business requirements. For example, spaces are often designed for smaller vehicles, meaning vans can't use them if other vehicles are charging in adjacent spaces, and waiting for an available charger can cost businesses valuable time on the road.

While there are now more than 42,000 charge points across the UK in over 15,000 locations, allowing an hour's downtime into a driver's route might well have greater implications for commercial users, more so when the need for the fast-charging stations necessary to achieve this time is not always easy to come by in rural areas.

The UK's charging infrastructure for vans is still a long way behind where it needs to be to allow for a commercial vehicle sector that is 100% fossil-fuel free. Ramping-up investment as requested in the BVRLA plan should make the UK commercial transport sector not just green, but profitable. ●

For more information visit: www.venson.com



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The **Fleet Interview**: Scottish Water

with *Elaine Pringle, Fleet Manager*

Introduction

Accountable to the Scottish Government, Scottish Water has the responsibility of providing 1.51 billion litres of clean drinking water to around 2.62 million homes and 160,000 businesses throughout Scotland. In common with all water utility companies, Scottish Water also has the responsibility of protecting public health and the environment by collecting and treating around 1.07 billion litres of wastewater each year,

before it is returned to sources.

Operating environments are diverse, ranging from the towns and cities across the Central Belt to the sparsely populated Highlands and Islands, a fact that presents significant challenges to fleet operations that are overseen by Elaine Pringle, Scottish Water's Fleet Manager.

By nature of the diverse operating environments, fleet operations are unavoidably complex. Additionally, further challenges are being presented

by a significant programme of fleet electrification and therefore Scottish Water bears not only the environmental responsibility for water provision and the treatment of waste but also of minimising the impact of all operations that support that core role.

We are therefore very grateful that we were able to catch up with Elaine, to talk about how these huge challenges are being met and to find out what the outlook for Scottish Water fleet looks like for the coming years.

Interview

Q: Could you break down your current fleet assets and how they are distributed across Scotland?

Scottish Water's diverse commercial fleet consists of around 1,300 vans, 120 heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) and 500 items of plant, including small trailers, mini excavators and forklifts.

The majority of our commercial vehicles

are specialist or have ancillary equipment fitted, such as tankers, jetting units, cranes and fridges.

We operate an electric vehicle (EV) only company car scheme, and with the introduction of our salary sacrifice scheme in 2022, we now have c.350 electric lease cars on our fleet, including 12 pool cars for grey fleet drivers to utilise.

Our fleet assets are based right across Scotland, from Dumfries and Galloway

right up to the Highlands and Islands.

Q: What are the core tasks of your vehicle fleet daily?

Our operational teams rely on their vehicles to complete a variety of tasks including:

- water and waste water sampling
- electrical and mechanical (E&M) repairs and maintenance,
- sludge movement from septic tanks and waste water treatment works

(WWTW) to sludge treatment centres,

- water and waste water operations
- preventative maintenance on our water and waste water network
- repairing bursts
- leakage detection
- facilities management
- ... the list goes on!

Our vehicles are what I would class as *'doing'* vehicles and the varied nature of our operations drives our need for a diverse fleet.

Q: How far along is your vehicle electrification strategy and what are the challenges that you have faced along the way?

We have set our vehicle electrification strategy: to transition to EVs when it is both economic and operationally practicable to do so.

For us, this is currently predominantly in the car and small/medium van segments of our fleet. We have started delivering on our strategy, with EV-only car schemes in place and all of our car fleet due to be fully electric before 2025. We have around 100 electric vans in the fleet, estimated to double over the next 12 months.

Although not economical at the moment, we are proactively trialling new vehicle technology in the large van and HGV segments, including taking delivery of our first battery electric vehicle (BEV) HGV, hopefully within the next 12 months too!

It will come as no surprise to many that our biggest challenges are vehicle technology (range, payload, towing capability), availability of infrastructure and repair and maintenance (R&M).

We are continually scanning the market and working with vehicle manufacturers to keep up-to-date with new vehicle technology to identify vehicles that may be up to the job!

Concerning infrastructure, we are not relying on the availability of public charging; we are installing our charging infrastructure and back office systems to meet the demand of our EV fleet.

The area we have less control over is R&M. We rely on a network of maintenance suppliers across Scotland, many of whom are not yet able to provide R&M for EVs. Although, R&M is one of our biggest challenges at the moment and not just for EVs!

Q: How do you ensure that charging infrastructure is available for your drivers and how is the cost of charging managed?

As we identify vehicles that can be transitioned to electric, we also consider the charging requirements. By using telematics data to determine vehicle utilisation and dwell times, and through engagement with drivers and operational teams, we can determine the optimal charging infrastructure required, which is a blend of home and workplace chargers. Workplace charging also allows us to effectively manage the cost of charging.

Q: What plans need to be put in place to meet your fleet EV targets and objectives and which parts of the fleet remain a challenge to transitioning?

Ah – the known unknowns! As are most, we have been targeting the low-hanging fruit, the vehicles that are doing relatively low average daily mileages and don't require a significant amount of

conversion/payload. We know that we need a plan for the parts of the fleet that are harder to electrify, our 4x4s, large vans and HGVs, but we don't know what that plan will be yet!

Q: There have been many challenges to vehicle supply chains and they seem set to continue with current global events. How have these affected your fleet replacement plans and what has been the effect on, for example, maintenance schedules and unplanned vehicle off-road time?

This is one of our most significant challenges at the moment. I have several assets that are beyond the replacement criteria we set, which is resulting in an increase in repair and maintenance costs, vehicle downtime or vehicle off-road (VOR) which has a knock-on effect on productivity and/or drives up hire or contractor spending.

Q: What are the challenges of a large home-based fleet, combined with grey fleet, when managing risk and what level of driver training are you using to minimise that risk?

Apart from our HGVs, the majority of our commercial vehicles go home overnight for business purposes, to allow our operational teams to respond to standby events or to benefit from efficiencies of direct-to-site working practices.

To manage our operational road risk, we undertake many driver safety activities, including driver induction and training, scheduled or planned vehicle audits, unannounced gate checks and post-incident investigations.

We complete driving licence checks for all our drivers and our grey fleet drivers, this includes vehicle checks.



Q: With the home-based vehicles in mind, how do you manage SMR schedules and therefore maximise efficiency and minimise vehicle downtime?

All our commercial vehicle drivers complete pre-use vehicle checks using a mobile phone App. The driver records any defects on the App and in the vehicle defect book and then calls our internal Fleet Maintenance team who arrange repair via our network of maintenance suppliers.

Scheduled maintenance is planned and communicated to our operational teams in a forward maintenance planner.

We have built a strong network of garages and suppliers across Scotland and aim to service our assets locally where possible to minimise vehicle downtime.

Q: How do you utilise technology and other services to assist in managing vehicle and driver risk and efficiency?

Technology certainly makes fleet teams' lives a lot easier! We use several systems including fleet management software, telematics, digital tachographs and tachograph analysis software, driver licence checking and vehicle pre-use check Apps. It would make our lives EVEN easier if we had one system that did it all! Recently, after a two-year trial, we have

partnered with Michelin Connected Fleet, both to support driver safety and also to help the business meet our ambitious target of transitioning to a zero-emission fleet.

We take a risk-based approach to driving licence checks. The frequency of checks is dependent on the type of vehicle being driven. With more than 4,000 drivers, it is a significant undertaking for Scottish Water to check driving licences to ensure that everyone driving for business purposes holds a valid licence for the category of vehicle they are driving. From that perspective, the DriverCheck service works well for us. It provides automated, reliable driving licence checking, continually and silently in the background, highlighting any issues.

Q: How important is regular engagement with suppliers, to ensure that objectives can be met and that expectations are practical and realistic?

Building and maintaining relationships is key. Regular engagement with suppliers is essential to keep up to date with new products and services, particularly new vehicle technology.

With the challenges we are facing in terms of new asset delivery and repair and maintenance, it is so important to have regular communication to ensure

estimated delivery/completion dates are realistic and to help us plan for the worst, to maintain service for our customers.

Q: The Government is responsible for setting out targets and objectives in many areas of fleet management. How much does it assist in meeting those targets and is there more that can be done?

Government targets and objectives influence strategy and policy decisions. For Scottish Water, the Scottish Government's Programme for Scotland targets for public sector fleets heavily influenced our fleet decarbonisation strategy and our internal targets.

There are still areas for improvement required in the speed of zero-emission vehicle technology, particularly for utility/HGVs, and for EV R&M networks. I would like to see Government targets, objectives and support in these areas.

Q: How do you think you will be able to best describe your fleet operation by 2028? What will have been the key, positive changes?

By 2028, our fleet operation should be well on its way to a large-scale transition to a zero-emission fleet. For that to happen, the key changes need to be around vehicle technology and infrastructure advances. ●



Licence Checking should be more than a superficial review of driver documentation

Supplier Insight: DriverCheck



Yvette Giannini, Managing Director at Drivercheck

Introduction

There are a great many things that, on the face of it, seem obvious. The fleet manager's responsibility to ensure that drivers' licences are valid does seem plain and simple. However, when fleets are subject to demanding legal scrutiny and when a diverse range of vehicle assets are being operated, the task becomes much more complicated. It is therefore essential that fleet managers utilise systems that ensure that all legal obligations are met and more, that ethical responsibilities towards drivers, members of the public and other road users are considered.

Essential Fleet Manager has been speaking with Yvette Giannini, Managing Director at Drivercheck, about how licence checking is so much more than a superficial review of driver documentation and is, in fact, a vital component in managing risk, meeting compliance requirements and providing legal protection for vehicle operating organisations.

Interview

Q: When operating a large and diverse fleet, what are the possible impacts of a flawed licence-checking regime?

Businesses have a duty of care to be compliant with health and safety regulations. This means checking their drivers hold a legal licence and they are entitled to drive work vehicles. Failure to do so could leave a business open to fines and prosecution, not to mention potential damage to their brand.

Many businesses decide to operate a manual "in-house" licence checking system on their drivers and this can lead to several issues. Manual licence checks can leave you exposed to critical human error. Endorsements can get missed or misinterpreted, resulting in fines or worse. And chasing your employees for their documents can be time-consuming.

Businesses can get caught up in "dailies" or more importantly, the growth of the business, and licence checking can fall off their list of "to do's" as they are too busy and this is a risk.

Large organisations should be focused on the business and not in the administration. By carrying out automated driving licence checks, organisations are free to get on with pursuing growth goals. And when time is money, automating the process for greater efficiency can significantly minimise the costs of a full fleet review.

Q: What are the main challenges of managing the full scrutiny of licences? How complex can this task be?

Businesses are exposing themselves to risk when managing drivers' licences and licence checking.

When managing drivers, you are handling large amounts of personal data and therefore at risk of breach of GDPR.

Automating your UK driving licence checks can remove this risk. DriverCheck requires 4 key pieces of information for each driver (forename, surname, valid and unique email address and a unique identifier (date of birth or employee number). We securely exchange this data with the employer and then we

handle the rest, so the driver's personal information remains secure within our encrypted portal, while providing their employer with the necessary information regarding their licence status: Does this driver have a valid driving licence? How many endorsements does this driver have? Does this driver have the correct categories to be driving our vehicles?

In addition to the risk of breaching GDPR, employers are at risk of human errors. Initial licence checks or rechecks can be forgotten about, endorsements can be missed and licence status may not be issued to the right people quickly and efficiently.

If businesses run an HGV fleet, most insurers encourage checking drivers on a quarterly basis (every 3 months). It's vitally important that these rechecks are completed in a timely manner. Having a secure automated system in place, means licence checks and rechecks will occur automatically at the set business frequency, and any changes to a driver's details will be highlighted straight away.

Q: Are there any common licence-checking errors or oversights that occur in fleets and if so, why do they happen?

Common oversights when managing a manual licence checking process, would be endorsements and categories.

It can be easy to see that a driver has a valid licence, however it could be missed how many points the driver has on their licence and if they carry the correct categories to drive company vehicles.

For drivers, their driving licence is a legal document, which means it needs to be kept up to date whenever their details change.

Updates can include a name change (for instance, if you get married and take your partner's surname) a change of address, or simply because your licence is due to expire.

If drivers fail to update their address when they move house, they could be at risk of a fine. Even if their new accommodation is temporary, they need to inform the DVLA.

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If their vehicle is caught committing an offence such as speeding, the notice will go to the address listed on their licence. Incorrect details may lead to missing the notice and therefore not complying with it. This can result in prosecution and 6 points on your licence.

Informing the DVLA of any changes will make sure your record is up to date and all future driving licence reminders are sent to your correct address.

Q: How does Drivercheck provide the fleet manager with a comprehensive solution to the core tasks involved in licence checking?

At DriverCheck, we provide a managed service to more than 1200 clients from both private and public sectors.

We help ensure clients' employees are eligible to drive and their vehicles fully compliant. Via our secure and encrypted portal, clients can check and validate their employees' driving licence credentials and that of their vehicles, which can be accessed 24/7.

The DriverCheck System provides businesses with a robust compliance management tool. Our solution is vital to manage your drivers, making sure they meet all the legal requirements to drive for your business.

Clients can relax in the knowledge that their drivers will be checked at the agreed frequency and that DriverCheck will contact them to highlight when licence checks have been completed, if there is any expired information, or if there is a change in licence status.

Our portal provides a summary overview for clients to log into and view all their drivers at a high level or within 2 clicks, drill down into the data for analysis.

Q: Following on from that, how does Drivercheck contribute to a fleet's risk management and reduction objectives and how is the operator provided with legal protection?

Drivers are required to complete a declaration when boarding onto the DriverCheck portal. This declaration is valid for 3 years and allows DriverCheck to carry out licence checks, via the DVLA, at their employer's set frequency. Once this declaration is in place, we are removing the risk of a driver not being checked.

Licence checking drivers through DriverCheck's portal, minimises the risk of employing disqualified drivers and ensures businesses are compliant with complex driver legislation, reducing their corporate road risks and insurance premiums.

Q: Within your system, how frequently will the status of a licence be reviewed?

The frequency of licence checking is dependent on the business's needs. DriverCheck can offer a "best practice" view however it really is down to each business's requirements.

For example, employers who have HGV drivers driving larger vehicles (greater than 3.5t) should check the status of licences in this group every 3 months, as these drivers are recognised as 'professional drivers' and the company's records can be inspected at any time by VOSA (Vehicle & Operator Services Agency).

Q: What aspects of Drivercheck, in your view, have led to it being the trusted choice of several essential services fleet operators, such as Scottish Water?

DriverCheck are able to offer a robust and secure platform for clients that can customise their account to meet their business needs and requirements.

For Scottish Water, they have over 4000 drivers and their licence checking frequency is set depending on the class of vehicle being driven.

We also track grey fleet drivers for Scottish Water, and many other clients, so that employers can check the MOT,

Road Tax and Insurance status on employee's privately owned vehicles, being used for work purposes.

We offer a managed service at DriverCheck and provide first class customer service to all our clients.

Q: Many fleet managers will not only have responsibility for large LCV and HGV based fleets but also for vehicles that support employee mobility.

Drivers may be "essential" car users but can often be only driving for work on specific occasions using, for example, pool cars, hire cars or their own vehicle. How does Drivercheck ensure that, in all circumstances, the correct checks and declarations are carried out?

For most businesses, they have all employees on the DriverCheck system with a valid declaration in place so they can be checked at an agreed licence check frequency. This frequency can be set differently depending on the type of driver. Again, the client can decide what works best for their business needs.

We would suggest to clients starting out to add all employees and then we can identify the complete "non drivers" list and remove them. The rest can remain on the system and be licenced checked.

Q: Do you foresee any changes in legislation or accepted best-practice advice that might drive change in licence-checking requirements?

Business insurances and business compliance are the main drivers (pardon the pun) when it comes to businesses looking to complete set frequency licence checking.

While businesses know they have a duty of care to be compliant with health and safety regulations, many still continue to do a manual in-house process.

Moving to a fully automated solution with DriverCheck will provide businesses with the peace of mind that they are meeting legal obligations and remove the administration burden. ●

To find out more about how DriverCheck can help your business visit: <https://www.drivercheck.co.uk>

Driver management best practice

- minimising risk and maximising compliance



Introduction

As a fleet or transport manager, you have the responsibility of managing your organisation's fleet, which includes managing its activity, ensuring compliance, and overseeing the drivers.

In this special feature, we will be discussing driver management, covering topics that focus on mitigating risks. We will discuss the importance of providing a driver's handbook, implementing further driver training, and the associated risks with drivers who take their company vehicles home in the evening. We will also be looking at the legal aspects related to drug driving, looking after driver well-being, and discussing how to stay up-to-date with compliance issues surrounding driver licence checking. Additionally, we have feature articles that look at the safety of lone workers and that provide safe driving advice.

Overall, managing drivers is about minimising risk and maximising compliance in the most cost-effective way possible. Good communication and encouraging a safe driving culture will help with driver well-being, their understanding of what is expected of them, and ultimately driver retention.

The basics - Driver Handbooks

To make sure drivers understand what is expected of them while driving a fleet vehicle, they should be provided with

clear instructions outlined in a driver's handbook. The Health & Safety at Work Act etc 1974, section 7, states that every employee has a duty to "Ensure the health, safety and welfare of themselves and others while at work." If drivers have full knowledge of the rules and regulations they need to adhere to, they are more likely to comply.

On any given day, statistically, driving is the most dangerous activity an employee can undertake, so it is essential to get things right from the outset. Placing a copy of your organisation's driver handbook in all your fleet vehicles and making drivers aware of its contents before the first use of the vehicle is ideal.

Ensuring drivers have the correct licence to drive

Routine driving licence checks should be carried out for all drivers who drive at work and should be part of your fleet management policy. Regular licence checking will help protect your organisation from the risk of prosecution or fines and keep our roads safer.

Under The Road Traffic Act 1988, it is an offence for anyone to knowingly drive without a valid licence, or for an employer to permit a driver to drive a company vehicle without one.

Many organisations operate specialist vehicles, so it is vital to ensure drivers have the appropriate licences for the type of vehicles they are required to

operate. Regular checks will help to mitigate risks.

Communication

Good communication is the most important aspect of driver management. Without regular communication between drivers and their fleet or transport manager, drivers may feel isolated, especially those who work remotely and spend little time at the depot. Building a 'team' like in any other business activity, means your drivers will feel included and therefore will 'care' about how they perform.

Ultimately, good driver management is about gaining mutual respect and leading by example. If drivers see their fleet or transport manager bending the rules or not listening to them when there is an issue, they are less likely to speak up when it matters.

Refreshing knowledge

All drivers, no matter how competent or experienced, can benefit from regular refreshers on driving safely and changes in legislation or regulations surrounding their driving activity. This may include changes to driver hours legislation, highway code rules, or general updates on what to do in the event of a collision. Setting aside a few hours a month to ensure drivers stay updated will pay dividends. This could be done through in-person meetings or e-learning modules.

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Increasing visibility of driver behaviour with telematics

Monitoring driver behaviour is an area that impacts all aspects of fleet management, and its importance cannot be underestimated. The use of telematics and data-led solutions helps managers monitor driver behaviour and make informed decisions to improve safety and efficiency.

Offering driver training

Implementing in-house or external driver training programmes for your drivers could reduce your fleet costs by reducing fuel spend, repairs and maintenance costs.

Passing your driving test is for most, a once-in-a-lifetime skill test, but driving is a daily activity where skills change, confidence is lost and complacency can lead to bad habits developing.

Offering regular training, especially to those drivers that your telematics data indicates as 'poor performers' can help to get driving skills back on track. With driver shortages becoming an increasing problem, retention is uppermost in fleet and transport manager's minds, so offering further training could be a short-term cost but a long-term gain.

If you are employing a driver who has only ever driven a passenger vehicle for example, but is entitled and required to drive a commercial vehicle, they might need extra training to gain a better insight into the differences in performance, visibility and size of vehicle. You could also decide to offer further training to existing drivers for specialist or larger vehicles they might be required to drive in the future, as part of their career progression within your organisation.

Whatever your requirements many providers can help deliver on-site and off-site training.

Mitigating the risks associated with drivers who take their vehicles home

It's not uncommon for large fleets to allow or even require drivers to take their work vehicles home at night. This may be due to limited space at the depot

or to disperse the van fleet as widely as possible to respond to emergency call-outs, for example. However, this practice adds an element of risk as the fleet manager has limited physical visibility of the vehicle. They rely on the driver or operative to carry out essential pre-use checks and look after the vehicle's security.

As a fleet or transport manager, you have a legal and financial obligation to ensure that your fleet is safe, efficient, and compliant.

The legislative burden has increased over recent years, and therefore, 'O' Licence holders seek solutions that not only assist in meeting requirements but also provide demonstrable proof of compliance.

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 meet your duty of care requirements. Ensuring your vehicles are compliant and safe to drive is essential. Regimes designed to meet legislative demands should be followed even when the whole fleet is exempt and no 'O' Licence is required.

Vehicle pre-use checks and defect reporting are vital for fleet compliance and safety routines. Thorough checks of all vehicles are essential, but for those that do 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 ensure their vehicles are correctly checked before use each day.

Enabling the driver to carry out these checks and communicate with the fleet department is equally important. First, to confirm that the check has been carried out and second, 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.

CheckedSafe, an award-winning vehicle compliance software, has innovated in this area, founded in 2014 by Gary Hawthorne and business partner Darran Harris.

CheckedSafe has developed products that help fleet operators not only with operator license compliance but also make the management of remote van fleets safer, more efficient, and easier.

The CheckedSafe fit-for-purpose App, not only helps with compliance but was also specifically designed for the effective management of work-related road safety.

Essential Fleet Manager recently spoke to Gary Hawthorne from CheckedSafe about the remote management of van fleets that do not return to base overnight and the associated problems and how the CheckedSafe App can assist with this.

Gary Hawthorne commented: *"CheckedSafe replaces the paper-based daily vehicle check by allowing drivers to complete a daily vehicle check via an App on their smartphone."*

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."

While some drivers may have driveways to park their vehicles overnight, many do not, and vehicles are left on the street, sometimes out of view of the driver's home address.

Theft from vehicles is a significant problem, and commercial fleet vehicles can be targeted, especially if someone believes there are high-value tools left in the vehicle overnight. A sticker stating that there are no expensive tools in the vehicle is unlikely to deter the most determined thief. Again, there are expert vehicle security providers who can help to make vehicles as secure as possible and the benefits will far outweigh the initial capital outlay.

Within fleets that have transitioned or are in the process of transitioning to EVs, it can also be challenging to ensure that they have sufficient access to charging. If they can be kept in a driveway then a home charging point is an obvious solution.

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Building a driver safety culture

RED Corporate Driver Training is the specialist sister operation to RED Driver Training – the leader in the UK helping many thousands of novice drivers pass their driving test each year.

We recognise the importance of good driving standards, from passing a first-ever car driving test to the world of safe and effective deliveries, transportation, logistics and competent driving for, or on business.

Safety, doesn't just embrace a range of physical goods and services to help support an organisation. It is an attitude of mind and a cultural thing, a philosophy to make sure whatever you or your workforce does, that it is done safely and, of course, effectively too.

Driving safely for, or on business is no exception, but it can all too often get disregarded or pushed down the priority list. But it is one of the most dangerous and yet mainstream activities performed at work.

Driving well, is a skill needed for life.

RED Corporate Driver Training offers a whole range of online and on-road driver training to support your drivers, but it requires a partnership approach between supplier and customer to make sure that the training delivered is well-targeted, relevant and effective. We can offer most of our services at 'your place or ours', and also help businesses get drivers through

HGV licence acquisition - a continuing need right now.

With the continuing shortfall in professional drivers in the UK, coupled with the fact that road safety statistics have remained largely unchanged, with approximately 1,700 road fatalities and 30,000 individuals severely injured every year, this is really no time compromise on driving safety standards. The cost of road collisions is enormous, affecting businesses and society as a whole.

RED Corporate Driver Training can help support your focus on driver training and standards with a comprehensive driver risk management and driver training course range. This includes truck driver licence acquisition in a range of categories including towing and runs through a course range that includes everything from advanced driving techniques to speed awareness, Driver CPC and more.

With RED's dedicated training facility at Donington, in the heart of the country, plus our wide network of fleet trainers, we can normally meet your needs with a strong customer focus and a commitment to quality delivery. We cater for car, van and truck drivers too.

In addition to our great choice of courses and delivery methods (online assessments, online e-learning, webinars,

workshops, one-to-one in the vehicle, etc), RED is just launching 'SafetyFirst' – its new driver risk management customer platform. Cloud-based, and flexible for use on a PC, tablet or smartphone, it provides the overarching control and visibility you need over your fleet. You can organise the details of each of your drivers and vehicles in one dynamic system, helping to monitor your commitment to driver safety, organise ongoing training as needed, and also monitor and check driver licence status. Individual drivers can access the system to complete online training and grey fleet drivers can also self-declare their vehicle's safety and legality to drive for any business needs. You can even host your important driver manuals, policies and other important driver safety assets in the system online. We would be pleased to arrange a demonstration of this new SafetyFirst system.

Having a comprehensive driver training approach (not just basic driver licence checking, for example) is increasingly important – risk needs managing and on the road is no different – if you outsource aspects of your driver risk/training, or even if you need support with a more ad hoc training programme or a focused Safety Day at our Donington facility, then we would be pleased to think you will consider RED Corporate Driver Training. ●

Contact RED Corporate Driver Training to find out more, visit: www.redtraining.com



...cont'd from page 22

However, if a driver lives in rented accommodation they may not have the authority to install a charge point and may have to use on-street parking and rely on public charging points.

Managing charging costs presents further challenges, but there are many organisations offering solutions to handle both infrastructure access and charging expenses.

Managing the Health and well-being of your drivers

Ensuring the safety and well-being of drivers should be a top priority for all fleet and transport managers and this includes taking measures to maintain their physical and mental health.

Companies need to recognise the impact of stress and fatigue on their drivers and the associated risks.

Drivers who spend most of their working hours on the road are at a higher risk of developing lifestyle-related health problems.

Long hours of sitting, lack of exercise, and isolation, are all factors that can have a significant impact on both mental and physical well-being, which could ultimately reduce a driver's ability to drive safely.

Organisations need to monitor their drivers and encourage them to report any medical condition that could affect their driving. However, stress and fatigue can be difficult to identify and address. A more focused approach is required to improve health and mental well-being.

Absenteeism and driver turnover can directly impact fleet performance, so it is important to understand drivers and look for signs of anything that could be affecting their life and work. Employing people is not just about paying a wage; it requires a more holistic approach.

Sleep deprivation is a significant factor

that increases the health and safety risks associated with driving. Regular and good quality sleep is essential, as it rebalances the immune and endocrine systems.

Many collisions caused by drivers can be linked to fatigue. Research indicates that driving tired is as dangerous as driving under the influence of alcohol.

Fatigue limits people's ability to learn and accurately interpret events. It can also affect perception, memory, attention, and response times, all of which are essential while driving.

Warning signs of sleep deprivation include increased difficulty in concentrating, yawning, and neck muscles relaxing, causing the head to droop. Micro-sleep can occur when someone sleeps for two to thirty seconds without realising or remembering. This often happens when people are trying to stay awake and can occur especially in monotonous road environments. Lack of driver stimulation can be a contributory factor.

Organisations can take several measures to support their drivers and reduce the risk of accidents. They can have an open-door policy for drivers and take the time to talk to them, not just about work. They can also build a social support structure to help drivers maintain their mental well-being. Encouraging drivers to eat a healthier diet, providing water bottles, subsidising exercise equipment, and implementing safe driving programs and incentives are other measures that can be taken.

Investing time and effort in supporting and getting to know drivers will help organisations create a better working environment and reduce their exposure to risk.

Mental health issues such as depression

can also affect judgement and decision-making, which can be dangerous when driving. Having regular contact with drivers in person is therefore vital to make sure you can understand any issues that could develop or that could be addressed with a friendly chat.

No one expects fleet and transport managers to be experts in all aspects of mental health, but unfortunately, it is not uncommon, and it is something all managers should be aware of.

Identify the activities that cause distracted driving

There are many known causes of distracted driving that all drivers are required by law to avoid. The most obvious of these is perhaps hand-held mobile phone use. However, there are many common activities that whilst perfectly legal are still highly distracting and best avoided. For example, eating and drinking whilst driving can be severely distracting.

Many of today's vehicles come with driver assistance features that can be useful but also highly distracting. For instance, when using satellite navigation, it is recommended to enter the destination information before setting off to avoid the need for manipulating controls while driving. Even while using satellite navigation, drivers should still pay attention to road signs. This will help them stay focused on the road and confirm the information and guidance provided.

As a general rule, anything that takes a hand off the steering wheel or eyes off the road, even for a second, can be considered distracting. Hence, it is essential to ensure that drivers are aware of the potential of such activities and act accordingly. The best way to achieve this is through regular communication with your team and providing 'top-up' training, where appropriate. ●



Mitigating **grey fleet risks** - developing a **pool car** strategy

If you are considering adding pool cars to your fleet, it's crucial to develop a strategy that prioritises risk management and safety, while also reducing emissions and fleet costs. Doing so will also help your organisation comply with legal obligations and mitigate the risks associated with drivers using their personal vehicles for business purposes, commonly referred to as grey fleet drivers.

Introducing pool cars within your fleet can offer several key advantages, the following statements highlight the benefits of taking this approach:

- Reduce the overall costs associated with business trips by eliminating the need for mileage cost reimbursement - such claims can often exceed the actual cost associated with the trip.
- Ensure that a driver's behaviour aligns with company policy by installing a telematics system to provide data insights.
- Help meet your duty of care obligations by providing new vehicles that are fully maintained

and insured for business use.

- Facilitate car sharing to remove unnecessary duplication of travel arrangements for individual staff members.
- Reducing the demand for car spaces at an office or depot.
- Remove the requirement for private ownership of vehicles in some cases, to help staff save money.
- Introduce lower or zero-emission vehicles to your fleet to contribute to reducing the overall environmental impact of your business operations.

Regarding pool car provision policy, you must be clear from the outset, that drivers are not permitted to use the pool vehicles for private use, due to the tax implications. All pool car-related expenses can be fully accounted for by the company without the usual 'benefit-in-kind' tax assessments associated with company cars.

Pool cars should only be used for round trips where the vehicles are returned to the office or depot at the end of the return journey. It may be also useful

to outline a usage policy for your pool vehicle fleet and encourage employees to use other travel arrangements for shorter journeys such as the use of public transport where possible.

All drivers wishing to use a vehicle within your pool car fleet should go through an induction process, especially if you introduce a booking system. In other words, you can pre-authorise drivers who wish to take advantage of the scheme. This should include making them aware of your company policies as outlined in your driver's handbook if you have one and performing a driver licence check on a regular basis.

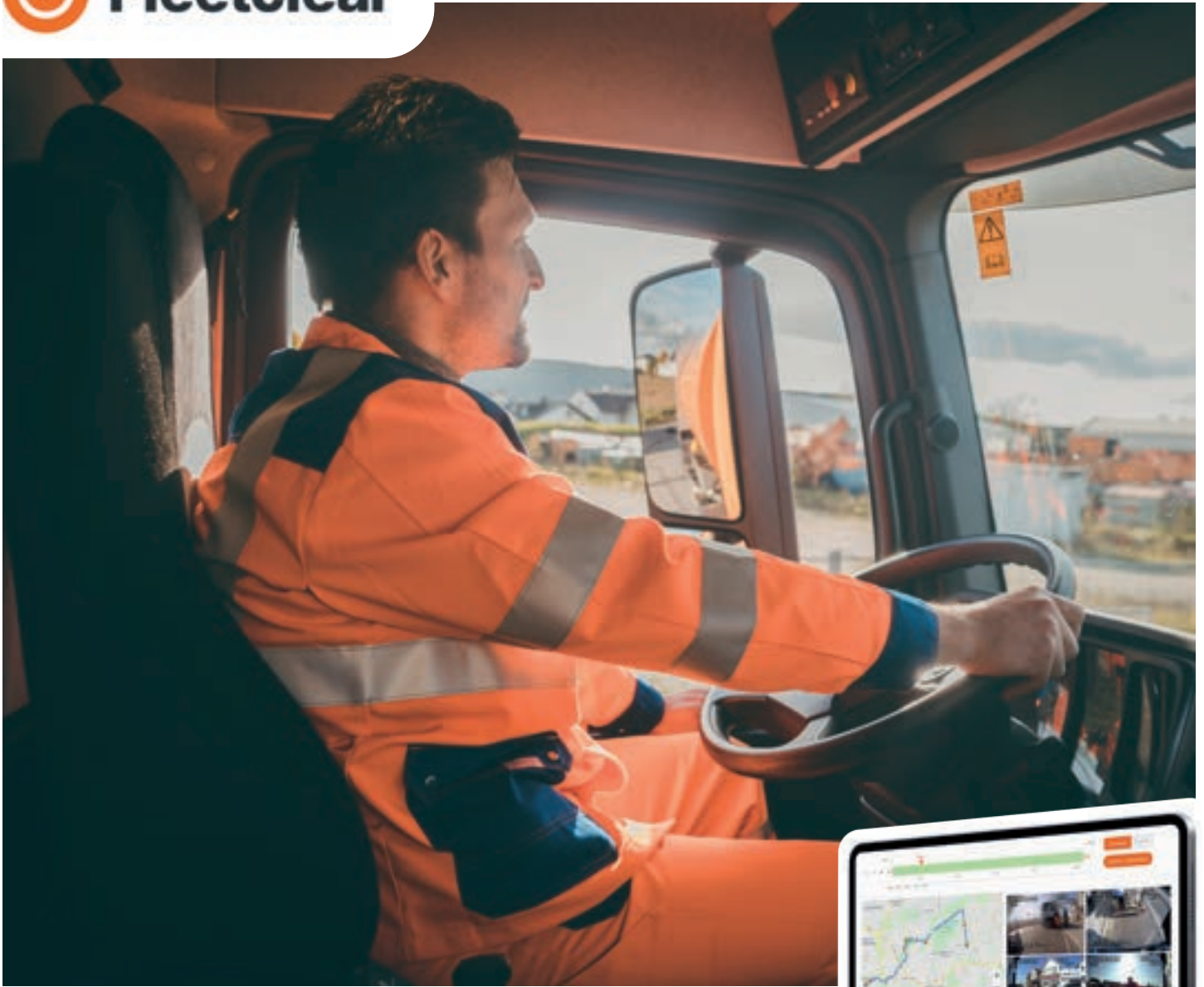
Capturing data from your pool car booking system can provide valuable insights into whether more vehicles are needed or if the current range of vehicle types should be expanded. You can also identify instances of underutilisation across different departments or depots.

Overall, adding pool car provision for employees allows a company to make better use of its resources, helps reduce emissions but more importantly it can help mitigate the risks associated with grey fleet. ●



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Ultimate driver management and protection with Fleetclear

In the world of fleet management, the increasing sophistication of vehicle and driver monitoring, and the retrieval of data, has advanced to deliver ever more sophisticated and detailed evidence about individual driver behaviour and performance.

Such data helps fleet operators pinpoint precisely how certain driving characteristics affect operational efficiency, safety, costs, sustainability, and overall fleet performance, both negatively and positively. It can also assist with the resolution of complaints and insurance claims. The behaviour of the driver workforce also influences the wider public perception and reputation

management of an organisation and is therefore an important factor in the management of any fleet operation.

In the realm of commercial fleet management Fleetclear has emerged as a trailblazer. With a proven track record as a leader in vehicle safety technology and its subsequent evolution into a complete fleet solution provider Fleetclear offers an unparalleled fleet management system that integrates safety, tracking and telematics technology with next level live video recording proficiency. The system also encompasses unique and powerful driver monitoring and performance tools.

Real-time driver monitoring and training

With its data-driven approach Fleetclear's web-based software platform Fleetclear Connect delivers real-time driver behaviour monitoring, alerts, and efficiency scoring. The data is relayed via an easy to use and fully configurable dashboard, which enables the detailed analysis and comparison of performance by individual driver, vehicle type, fleet, contract, or department.

Advanced reporting enables the creation of driver leader boards to highlight desirable driving attributes and isolate specific training needs for

improvement, such as limiting higher risk behaviour or encouraging eco-efficient driving patterns to reduce fuel costs and save carbon emissions.

Detailed data on harsh braking, speeding, and cornering can be overlaid with live traffic information and heatmaps that highlight areas of high vulnerability or risk, resulting in a comprehensive and live profile for every driver.

The speed and user friendliness of Fleetclear reporting tools provides quick and easily accessible information for driver debriefs or 'toolbox talks'.

These reports can also provide essential support for internal spot check health and safety audits that are now commonplace within Local Authority and private sector fleet operations.

Driver protection & speedy incident resolution

Fleetclear's ultra-reliable Digital Video Recording (DVR) ensures critical evidence is captured in the event of an incident, accident, complaint, or potential insurance claim. This invaluable footage helps to protect drivers and crew members, validate, or disprove claims, establish circumstances, and prevent unwarranted liability, ensuring a fair resolution.

Fleetclear's superior event reconstruction capabilities means that managers can quickly drill down into the precise footage when an incident occurred and view details at street level. This evidence can be shared with drivers or colleagues, easily and securely, and where appropriate used to streamline driver improvement procedures and inform training needs.

Dependable blind spot monitoring

Fleetclear's advanced Reverse Radar technology is a dependable active blind spot monitoring system with the capacity to detect up to 16 stationary or moving objects simultaneously. This provides drivers and operators with an additional level of safety and security when reverse manoeuvres are being performed. The mere presence of the system has been proven to encourage drivers to exercise caution when reversing and improve driving behaviour, thus reducing accidents, and

creating a safer driving environment.

The system features optional automatic braking functionality to guarantee an immediate response when objects are within a critical distance.

Geo-fencing and vehicle optimisation

Fleetclear Connect's unique geo-fencing functionality is beneficial for a wide range of purposes such as setting target 'active' hours, highlighting out of hours utilisation - late starts and early finishes, or to ring fence prohibited areas or weight limitations.

Recorded footage is also geo-locatable, a significant time-saving feature when searching for vehicles and drivers in precise locations at definitive times of day, to provide evidence relating to an incident or complaint for example.

Tailored solutions for diverse sectors

Fleetclear Connect is adaptable to any vehicle make or model, making it suitable for a wide range of sectors, from local authority waste collections to heavy construction sites and fast-moving transport and logistics businesses. Customisable to meet unique safety, efficiency, and sustainability requirements, Fleetclear is fully tailorable for multiple stakeholders in an organisation as well as multiple sectors.

Fleetclear also offers a full range of tracking hardware that integrates through a single platform, including wearable battery-powered personnel trackers to map the activity of individuals or non-powered units. This tracking and monitoring solution features alarms, alerts, and two-way communication to ensure the safety and well-being of lone or pedestrian workers and provides peace of mind for both employees and employers.

Driver compliance and vehicle security

Fleetclear can provide a fully remote tacho download service that integrates with any existing tachograph analysis provider, to deliver additional data such as the logging of driver hours and the frequency of breaks, to check driver compliance with regulatory requirements.

Anti-roll away, theft prevention and Driver ID technology not only protects staff and the public but can also have a big impact on the entire fleet operation. For example, a high rate of activations could mean that a driver is relying too heavily on emergency systems as an extension of their usual practices and point to additional training needs.

Data security

GDPR compliance and data retention policies are also easy to manage via Fleetclear's secure cloud-based management suite.

A Cyber Essentials certified company Fleetclear has proven its commitment to cyber security and has rigid controls in place to help protect against cyber threats. Strict measures are in place to keep customers' data secure and to safeguard its systems against the threat of cyber-attacks.

AI-Powered Risk Reduction

With a heavy focus on continual R&D Fleetclear is committed to future proofing its products and software, delivering a regular and ongoing programme of version upgrades across its portfolio.

Current developments include the integration of AI within camera systems to further enhance driver and route performance. The automatic detection of cyclists and vulnerable road users can be utilised to highlight areas of vulnerability, for routing, scheduling and to deliver targeted driver training and awareness courses.

Fleetclear's ultimate driver management and protection system offers consummate safety, efficiency, and compliance for commercial fleet operations. From real-time driver and vehicle monitoring to incident resolution and risk reduction, Fleetclear sets the standard for comprehensive fleet management solutions..●





Testing for banned substances

Fleet operators often carry out random drug tests, as driving while under the influence of drugs is a major contributor to road deaths and injuries.

If a fleet or transport manager has not taken reasonable steps to ensure that their drivers are fit to drive, they could be found culpable in the event of injury or death.

There is no permitted limit or allowable level of illegal drugs that a person can have in their system.

Employers must have consent if they want to test for drugs. They should limit testing to employees who need to be tested, ensure that the tests are random, and not single out particular employees for testing unless this is justified by the nature of their job. Employees can refuse to take a drug test, but if they refuse when the employer has good grounds for testing, they may face disciplinary action.

It is not only banned substances that can affect a person's ability to drive. Some prescribed drugs can also impair driving ability. Anyone driving for work should always check with their doctor or pharmacist and inform their employer if their prescription could compromise their safety.

Drink / Drug related driver penalties

If one of your drivers is caught driving under the influence of alcohol, the consequences can be severe. Depending on the severity of the

offence and the decision of the magistrates hearing their case, they may face imprisonment, a driving ban, and a fine.

If they opt to take a drink-drive rehabilitation scheme (DDRS) course, there is the possibility of reducing their driving ban. However, whether or not this option is available to them will be decided by the court.

During an investigation into a possible drink driving related offence, the police may require a driver to provide two specimens of breath for analysis or a specimen of blood or urine for a laboratory test.

If the driver refuses to provide a specimen for analysis without reasonable excuse, they will be guilty of an offence.

Below are some of the penalties associated with different drink-driving offences:

Being in charge of a vehicle while above the legal limit or unfit through drink:

- A fine of up to £2,500
- Possible driving ban
- Imprisonment of up to three months

Driving or attempting to drive while above the legal limit or unfit through drink:

- An unlimited fine
- Driving ban for at least one year (three years if convicted twice in 10 years)
- Imprisonment of up to six months

Causing death by careless driving when under the influence of drink:

- An unlimited fine
- Driving ban for at least five years
- Life imprisonment
- An extended driving test before the driver's licence is returned

Please note: If the driver is a high-risk offender, they will not automatically get their licence back.

A drink-driving conviction can also result in significantly increased car insurance costs.

If drivers are caught driving while under the influence of drugs, they could face the same severe penalties. These include a minimum one year driving ban, an unlimited fine, up to 6 months in prison, and a criminal record. A driver's licence will also display a drug driving conviction for 11 years.

In addition to these penalties, if a driver causes death by careless driving while under the influence of drugs, they could receive a life sentence.

A drug-driving conviction as with a drunk driving conviction can also lead to increased car insurance costs, difficulty in travelling to certain countries like the USA.

More in-depth information can be found by reading Section 7 of the Road Traffic Act 1988.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/52/section/7> ●

Reducing risk on the road with high quality data insights

Utilising real-time driver data and tailored training courses cuts collisions and costs, explains tech-enabled training and compliance expert, TTC

When it comes to accidents and injuries, driving is undoubtedly the highest risk activity most people will take part in. In the UK, those driving for work are protected by a strong legislative and enforcement framework, and employers have a legal duty of care to their employees who drive 'at work' whether driving their own grey fleet vehicle, or a company vehicle.

Ensuring the safety of business drivers is not only a legal requirement but is also the right thing to do for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). As a result, fleet and driver risk management programmes are relatively standard for most businesses today, although the breadth of the programme varies between companies and the requirements upon their drivers.

Data is a vital element of any road risk programme, and access to detailed, reliable, real-time data can provide businesses with valuable insights to better inform their decision making. However, gaining access to such data can have its challenges.

Understanding driver behaviour and associated risk

Businesses opting to partner with a tech-enabled expert such as TTC can not only build a detailed profile of an individual's driving risk, but have the means to positively intervene. TTC brings together a wealth of data sources such as telematics, connected cameras, dash cams and DVLA licence checks, to

provide a holistic view of driver risk and opportunities to make improvements.

TTC's end-to-end driver risk management tool, Continuum, delivers real-time 24/7/365 driver and fleet risk data via an intuitive dashboard with drill-down capabilities. This helps to make managing any organisation's fleet a much simpler process, drives decision-making, and focuses fleet management resources to where it is needed most. It also directly empowers drivers by sending individuals personalised alerts for training and reminders to upload important driver documentation.



The Mull of Galloway Lighthouse

Reducing driver incidents with Continuum

The Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB), the General Lighthouse Authority for the waters surrounding Scotland and the Isle of Man, has regained nearly three weeks' worth of management working hours and reduced the number of driver incidents on the road by 40% since partnering with TCC.

"Continuum allows us to manage our entire driving community easily and quickly from a single online platform, ensuring real-time compliance with HSE legislation. Live data, visual dashboards, tasks and alerts provide accurate insight into driver compliance, building our own risk landscape which allows us to intervene with learning activities. In a nutshell, Continuum simultaneously reduces the driver risk and administration burden."

Trish Donaldson, Compliance Officer for Northern Lighthouse Board

Tailored training to create safer drivers

While monitoring driver behaviour is a key factor in road safety, it is estimated that 95% of crashes are caused by human error so it is vital that training focuses on the individual driver. This means any training interventions must be data-driven so the driver receives a completely personalised training experience, focused on their unique training needs. Traditional driver training involving on-road practice is perfect for some drivers however, cost-effective and targeted training using data and technology is increasingly sought after, reducing intrusion on the driver time.

The evidence is clear. Adopting a comprehensive tech-enabled fleet risk management and training programme, underpinned with relevant and personalised driver data, will ensure businesses will be legally compliant, meet their health and safety obligations, ensure their drivers are safer behind the wheel, save money while running their fleet and protecting their brand reputation. For those who have yet to make the step, now is the time to act.

Safety brings business benefits

Driver assessment and training makes solid business sense too. Many industries are facing skills shortages and by building a personalised risk landscape to create bespoke fleet driver training, employees feel valued. As such, driver training not only reduces risk but can help support employee engagement and well-being.

Investing in safer drivers means a reduced collision repair bill and vehicle downtime, leading to a more profitable business. Of course, there are other costs including third party legal costs, damage to stock and the impact on business reputation that may all play their part in the event of a crash. That's before the effect on the driver is even mentioned. Investing in training for 'at work' drivers can do so much more for a business than reducing risk. ●



Trusted Training & Compliance

For more information please visit: <https://www.thettcgroup.com/driver-risk-management/ttc-continuum/>



Supplier Insight: The Miles Consultancy (TMC)

with Barry Monks, UK Sales Director

Introduction

The Miles Consultancy (TMC) are leaders across Europe in mileage capture, fuel management, EV reimbursement and reporting solutions.

TMC's solutions capture, consolidate, analyse and audit data, helping fleet managers to understand and make better-informed fleet decisions using real-world data.

The service TMC provides, ensures compliance, offers support for its clients' drivers and a reduced administration burden. Additionally it can help deliver sustainability goals.

Essential Fleet Manager spoke to Barry Monks, UK Sales Director at The Miles Consultancy, to explain further how fleet operators can benefit from using their services.

Interview

Q: Where and how did TMC begin?

TMC began back in 2003, established by Paul Jackson to deliver business mileage savings, including mileage capture, applying audits and bespoke payrolls.

The business has grown and grown over the years, which is testament to the hard work and commitment of the team, that oversees the provision of our fleet-based solutions to an ever-growing client base across Europe.

Q: What are TMC's main strengths?

It's all about data collection. We do the heavy lifting by providing the tools



or taking in data from client suppliers (including telematics and fuel/EV charges), to then apply audits and supply accurate payrolls!

TMC's ability to deliver solutions that provide a user-friendly experience is key. We can support fleet operators by ensuring employees are compliant with company policy and HMRC when it comes to recording accurate mileage.

We've also added extra services to our portfolio, which have been important in our growth. Our solutions can assist with driver compliance, road safety, fair & accurate reimbursements for EV drivers and specifically home energy reimbursement. Additionally, fleet and expense management and data aggregation.

Q: What is TMC's target audience?

Typically, it's large organisations with user profiles that can include company car, LCV, cash allowance and grey fleet. Although size really doesn't matter, as we can tailor our services to suit the needs of the client.

Q: How can mileage data be captured and integrated?

Mileage can be logged on-the-go via our mobile app, manually via the online platform, or we can digest a new or existing telematics feed.

We can help our clients to source a fuel and EV charge card provider, integrate the spend, or work with a pre-existing supplier.

Whether it's capturing data, or making better use of your existing data, what we're saying is we can help!

Our app can capture all of your mileage, fuel and EV data as well as complete all of your duty of care checks. Alternatively we can work with your existing suppliers to optimise your current data.

Q: How do TMC's clients benefit from engaging your services?

First and foremost, our clients benefit from reduced costs. Our mileage capture and audit solution typically reduces the cost of mileage claims by an average of 15.4%.

TMC audits the data input to ensure

accuracy and compliance. We then generate detailed reports for our clients about their fleet. This includes true cost and carbon reporting, for each vehicle and driver.

We like to help fleet operators understand what is driving these costs and where further savings can be achieved.

Our clients also benefit from reduced administration relating to managing mileage claims and private fuel recoveries. We streamline reimbursements and repayments by providing a payroll file which can be easily used to deduct private mileage or reimburse business mileage. With the data we hold concerning their vehicles, miles driven and fuel consumption (or EV charge intake), we're able to provide a range of reports that clients find helpful when it comes to making better-informed fleet decisions.

Qualified payrolls and accurate reporting to large organisations are key, and so is removing the administrative burden from the client.

Q: When it comes to savings specifically, what is TMC's approach?

Our audits play a big part in helping our clients to achieve savings. The first process is to discuss and correct discrepancies with the employees logging claims. By analysing mileage and fuel/EV charge data through a dedicated team, we can encourage better practice on the road, prevent misuse and deter fraudulent claims.

It's important to maintain compliance with HMRC guidance on business mileage reimbursement, so TMC has developed its solutions and tools to fully support companies and employees in achieving this.

Proactive management (compliance and audit checks) is key. At TMC, we review the complete picture and not just one data set in isolation. For example, with trips, we look at things such as potentially duplicated mileage claims, querying mileage variance or identifying trips that have been logged incorrectly.

With fuel, we can analyse transactions and compare against vehicle data to ensure fuel is being purchased for the correct vehicle and we can encourage employees to use cheaper alternatives, such as supermarkets, where possible.

Q: How does TMC work with partners?

TMC has several partners across a mixture of service areas which includes consultants, lease and fleet management companies and payment solution providers, for both fuel and EV charging. This can lead to formal introductions of their clients and even white-labelled solutions. They see TMC solutions as high-value and low-cost, that provide HMRC-compliant data, administrative efficiency and reduced business costs for mileage.

It's pretty much seamless for the partner, as TMC fully supports any deployment and dovetails with the required reporting and innovation opportunities. These may include additional services that complement mileage capture.

We're very proud of the partnerships TMC have within the industry. It's great to have links with some of the best insights and providers in the business, putting us in a great position to ensure that our clients have everything they need when it comes to managing their fleet.

Q: What are the biggest challenges facing fleets?

This can vary, but from our experience, it tends to be the progress of their transition to a low or zero-emission fleet. Whilst the car side has largely been easy to achieve, due to the fiscal 'benefit-in-kind taxation' incentive, it's LCV fleets that pose the biggest challenge.

Where organisations have transitioned, it's then the challenge of making sure charging costs are controlled, and that they have a fair and effective home / public charge and mileage reimbursement process in place.

Q: Electric is the future, what is TMC's take on it?

The key points are how people charge, how they are supported with effective payment mechanisms and an all-encompassing reimbursement process. It's clear to us that a one-size approach will not work. At TMC we have been very vocal on this, especially when releasing data about our own EV Rates.

Companies need to ensure that they have policies in place and engage with service providers that can adapt, offer real value and fully support users in the ongoing management.

There is a need to provide employee support, and control costs across

their total employee base, that travel on business. TMC solutions are key in supporting this. To reiterate, this is applicable regardless of whether employees have a company car, receive a cash allowance or form part of a wider grey or commercial fleet.

Q: Anything to look forward to for the future?

Managing drivers with electric vehicles can be a complex task and it's probably safe to assume that the number of EV drivers in fleets is only going to rise in the future. We've mentioned how well-positioned TMC is in assisting fleets in this area.

We want to be able to help make fleet transition as seamless as possible for employers and employees, which means fair and accurate reimbursement, based on their tariff and charging events.

Carbon reporting is now being widely discussed, especially when categorised into Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions. It's therefore essential to understand, manage, and mitigate the environmental impacts of overall business operations. This will continue to grow in importance in the years to come and will become more of a priority for fleet managers.

We've mentioned the valuable data that we hold and how precious this can prove to be, when it comes to true cost and carbon reporting. We expect and hope for more and more organisations to look to TMC to help with this.

Companies strive to have transparency and full visibility when it comes to data concerning their operations and we are perfectly placed to assist.

As business travel needs are changing, we understand the importance of reducing expenditure and improving environmental impacts. We believe the future of travel is using our new Mobility IQ product, which opens the door to a new world of data-driven travel. This is an exciting venture for the business and we are looking forward to seeing that grow in the coming years for sure, so keep your eyes peeled for that. ●

To find out more, visit: <https://themilesconsultancy.com/>



The role of driving health declaration forms

One crucial aspect of managing drivers for work-related purposes is often overlooked - the significance of driving health declaration forms.

This article provided by Driving for Better Business, explores this essential tool for understanding drivers and maintaining road safety, with insights from Charlotte Le Maire, a regulatory lawyer specialising in criminal motor matters at LMP Legal.

A common question I'm asked by companies is "What should be included on driver health declaration forms to cover myself and the company?"

Drivers need to understand the importance and significance of these declarations and that involves proper training. This form can, if used correctly, serve as a self-assessment tool for drivers to declare any health conditions that might affect their driving abilities. However, it is not a get-out-of-jail-free card for managers and companies to simply put everything at the door of the driver with one simple tick box form. It is simply one tool and one form of effective driver communication.

Completing a health declaration form driving – the law

The key components of a Health Declaration Form are as follows:

- **Personal Information:** This includes basic details such as the driver's name, address, contact information, and driving licence number.
- **Medical history:** A comprehensive section detailing the driver's medical history, including known conditions like diabetes, epilepsy, or cardiovascular diseases. This part should cover both current and past health issues.

- **Medication details:** Drivers must declare any medication they are currently taking, including over-the-counter drugs. Some medications have side effects that could impair driving, such as drowsiness or delayed reaction times.
- **Vision standards:** Drivers should confirm they meet the legal vision standards for driving. This might include a declaration that they have had a recent eye test and are using prescribed glasses or contact lenses if needed.
- **Mental health status:** Given the growing awareness of mental health issues, this section is increasingly important. Drivers should disclose any mental health conditions, such as depression or anxiety, that might impact their driving.
- **Lifestyle factors:** Information about lifestyle choices influencing driving ability, such as alcohol consumption and drug use, should be included.
- **Acknowledgement of responsibility:** The form should end with a declaration that the information provided is accurate to the best of the driver's knowledge and an acknowledgement of the legal responsibilities as a driver.

Avoiding the pitfalls in health declaration forms

- **Incompleteness:** The most common pitfall is an incomplete form. Drivers must provide detailed and accurate information in every section. Leaving out information can have serious legal and safety implications.
- **Lack of regular updates:** Health conditions and medications can

change over time. Drivers should be encouraged to update their health declaration forms regularly, especially after any significant changes in their health status. I would recommend at least every 12 months OR if a driver or the Company become aware of any significant changes.

- **Misunderstanding legal obligations:** Drivers must understand the legal implications of their declarations. Misreporting or withholding information can lead to severe consequences, including legal action.
- **Overlooking mental health:** Mental health is as critical as physical health in determining driving fitness. Drivers often overlook this aspect due to stigma or lack of awareness. Educating drivers about the importance of mental health in relation to driving safety is crucial.
- **Assuming one size fits all:** Each driver's health situation is unique. A standard form might not capture all the necessary information for every individual. Tailoring questions to address broader health issues can be more effective.

In conclusion, Health Declaration Forms are more than just bureaucratic paperwork; they are a fundamental part of ensuring road safety. As professionals guiding drivers, we have to emphasise the importance of these forms, ensuring they are filled out meticulously, updated regularly reviewed and more importantly actioned by management. The road to safety begins with transparency and honesty about one's health and its impact on driving capabilities. ●

Commercial fleet experts recognise rising threat to drivers

There has been a steep rise in incidents of aggression and harassment towards commercial fleet drivers. This was the opinion of leading fleet, health and safety, and technology specialists at a recent event organised by SureCam and PeopleSafe to discuss driver safeguarding and lone worker protection.

"We are seeing significantly more risk associated with working alone and in isolated areas, with London a particular hotspot for our fleet drivers," explained Lee Jackson, Group Head of Plant & Transport and Board Director at Association of Fleet Professionals.

"Incidents are occurring on a frequent basis, especially during the darker months, as opportunist thieves target vehicles and advanced equipment used by our mobile team. We are constantly looking at ways to deter this threat, undertake risk assessments, and ultimately put in place processes to minimise the dangers to our people."

However, it is not just the threat from thieves that is on the increase, with growing aggression towards fleet drivers who are simply going about their daily routine. According to Mark Ryder, Chief Commercial Officer of Peoplesafe: *"We are experiencing a greater volume of raised alerts to our alarm receiving centre. Post pandemic we have seen a real change in people's tolerance to other road users, which has resulted in a major increase in road rage. This lack of patience and understanding can lead to verbal and physical harassment for perceived disruption where vehicles are making a delivery or simply manoeuvring."*

Philip Read, Head of Safety, Health, Risk & Resilience at G4S added: *"While serious incidents within our health and patient*

transport services, as well as elsewhere in the business, are often sporadic, they are on the rise and can represent a significant threat to our drivers and passengers. The safety of our staff and patients is paramount, and with many of our drivers single-crewed and working autonomously, so are challenge is how we address this issue and provide the level of lone worker protection needed?"

The expert panel considered what cultural and organisational shifts were occurring within the fleet sector to foster a safer work environment for lone workers. Measuring risk to identify areas of weakness and the threats that exist was pinpointed as critical when creating an effective mitigation plan. It was clear from the discussions that communication and engagement was a key part of this process to share information and experiences, with back to the floor and ride along sessions, hazard reporting, safety tours and training all mentioned as effective tools.

In response to the situation, commercial fleets are also looking at how technology can help safeguard drivers that are working alone, out of hours and in remote locations, said Sam Footer, Director of Partnerships at SureCam. *"Employee safety and wellbeing has come to the fore in recent years – particularly in fleet sectors such as logistics, utilities, highways and construction – and many businesses acknowledge that they need more robust processes to support their mobile teams both in and outside the vehicle. Every organisation has different needs to address, but what is consistent is the demand for an affordable, easy to implement and simple to use technology solution, underpinned by a clear driver protection strategy."*

There was a consensus that cutting-edge technology, such as dash cameras integrated with personal safety apps, had a major role to play in ensuring fleet drivers received the protection needed. *"We need to allow fleet drivers to do their job without risk or being threatened, and by giving them this added support, it will contribute to them feeling less vulnerable and more confident,"* concludes Jackson. ●

Are your drivers mentally ready to control a vehicle?

There's a new podcast on the Driving for Better Business website that's well worth 20 minutes of your time.

Here are some of the comments made by James Tillyer, Managing Consultant at Ireland-based Transformation, specialists in immersive driver training, when he spoke to Simon Turner at DfBB about the mental 'clutter' that can get in the way of driving safely.

"If we've got cramp, or a headache, or a cold, it's quite clear. But it's more difficult to know if we're suffering from mental fatigue."

He talks about eye-tracking technology

in the cab: *"The sheer volume of eye movements to point A to point B in a given journey is enormous and a driver doesn't realise it, because it's an involuntary movement. But it goes some way to explain why a professional driver feels so exhausted at the end of the day. It's not just the physical task of driving, it's also what their brain is doing, and where they're looking."*

On personal issues that can impact driving style: *"It's very difficult for anyone to avoid thinking about the general rigours of life – but the result is almost always emotive. Things like anger, resentment, worry all come to the fore."* When operating a vehicle: *"That tends to lead to erratic driving, risk taking, distraction, speeding. All the negative stuff. And obviously those are really detrimental to the safety of the driver and other road users."*

He goes on to talk about the role of 'cognitive tunnelling', the processing of highly critical task-relevant information, with limited or no processing of secondary information that may also be important to the task. He mentions a common daily issue: *"A driver is travelling on an unfamiliar road and looking for an entrance. They're so fixated with finding that entrance that things like a cyclist, or a tight bend, or warning alarms, become barely noticed or registered. What that means is that, through cognitive tunnelling, they've created risk for all other factors on the road."*



Listen to the podcast here:
 <https://www.drivingforbetter-business.com/podcast/>



The dangers of tailgating

Tailgating, in other words driving too close to the vehicle in front, is a dangerous activity that every driver should avoid, as it can lead to an increased chance of collision.

Some drivers consider speed limits as a target to be reached in the quickest time possible and treat other road users as obstacles in their way.

It is crucial to view speed limits as the *'absolute maximum'* and not to consider it safe to drive at that speed, regardless of the road conditions. Unsafe speed increases the chances of causing a collision or being unable to avoid one, as well as its severity.

Tailgating is an aggressive behaviour

that triggers emotive responses, making it difficult for drivers to react properly.

Drivers who are being tailgated can feel intimidated, especially when they are not able to pull over to let the tailgater pass.

Tailgating is a driving behaviour that can also cause fear in the driver of the vehicle being followed, the driver may feel forced to constantly check their rear-view mirror instead of focusing on the road ahead, which can be extremely dangerous.

The safest response in this situation is to maintain a safe and correct speed and allow the closely following driver to overtake when possible. If the tailgater does not overtake, slow down gradually and pull over if possible, even if that means taking an unintended turn.

A study conducted by Highways England showed that one in eight (12.5%) of all casualties on England's

major routes are caused by drivers tailgating. In response to these figures, Highways England launched a campaign called 'Don't Be A Space Invader,' using the classic arcade game to warn motorists about not leaving enough space.

Drivers who tailgate need to know that it is unacceptable, and a form of bullying that won't lead to a faster journey. Drivers should always leave at least a 2-second gap between themselves and the vehicle in front. In wet or bad weather conditions, that gap should be doubled.

Deliberate tailgating is difficult to combat, most new vehicles have anti-collision safety technology that includes alerts signalling to the driver that they are travelling too close to the vehicle in front. But for those drivers determined to tailgate, these warnings are just ignored. ●



Why do drivers speed?

Dr Lisa Dorn

CPsychol CERG HF AFBPS FCIEHF FHEA. Founder, PsyDrive

Speed is one of the most important crash contributory factors increasing both the severity and frequency of crashes. According to Department for Transport statistics published in November 2023, over a third of fatal collisions in 2021 were speed related.

From a Human Factors perspective, speeding reduces the time available to process information, make decisions, and initiate a response to avoid a collision. It has been argued that if speed could be reduced by just 1-3 mph there could be 10%-30% reduction in collision injuries (Molin and Brookhuis, 2007). Speed limits, and enforcement of the speed limits, are the most widespread attempt to make drivers choose safer speeds, along with speeding campaigns, road design and signage but still 50% of road users are reported to break the speed limit every day (Yannis et al, 2013).

So why do drivers speed? What propels drivers to exceed the speed limit? How do motives influence speed choice? Road safety practitioners need to understand why drivers exceed the speed limit as this has important implications for designing effective interventions. Psychologists have investigated the reasons why people habitually speed and identified two basic types of motives: intrinsic and

extrinsic motives.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motives

Intrinsic motives explain speeding behaviour that does not have any obvious external rewards. You do it because it's enjoyable. Speed is intrinsically motivated when performed as an activity for its own sake - the behaviour itself is its own reward. Here, drivers exceed the speed limit to maximize the pleasure or fun of driving, seeking thrills and spills that the behaviour offers. Other intrinsic motives may be more socially oriented. For example, being seen as a slow driver has the image of someone who lacks self-confidence and driving ability and drivers may be motivated to avoid this characterisation, preferring to be seen as a confident risk-taking driver with exceptional skills when driving at speed. Extrinsic motives explain speeding behaviour as the goal to achieve some form of external reward or avoidance of punishment. In this case, you engage in behaviour to obtain something of value in return or avoid something unpleasant. For example, your income is dependent upon how many deliveries you make or reaching some target. These outside incentive or pressures can significantly influence speed choice, especially when driving for work.

PsyDrive Courses

Developing your knowledge and skills in Human Factors - Levels 1 & 2

Level 1: The Human Factors and Road Risk Management programme focuses on how the individual interacts with the vehicle and road environment. The course develops competences in identifying when and how human error in road use is most likely to occur and what strategies can be put in place to mitigate the risk.

The first module of **Level 2** explains what motivates driver behaviour and how motives influence risk. Road safety practitioners will learn new models and theories on the Human Factors for managing road risk.

The programme is delivered live and includes approximately 15 hours of learning material including a pre-read workbook. The course encourages active, value-driven discussions and tailored to the specific interests of the delegates attending.

Level 2 is only available to people that have been accredited at **Level 1**.

For more information, visit:
www.psydrivegroup.com



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. ●

Key references

Molin, E. J., & Brookhuis, K. A. (2007). Modelling acceptability of the intelligent speed adapter. *Transportation research part F: traffic psychology and behaviour*, 10(2), 99-108.
Yannis, G., Louca, G., Vardaki, S., & Kanellaidis, G. (2013). Why do drivers exceed speed limits. *European Transport Research Review*, 5, 165-177.



Empowering Driver Management

Technology Insight – Telematics

Introduction

For any essential fleet, managing drivers is a complex challenge in terms of safety, compliance, productivity and efficiency, which requires a comprehensive approach that incorporates robust processes and leverages advanced technology solutions. As such, telematics is playing a crucial role in driver management by providing valuable data and insights that enable better decision-making, while facilitating better communication and collaboration between the fleet manager and drivers.



Steve Thomas
Managing Director,
InseeGo UK Ltd



Justin White
European
Managing Director
of SureCam



Vernon Bonser
UK Sales Director
Queclink Wireless
Solutions



Nigel Lawrence
Director
Applied Driving

Driver Data and Insight

While fleet technology has become a key component of effective driver management, it also represents a potential headache in terms of the amount of data it provides, often from multiple systems and hardware. For overstretched fleet management teams, there is often a lack of time and resource to use the available data and turn it into the required actionable insight.

The latest telematics innovation, increasingly using AI-powered tools and processes, has the potential to transform how critical data is analysed, providing much needed support to fleet managers. "AI-powered analysis will enable

the telematics system to understand where issues exist and take the appropriate steps to resolve these exceptions," believes Steve Thomas, Managing Director, InseeGo UK Ltd.

"It can increasingly be used to interrogate a wide range of data and video sources – behaviour, incidents, near misses, fuel usage, speed limits, location, weather conditions – to create a holistic view of driver performance."

By combining multiple data sets, that would be impossible to analyse manually, a fleet manager can use a telematics system to create a true picture of fleet risk and pinpoint driver behaviour that requires attention. "Someone speeding, in the rain, outside a school is clearly a higher

risk than someone marginally over the speed limit in dry conditions on a motorway, but most current systems would not differentiate, making it harder to prioritise intervention," explains Thomas.

Vernon Bonser, UK Sales Director Queclink Wireless Solutions, agrees that AI will undoubtedly enable fleets to analyse huge amounts of data quickly and effortlessly, to gain operational insight and trends that were previously impossible to compile: "The challenge for fleet and video telematics has always been how to best compile, review and then act on visible trends, which is where the risk reduction and return on investment sits."

Vehicle cameras, for example, typically upload video clips based on g-force

events, but often these are triggered by false positive events such as harsh driving, potholes and speed humps. For a fleet of 50 vehicles, if each generates four clips per day, the fleet manager would have 1,000 videos to watch a week, which is simply not workable. This is not just about having the time to view footage, but also being able to react quickly to situations that need immediate attention, both from a Duty of Care and insurance perspective.

“The time needed to simply examine daily driver behaviour events for a medium or large sized fleet is significant and would be impossible for single person or even a small department to achieve efficiently. When you add video into the equation, imagine how much more resource is required to review the gathered vehicle and driver footage,” adds Bonser.

With post event machine vision, telematics software can view the video clips and flag up those that need attention. This means a fleet manager can quickly focus on actual collisions or an incident where a vulnerable road user (pedestrian, motorcyclist or cyclist) was involved. AI technology of this kind has already been shown to reduce the number of videos needing review by as much as 99% leaving just a handful that can be checked in a matter of minutes.

The major problem facing organisations now is certainly information overload says Justin White, European Managing Director of SureCam. *“With so many additional alerts available to a vehicle operator, there is a risk that actionable data is received but not acted on, which could be a huge liability in the event of an incident.*

Camera technology and AI models are all much the same, so fleets need to identify a video telematics partner that ensures the data load is manageable; uses AI to create alerts but also to formulate a tailored and automated response; and provides the tools to really drive out risk.”

Automated Communication and Engagement

Fleet telematics is rapidly evolving to enhance driver communication and management with ever greater levels of automation and engagement. This is already happening to a certain extent, according to Inseego's Thomas, but moving forward the system will possess the ability to communicate with the drivers directly, which will massively reduce the burden on the fleet manager.

“We will start seeing telematics handle many aspects of fleet management including training, compliance, vehicle usage, and working hours to take on much of the hard work. Many driver, vehicle and fleet processes will soon move from human intervention to automatic system management, leaving the fleet manager to deal with the 2-3% that truly requires their attention. For the rest, they will be able to oversee using reporting dashboards that intelligently measure ongoing performance,” he suggests.

There is automation occurring around driver behaviour monitoring and education, with some exciting developments in targeted training that provides engagement and coaching, triggered by specific recurring behaviour.

“Fleets need to have a system in place to provide drivers with useful feedback, based on their performance,” comments Nigel Lawrence, Director of Applied Driving. *“The ability to share automated safety messages, performance reports and training modules – using both real-time and historical data – is helping address individual issues, change driver attitudes, and instil a responsible driving culture.”*

There is a growing number of intelligent dashcams that can not only capture footage but also engage directly with drivers regarding distraction and fatigue; detect nearby vulnerable road users; and understand fleet risk like never before. According to SureCam's White: *“The advent of AI technology has meant that organisations can now identify risk-generating events behind the wheel and automatically prompt the driver to change their behaviour with real-time voice instructions. Event alerts with video are then sent back to base to ensure coaching and training is focused and relevant to their drivers.”*

Queclink's Bonser suggests that the continued advancements in edge-based computing, and AI algorithms will lead to enhanced decision-making capabilities and the provision of highly accurate real-time insight. *“With improved object detection, better understanding of driving scenarios, and sophisticated behaviour analysis, driver communication and management is going to take a massive step forward. This could even include a way of predicting a person's actions – based on age, direction, speed and distraction – which will enable far quicker and more accurate risk alerts than existing technology.”*

Making Telematics Part of Driver Management

By: Nigel Lawrence, Director of Applied Driving

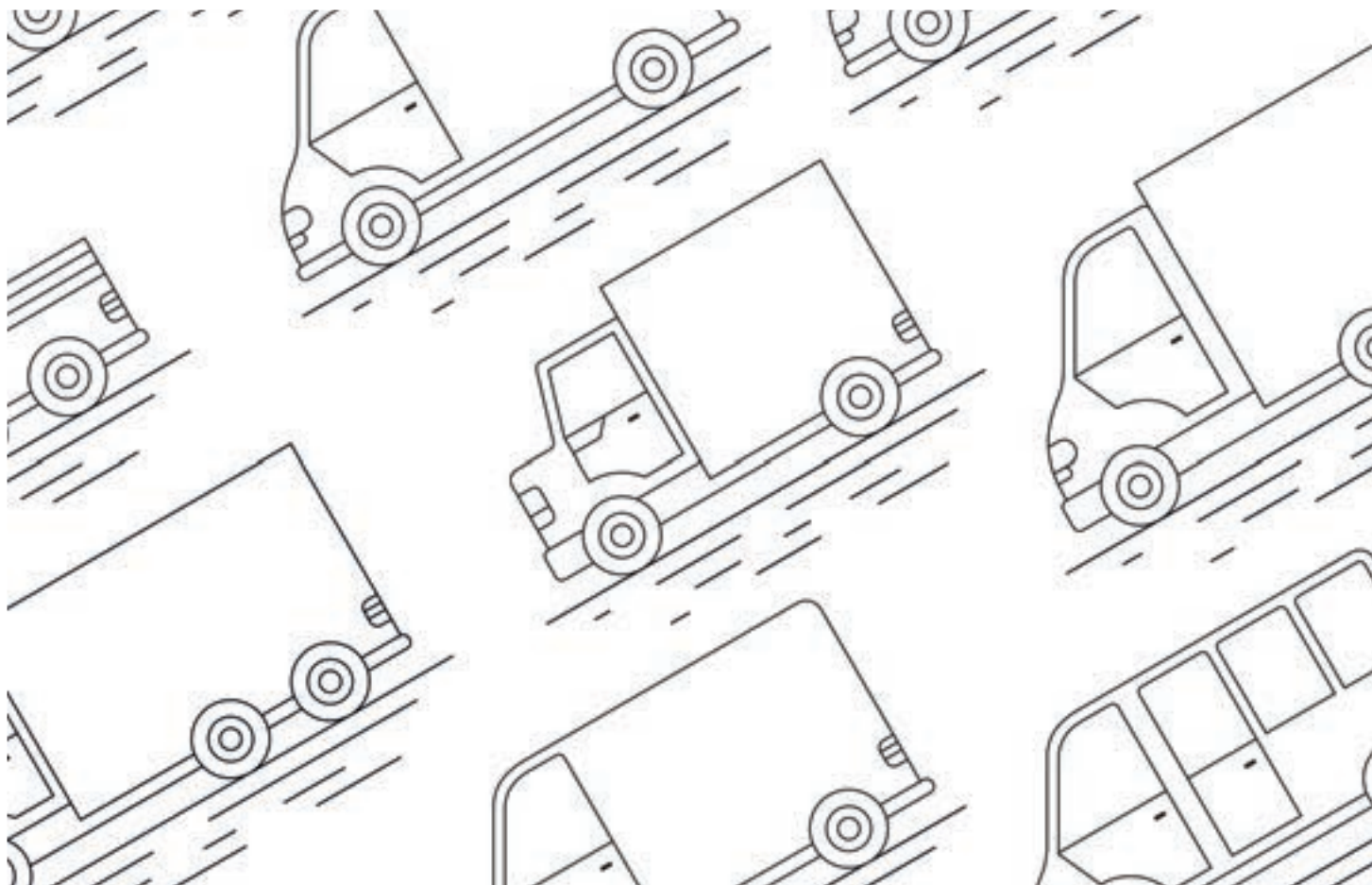
When fleets introduce telematics, the focus often centres around the asset – where it is, what it is doing, how is it performing, is it safe? It is, however, important not to overlook the significance of additional data relating to behaviour, and organisations

increasingly want to use this information to reduce driver-related risk. With this in mind, it is crucial to gain the buy-in from drivers by ensuring they understand the reasons behind telematics and how it also supports them.

A major benefit of telematics is having the ability to implement a consistent response to riskier driving behaviours. All too often driver management can be influenced by bias at a local level, relying on the strength of personal relationships with managers to decide on what intervention is taken. It is vital that any approach taken by the business is fair, non-punitive and based on fact, so using real-time and historical driving data from

fleet and video telematics can help achieve this.

However, one of the biggest challenges of effective driver management is becoming complacent about safety, compliance and risk reduction, allowing programmes to become too *‘business as usual’*. Simply installing telematics will never be enough. Instead, it needs to form part of an ongoing, evolving and proactive programme that is kept fresh and stimulating. Having an ongoing effective communication path is crucial to keep drivers engaged, with incentives and gamification offering useful tools to target continuous improvement. ●



Vehicle conversions guide

Specifying and managing vehicle conversion procurement

By: Phil Gale, Managing Director, PAG Fleet and Plant Consultancy Ltd.



Introduction

Vehicle conversions that will be a good fit for your organisation should be specified with a firm focus on employee safety, vehicle security, working efficiency and compliance. Fleet operators should never underestimate the power of the end user, so it is vital to engage with all stakeholders at the start of the conversion journey.

Selecting a converter

You should select and engage a fully accredited converter as they will follow strict guidelines and will:

- Carry out work to a high standard and have stringent quality control measures in place.
- Have the right expertise and knowledge to deliver fit-for-purpose conversions, including experienced specialist design teams.

- Offer warranties that align with the vehicle warranty.

Preliminary considerations

Is the asset to be leased or owned, replace an existing end-of-life asset, or a new requirement?

If you are considering leasing a new asset to be converted, make sure you engage with the vehicle supplier early in your discussions to ensure they are aligned with your chosen converter - your leasing provider should be able to consult directly with the converter on your behalf. Owned assets involve more direct input from the user's perspective, in other words, a more hands-on approach in meetings and discussions with the chosen converter.

What is the required replacement cycle for your vehicles?

Before deciding to purchase or lease

a new vehicle conversion think about how often the vehicle will need to be replaced. If the vehicle will need regular replacement, consider the possibility of re-using or giving a second life to existing equipment and fittings. Also, whether your next vehicle choice will accommodate these fittings.

Assets that require regular replacement tend to be leased and if this is the case, you may wish to consider cheaper levels of build.

If the converted asset will be owned and used for an extended time, you may wish to consider a more robust build that will provide longevity and retain residual value.

Build a working group

From the outset, vehicle procurement should be carried out with the full engagement of all stakeholders.

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Emma Donnelly Marketing Executive & Donavon McKillen Commercial Director of TBC Conversions at the site of the £1M development in Dungannon



TBC CONVERSIONS ANNOUNCES £1M INVESTMENT IN DUNGANNON FACTORY

Leading vehicle convertor, TBC Conversions (TBC), has announced a £1 million investment into its Northern Ireland-based factory to account for sustained growth.

In addition to the factory extension, which will increase production space by 35%.

TBC has also predicted it will increase its yearly turnover by over 200% and nearly double the number of employees across its factories in Dungannon and Liverpool by 2026.

SPEAKING OF THE COMPANY'S PLANS FOR INVESTMENT, DONAVON MCKILLEN, COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR AT TBC, SAID:

"It is a hugely exciting time for TBC as we enter a period of major predicted growth.

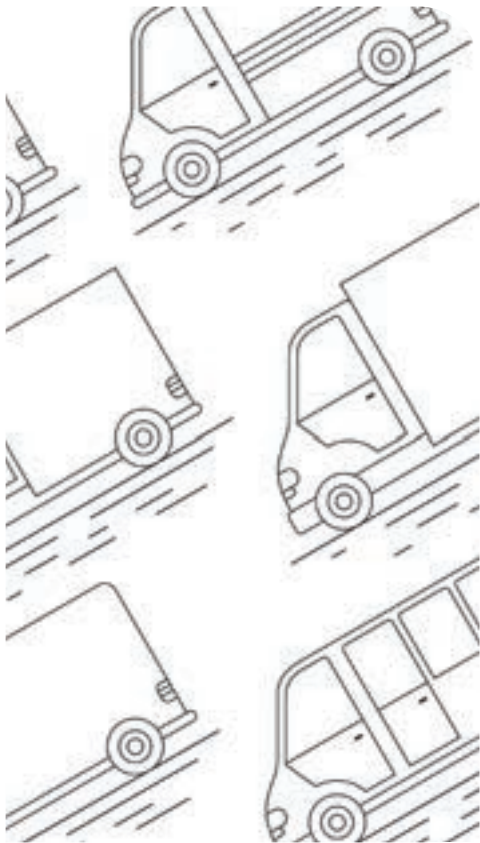
"As a result of our impeccable attention to detail and innovation, TBC is already an approved partner for Volkswagen and Man Truck and Bus and has close relationships with manufacturers including Mercedes and Ford.

"We look forward to building on these partnerships and working to further develop state-of-the-art vehicle conversion solutions that not only meet but exceed the needs of our customers.

"This includes the electric market, which is currently underserved, and we are committed to extensive research and development in this area with a view to expanding our offering in the very near future."

TBC Conversions are recognised as one of the UK's leading vehicle conversion and adaptation specialists. Established in 2006, the company has secured a reputation for quality and reliability, converting each vehicle with intelligence, empathy and care.

The company has an expansive customer base including Local Authorities, Community Transport Operators, Commercial Vehicle Dealerships, Health & Social Care Trusts, Fire & Rescue Services and Utility Companies.



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One way to do this is to set up a working group, involving drivers/end users, way to do this is to set up a working group, involving drivers/end users, operational staff, fleet managers and the procurement department. You can then use this working group to further develop and discuss your vehicle conversion requirements and to ensure that the final result will be fit for purpose.

Working with your conversion partner to meet your fleet requirements

Your conversion partner should be able to produce CAD drawings of your chosen build design. These drawings will help you to identify equipment, safety features and key legislative items for you to robustly cost out your design requirements. The aim of this type of engagement is in the total acceptance of the finished vehicle - having involvement at the design stage means less chance of rejection on the day of delivery.

To help define a fleet procurement strategy, consider putting together an in-house vehicle specification document by vehicle type. Include the required safety, servicing, and legislative items for your vehicles. This document can then be used as a reference when procuring assets. It will also help with developing a business case if there are multiple

stakeholders involved.

Base Vehicle Selection

As a fleet or transport manager, you should be fully conversant with the carbon reduction policies of your organisation. Such policies will form the basis of any decision regarding the procurement of certain vehicle assets. In other words, whether your organisation will require you to look for ICE-powered vehicles or to consider vehicles that run on alternative fuels such as HVO, CNG, and Biofuels etc. If targets are more stringent, Electric Vehicles (EVs) may be the right choice, but range capability and charging infrastructure requirements will have to be factored into the decision-making process.

If you are procuring your vehicles through a leasing company they will be able to provide a whole-life cost (WLC) evaluation by vehicle type which will help you align your budget, with operational requirements.

Owned assets should ideally be assessed on their merits to obtain best in class and as they are kept for longer periods, they should be evaluated on this basis.

Other considerations will be whether the vehicle will be required to tow plant and equipment, its payload and load space. Payload is an important consideration with 3,500kg being the threshold where a large van is technically classed as a heavy goods vehicle (HGV).

If payload requirements are paramount, and you are looking at an alternatively fuelled vehicle, consider a deregulated 4.25t EV. The derogation for this type of vehicle was granted by the Government to avoid constraining payload for operators and so that they do not face additional regulatory steps when doing so.

Supplier Assessment

Ideally when choosing products as part of the first kit list and build considerations, decisions should be based on environmental impact including any carbon reduction policies. Consider recycled or at least recyclable products, those that utilise responsibly sourced materials, or goods that are produced in the UK.

It is vital to set stringent Service-Level Agreements (SLAs) with suppliers and converters and ensure they are formally agreed between both parties before commencing the service delivery. This

will help to define the expectations, responsibilities and service standards the provider is obligated to meet.

Implementing driver training modules to protect your assets

Future-proofing your vehicle acquisition strategy is essential for long-term success, but so is protecting your new vehicles from excessive wear and tear, especially with EVs.

For example, providing EV-focused driver training will help drivers to get the most out of an EV and to further understand the differences in performance and power delivery.

There are numerous other training modules developed for drivers that will help protect your assets including SAFED (Safe and Fuel Efficient Driving) a driver development course backed by the Department for Transport that focuses on reducing the risk of collisions and driving economically.

Stay informed

As a fleet or transport manager, you should look to stay informed about industry developments in s EV technologies and autonomous vehicles through memberships of regulatory bodies and regular networking.

Technological changes evolve rapidly whether this be with connectivity, to enhance convenience or driver safety and should be implemented, with assets upgraded in life.

How PAG Fleet and Plant Consultancy Ltd can assist your business

Regardless of your business size or sector, you will already know the stringent challenges in the current market climate, including tight cost controls, growing contractual requirements and sustainable targets. PAG Fleet and Plant Consultancy Ltd has extensive fleet operational knowledge and experience within the infrastructure services, utilities and rail operations sector.

We offer specialist services to fleet and plant operators including advice on how to design, build and project manage your new vehicle conversions, so get in touch today to start working with PAG. ●

For more information please contact: Phil Gale, info@pagconsults.com or visit: <https://pagfleetandplantconsultancy.com>

Lead with LEGEND and say no to ply!

LEGEND products are the 'toughest out there' - so whatever the workload, your fleet vehicles will hold their value.

Our van interior protection and accessories offer durability, anti-slip grip, a life-time guarantee, and most importantly, absolute safety and protection.



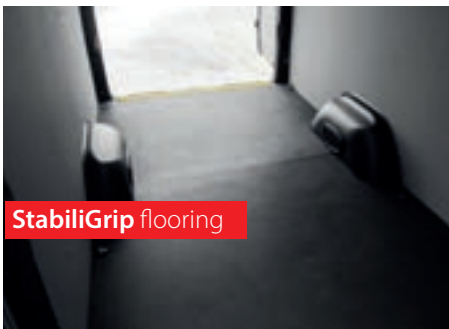
THE UPFIT YOU DESERVE

Legend is an industry-leading vehicle flooring, liner, and accessory brand, offering products that are built to outlast the life of the vehicle and maximise driver safety and comfort.

With an extensive network of dealers across the UK and North America, and a wide range of products, Legend Fleet Solutions is committed to providing your vehicle fleet with the ultimate interior protection.

LEGEND Interior Protection Kit

The LEGEND Interior Protection Kit consists of a rigid composite floor and a robust wall, door and ceiling liner that has proven results in increasing the residual value of commercial vehicles.



StabiliGrip flooring

The LEGEND floor, called StabiliGrip, features an extreme anti-slip surface which enhances safety. Engineered to endure all climates and temperatures with no resulting bulging or buckling, StabiliGrip's strength has earned it the reputation of being a tough flooring that stands up and that is capable of withstanding daily loading and unloading. It has earned respect in the industry as the only dimensionally-stable composite floor available for load-carrying vans.

The LEGEND wall, door and ceiling liner has proven time and time again how it can significantly help protect a van's interior from wear and tear throughout the entire life of the vehicle.

Construction companies, Utilities, Housing Associations and Facilities Management services all send out

trades to site or to homes, which often involves the movement of heavy machinery and equipment. Legend's StabiliGrip composite floor has proved to be "nearly indestructible," providing the durability and resilience needed for heavy-duty applications.

We are so confident at LEGEND in the toughness of our flooring, that at the Commercial Vehicle Show in 2023, we worked with a professional axe thrower to demonstrate the strength and resilience of Legend products vs. traditional plywood floors.



LEGEND lining kit

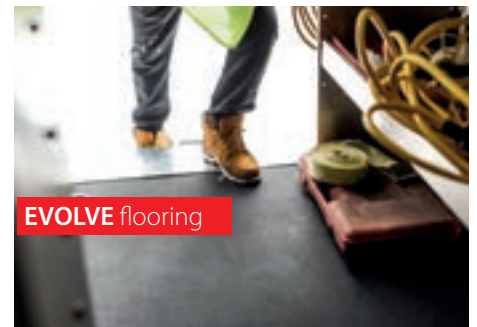
The LEGEND lining kit can offer robust protection against wear and tear, thereby preserving the vehicle's interior in pristine condition. This innovative lining solution guards against scratches, dents, and spills, preventing damage that could otherwise depreciate the vehicle's value over time. By maintaining the interior's integrity, the LEGEND lining kit ensures that potential buyers perceive the vehicle as well-maintained and durable, thus increasing its appeal at the remarketing stage.

EVOLVE Lightweight Floor designed for electric vehicles (EVs)

EVOLVE is a tough, composite flooring that is 53% lighter than other comparable floors. This substantially increases the driving range and relieves unnecessary payload in an EV.

Made from 75% recycled materials, EVOLVE flooring is being used in fleet vehicles across the UK to help operators meet their carbon-reduction targets.

By switching from standard plywood linings to Legend's lightweight and easy-to-clean alternatives, organisations can realise significant weight reduction without compromising on durability.

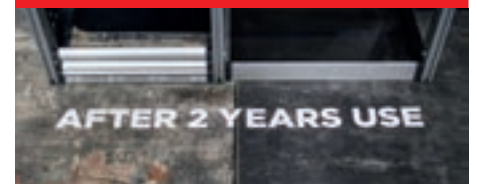


EVOLVE flooring

Racking manufacturers too, are partnering with Legend, because high-performance racking should not be put on a low-performance floor (plywood), that will eventually need to be replaced.

Just look at the comparison between the LEGEND Heavy-Duty StabiliGrip and Standard Coated Ply Floor – both after 2 years use in a van!!

What would you prefer to be the base of your work van?



AFTER 2 YEARS USE

Legend Fleet Solutions is committed to sustainability, offering products made from over 75% recycled materials.

By choosing Legend, fleets can contribute to their corporate environmental goals and move away from materials sourced from "conflict timber." Legend's secure supply chain ensures a reliable and sustainable source of interior solutions for vans. ●

For more information visit www.legendsoftheroad.com or email contactus@legendfleet.com



7 strategies for efficient fleet electrification

The gradual shift towards e-mobility has also reached the corporate sphere in the UK and more and more companies are opting to incorporate EVs into their fleets. The environmental component plays a key role in this transition process, as its implementation can significantly reduce CO2 emissions, which reinforces companies' commitment to sustainability.

Beyond environmental sustainability, companies can benefit from many advantages by electrifying their fleet, such as cheaper refuelling costs, a reduction in the tax burden when purchasing EVs, greater energy efficiency, greater freedom of movement in low-emission areas, the availability of public subsidies or an improvement in the company's reputation by committing to a new mobility model.

Juice Technology, one of the world's leading companies in the design and marketing of charging solutions for electric vehicles, offers a series of strategies or steps for an efficient fleet electrification:

1 - Good planning: Before embarking on the electric mobility journey, fleet operators should thoroughly analyse their current situation. Assess the existing fleet, the driving patterns of their employees, the charging infrastructure and energy requirements. A clear roadmap for the transition, including a timetable and budget, will need to be developed to ensure a seamless integration of electric vehicles.

2 - Justification of electrification costs: Fleet electrification has many benefits, but one of the most important is the reduction in total cost of ownership (TCO). Electrification can involve a



significant upfront investment, but the reduction in maintenance, operating costs and fuel supply can make up the difference. In addition, incentive financing can reduce acquisition costs. Some ways to reduce fleet costs to make room for electrification include driver training, vehicle monitoring and telematics systems, and sourcing repair providers and other external partners.

3 - Developing charging infrastructure: A robust charging infrastructure is crucial for the successful EV adoption. Work with charging station providers, utilities and other stakeholders to establish an efficient

charging network. Consider installing charging stations in strategic locations, such as your office car park, or opt for more flexible charging solutions, such as portable charging stations, through which the employee can charge the vehicle at home, in the office or anywhere else where there is a power outlet (domestic or industrial). This will ensure a reliable charging experience for drivers.

4 - Engage drivers: A good starting point for electrification is to teach drivers how to drive and maintain an electric vehicle. It is important to ensure that all company drivers are properly



trained and educated on the operation, maintenance and safety protocols of an electric car. Familiarising employees with the technology will promote confidence and encourage active participation in the electrification process.

5 - Technology and integration: By leveraging smart charging solutions, fleet operators can remotely monitor vehicle status, plan charging schedules and optimise energy use. With j+pilot, the app developed by Juice Technology and compatible with all car models, each journey is automatically logged,

allowing the app to show how much energy the car consumes and how much regenerative braking energy is recovered on a given journey. This helps to drive more economically and sustainably and also offers a personalised driver experience by providing data on driving behaviour or allowing remote planning of charging sessions.

6 - Align EV purchases with the growth of the charging infrastructure: Before expanding your EV fleet, start by investigating your infrastructure. An electric vehicle cannot operate without a

charger. As you expand your fleet, consider whether your charging network, whether through fixed or portable chargers, has the capacity to support that growth.

7 - Data analysis: Telematics data on fleet behaviour and driving patterns is critical to operating your fleet. Systematic and continuous analysis of this data over time will help you to introduce possible corrective measures and, as a result, make your fleet management increasingly efficient and sustainable. ●

To find out more about the company, its products and solutions, go to <https://juice.world/en/>



Commercial Vehicle Show - by the Industry for the Industry

With the road transport sector undergoing a rapid and complex Net Zero transition, the CV Show is returning to NEC Birmingham this April 2024 in an expanded form to help operators prepare their businesses for growth against a complex and ever-changing backdrop of new regulations and technology.

With the EU expected to implement new emissions standards for conventional truck and van engines from 2027, the UK ending the sale of new non-zero emission vans and trucks under 26 tonnes by 2035 – with heavier HGVs to follow in 2040 – and a national shortage of truck technicians, the commercial vehicle industry is undergoing the most radical changes in its history. For operators, manufacturers and technicians looking to future-proof their fleets and skills, the show is an essential fixture in the commercial vehicle calendar.

Last year's show welcomed executives, transport managers, engineers, procurement professionals and directors from across the public and private sectors – all planning to renew their fleets, upgrade their operational management and find new ways to grow their businesses. With 98% of visitors holding purchasing authority for vehicles, the

event is Britain's business centre for truck, van, trailer and other commercial vehicle technologies that are set to shape the sector over the next decade.

With an audience that faces significant challenges and opportunities over the next few years, an extensive list of manufacturers and suppliers will be showcasing their tech and expertise to the entirety of the sector, from major public sector bodies looking to make long-term large investments in fleets, to owner-operators keen to learn how to adapt their operations against a backdrop of growing emissions legislation.

For this year's show which takes place from the 23rd-25th of April, the organisers have added new seminars to complement the extensive exhibition, covering all of the 'hot topics' including decarbonisation, including electrification and hydrogen, skills and recruitment, and technical updates.

Developed by the industry for the industry, the CV Show is represented by three stakeholders – the Institute of Road Transport Engineers (IRTE), the Road Haulage Association (RHA) and the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT).

Richard Smith, RHA Managing Director,

said: *"The CV Show is a vital fixture in the commercial road vehicle sector promoting the very best innovations to help businesses operate responsibly and efficiently. It's also an opportunity for people to connect, learn and join in conversations about the future of our industry, especially on the journey to net zero. We are proud to be a partner in our industry's biggest trade exhibition in the UK."*

"The commercial vehicle sector plays a pivotal role in the UK economy, with manufacturers investing billions to deliver ever greener, safer and more cost-effective vehicles and equipment. With the sector in such a period of complex change, operators' need for expert insight into the latest technologies and regulations has never been greater. In these uncertain times, the CV Show is an unmissable opportunity, providing the most authoritative platform for manufacturers to demonstrate how they can help businesses across Britain navigate the road ahead."

Mike Hawes, SMMT Chief Executive. ●



Exhibiting at the CV Show 23rd - 24th April



Streamline your fleet management and workload for £1 per vehicle, per week!

Visit checkedsafe.com

Come & visit us on stand 4A21 to find out more



TRAKM8

STAND 5E91

Trakm8 is the recognised leader in technology solutions for fleet management, telematics, AI fleet optimisation and vehicle camera systems. Trakm8's cutting edge technology offerings are adaptable for fleets of all sizes; providing intelligent, game-changing insights that can improve fleet efficiency, reduce risk across fleet operations and enable greener, more sustainable driving.

MODUL-SYSTEM

STAND 5D40

Modul-System is one of the world's leading manufacturers of racking solutions for service vehicles. Working with our customers we ensure EV conversions preserve vehicle range, meet operational requirements, and are fit for purpose. Safety and quality are of paramount importance to Modul-System who consistently invest significant resource into the development of innovative products that deliver value to customers.

CIVICA

STAND 5D68

Civica TranSend fleet management, ePOD tracking and route planning software helps you to maximise your assets whilst lowering costs and mileage. It gives you instant access to real-time data for complete visibility and control of your operation. Proactive alerts help you to improve compliance, minimise vehicle downtime, optimise service delivery and enhance customer satisfaction.



Register for your free ticket Visit: <https://cvshow.com/>



Centrad cameras help reduce insurance premiums for Excalon

The installation of specialist Centrad CCTV forward and internal cameras on its vehicles is reaping dividends for leading infrastructure contractor Excalon Ltd.

Lower insurance premiums and clear video evidence in the event of a collision are among the benefits to the Salford-based company.

Excalon operates a fleet of over a hundred vehicles and specialises in the provision of services to the utilities industry, including laying cables to further enhance the power infrastructure throughout the UK.

Mindful of the daily risks out the road and keen to take extra steps to protect its business and drivers in the event of a claim, Excalon invested in Centrad cameras complete with tracking and remote access for each of its vehicles.

The company has been a customer of Centrad's for five years. It needed a system which would give a fast and accurate picture to determine who is at fault in the event of an RTA, in addition to a full suite of telematics reporting.

Centrad was established in 2006 by Managing Director Geoff Cross. With

Geoff's background in fleet operations Centrad's USP is developing innovative solutions which meet gaps in the market.

Julie Sutherland, Support Services Director of Excalon, said there had been a vital need for the cameras, to give clarification on events following a number of incidents on the roads.

She said: "With a large number of vehicles on UK roads every day, mainly during the late mornings and late afternoons when the roads are busier, the Centrad system has proven to be an excellent investment which continues to pay for itself.

"There have been numerous occasions in which we have had to look at footage captured on the Centrad system to conduct our own investigations into road traffic incidents where there has been a dispute over who has been at fault.

"It also helps us monitor driver behaviour – including use of mobile phones – and gives added protection to our vehicles when they are on-site – giving footage of other vehicles.

"The system's geofencing function is an added benefit, triggering an alert for employers when their drivers are not within the boundaries of where they are expected to be."

"With several vehicles on the roads every day Excalon has already had the misfortune to experience occasions over the years where their drivers have been blamed for collisions that were not their fault.

"Thankfully, with more than 20 years in business the company has long been aware of the risks on the roads and has long had the foresight to invest in Centrad cameras to give a clear picture of events that have occurred should such a need arise.

"We are delighted our systems have already provided that much-needed protection for Excalon and its drivers and has helped the company fend off more costly insurance premiums. We are confident our systems will continue to prove their worth to the Excalon workforce in the years to come."

**Commented: Geoff Cross
Managing Director, Centrad. ●**



Autotech Recruit survey reveals UK automotive industry's hiring challenges and trends for 2024



Autotech Recruit, operators of the UK's largest network of temporary vehicle technicians and MOT testers, has announced the results of its comprehensive annual recruitment survey detailing hiring challenges, staffing needs, and recruitment strategies within the UK automotive industry for the upcoming year.

Shedding a light on the critical insights that will shape recruitment strategies and workforce planning for the foreseeable future, the survey reveals widespread difficulty filling vehicle technician roles and the detrimental impact the skills shortage is having on profitability.

Almost 70% cited recruiting vehicle technicians as one of the most difficult roles to fill with over 65% admitting that sourcing specialist Hybrid/EV trained technicians is challenging.

The situation is set to be exacerbated with half of all respondents (50%) anticipating an increase in vehicle technician vacancies over the next year, highlighting the ever-growing need for skilled automotive professionals.

While three-quarters of respondents (71%) plan to recruit for permanent roles, an encouraging 73% are actively seeking routes to attract young talent – through apprenticeships and paid internships – to address the skill gaps within their businesses.

Raising the salary bar

The survey highlighted an interesting trend in wage adjustments with 95% of respondents reported offering salary increases last year, with approximately 6 in 10 of these exceeding the rate of inflation. Furthermore, 76% anticipate raises in line with or exceeding inflation in 2024.

To retain staff, 53% of respondents are prioritising training, with electric/hybrid vehicle training identified as the top priority for over 71% of respondents in the coming year.

Challenges for automotive businesses in 2024

The survey, which saw responses from over 100 automotive industry professionals, looks at the challenges impacting automotive businesses and found an inability to meet demand (52%) and a reluctance to maximise profitability due to skills gaps (56%) as a common theme.

While a focus on permanent recruitment remains paramount for most, bringing in temporary vehicle technician labour is seen as a valuable resourcing tool with almost half of respondents (49%) citing general skill shortages as the primary factor driving the usage of contractors. Additionally, demand peaks (16%) were identified as an important consideration for leveraging temporary labour.

"Our survey highlights that the skills shortage within the industry is still prevalent and the impact this is having on businesses, along with plans to address the challenge. Encouragingly, there is a growing recognition of the need to invest in salary and training, but it is important to remember that no company can resolve these issues alone. Stakeholders from across the industry - including employers, educational providers, recruitment specialists and industry interest organisations need to work cohesively to make a real difference."

"Our business was founded on our network of temporary vehicle technicians and MOT testers and, since our inception in 2010, we have worked to educate the industry on how the use of temporary cover shouldn't be a reactive measure but built into annual strategies as a way of providing flexibility, allowing businesses to manage absence cover and scale up capacity without the long-term commitment of permanent hires."

"The results of the survey clearly reveal a maturing of the sector in the understanding of this concept. Skilled temporary contractors are viewed as valuable resources, helping automotive businesses navigate the continually evolving landscape of the UK automotive industry."

James Mackay, Managing Director of Autotech Recruit. ●

Download the survey here: <https://autotechrecruit.co.uk/automotive-recruitment-trends-survey/>

Nurture Group marks sustainability milestone with new E-Transit vans

Nurture Group is expanding its commercial electric vehicle (EV) fleet with the addition of 10 new Ford E-Transit vans for its Grounds Maintenance division.

This move marks a crucial step forward in Nurture Group's commitment to achieving its sustainability goals and reducing its carbon footprint, as it works towards net zero emissions.

Gordon Brownrigg, sustainability manager at Nurture Group, said: "I am excited about this next round of EV vans as it represents our biggest single order of commercial EVs since we started electrifying the fleet.

"Using electric vans where we can is a critical step in our net zero journey and these additions will have a positive, tangible impact on reducing our carbon footprint. These vehicles will reduce our emissions by between 3 and 4 ½ tonnes per year each.

"We are acutely aware of the pivotal role that fuel consumption plays in our carbon footprint, constituting 51% of the current total. In a bid to address this, hawse has chosen electric vans over their diesel counterparts where feasible, with an electric van emitting up to 65% fewer emissions

per mile."

The E-Transit takes centre stage in Nurture Group's electrification strategy, with the vehicle's size and operational suitability aligning with its diverse needs for carrying large machinery and tools as well as trailers. Nurture Group will showcase one of the vans across the UK, aiming to inspire teams and operational units to consider EV options wherever possible.

The company has also opted to take the Pro Power Onboard optional extra meaning the vans can double up as a plug-in power source, allowing the Grounds Maintenance teams to power their equipment without the need for a mains power source or a separate fuel-driven generator. The Pro Power Onboard delivers 2.3 kilowatts of exportable energy.

Nurture Group has already made progress in cutting emissions across the commercial fleet. The company's vans are Euro 6 compliant meaning they are more efficient and emit no more than 80mg/km of NOx gasses, reducing carbon dioxide emissions and helping to improve air quality.

Additionally, Nurture has already successfully adopted an EV greener company car policy, operating at an impressive 93% electric and hybrid composition. The ultimate goal is to electrify as much of the fleet as possible. The company is also exploring the viability of other alternative fuels such as HVO with the long-term goal of decarbonising service delivery to hit net zero targets.

The decision to integrate electric vans into the Nurture fleet comes with its own set of challenges, as there are difficulties associated with transitioning vans that carry heavier loads and are constantly on the move. Overcoming these challenges involves not only procuring electric vehicles but also the installation of charging infrastructure across various company and client sites. To combat this, Nurture has introduced innovations in staff remuneration for home charging to help support the commercial fleet teams as well as ease pressure on depot chargers and a reliance on expensive roadside networks.

With this strategic move towards electrification, Nurture anticipates a





Pictured: Nurture's fleet team and sustainability manager with one of the new EV-transits

substantial increase in the number of EV vehicles within the fleet over the year, further solidifying its commitment to a greener future.

The emission reduction percentages are based on DEFRA emission conversion factors, comparing diesel use with the electricity supplied via the National Grid for roadside charging. Where Nurture Group vehicles are charging on its sites these emissions will be further reduced as these sites use renewable energy sources, such as electricity from PV solar panels.

About the Nurture Group

The Nurture Group is a multi-award winning national service provider consisting of three established companies providing 'one stop' integrated services to a wide and diverse client base across the UK.

Nurture Landscapes provides Grounds Maintenance, Interior & Exterior Plant Displays and Winter Gritting to a wide range of clients predominantly to the corporate sector.

Gavin Jones provides landscape construction services to commercial and private clients and landscape maintenance services largely to government and MOD sites, public open spaces, and the educational sector.

Rokill is one of Britain's leading Pest Management services to commercial, domestic, and public sector clients

developing innovative, environmentally sensitive solutions for the detection, prevention and elimination of troublesome pests. The Nurture Group's aim is to be the UK's leading green service provider achieving net zero by 2030. As a carbon neutral business in accordance with the global PAS 2060 standard, delivering sustainable, industry leading services and endeavours to build lasting relationships with their customers, colleagues, and supply partners.

The group's head office is in Windlesham, Surrey, and it has a network of regional offices and depots across the UK. ●

"We anticipate a substantial increase in the number of electric vehicles within our commercial fleet over the next few years, further demonstrating our commitment to operating a greener fleet. The Ford E-Transit is a monumental step forward for the vehicle EV market and is ideally suited to the needs of the Nurture Group as the vehicle meets the requirements of our day-to-day operations."

"I would like to thank all our key suppliers involved in fitting out additional accessories. I'm looking forward to seeing the vehicles out on the roads and visiting our customer sites."

Mohib Iqbal, Group Fleet Manager, Nurture Group



For more information visit: <https://www.nurture-group.co.uk/>

New era of greener ambulances caring for patients in London

On New Year's Eve, the first fully electric ambulance that responds to emergency 999 calls in London went on its first mission. Paramedic Telma Ricardo Guerreiro and Emergency Medical Technician Taylor Forde drove the lightweight vehicle on a night shift from Oval Ambulance Station, taking care of patients in Clapham, Peckham, and Brockley.

The new bespoke ambulances are part of London Ambulance Service's plan to move towards a net zero fleet. This will decrease operational costs incurred from fuel and maintenance while improving air quality to help reduce the prevalence of major diseases in the capital.

The new vehicles are lightweight and come with more accessible features such as a powered trolley bed system, a powered carry chair, and an integrated scanning system that informs crews whether the ambulance is fully stocked after each patient they've treated. These vehicles create zero emissions at the tailpipe, which makes them better for the environment.

Sadiq Khan, the Mayor of London,



praised the London Ambulance Service for leading the way in the city's first fully electric emergency ambulance. The ambulance will allow paramedics to provide top-notch care to thousands of patients while improving air quality and decreasing toxic emissions in the capital. London Ambulance Service is working with hospitals in the capital to provide high-powered electric vehicle charging ports so crews can charge their vehicles at hospitals.

The electric ambulances are the latest addition to the largest emergency fleet of fully-electric vehicles in the country, with a total of 42 fully-electric fast-response cars and three electric motorcycles. In total, there are 160 zero-emission capable vehicles in the fleet. Four fully electric ambulances are expected to be delivered to London Ambulance Service this year,

and the Service plans to expand its fleet of electric ambulances from April 2024.

Ford is the first original equipment manufacturer to provide the NHS with a base vehicle that enabled specialist converters, WAS, to build a fully electric ambulance that could power the heating, ventilation, air-conditioning, and auxiliary supply that a traditional ambulance requires. The ambulance has enough battery capacity to keep it operational throughout each 12-hour shift.

These vehicles are the first of twelve fully electric ambulances that will be piloted by NHS England's Net Zero Travel and Transport team in partnership with London Ambulance Service and four other ambulance trusts. The data collected will be used to inform the wider roll-out of zero-emission emergency ambulances in the future. ●

NHS Scotland welcomes its first pop-up solar car park and electric vehicle charging hub

An innovative charging hub has gone live in the UK and is the first of its kind in the country. Developed by 3ti, the Papilo3 is made from a recycled shipping container and can be easily transported and installed in less than eight hours.

The charging hub provides parking

and fast charging for up to 12 EVs using renewable energy. Its roof-mounted solar panels are integrated with existing local power sources to provide AC charging at up to 22kW for 12 vehicles at a time. With an average annual energy generation of 18MWh, the Papilo3 has the capacity to provide 63,000 miles' worth of charge to users.

The charging hub is equipped with motion-activated lighting, CCTV and a fully integrated billing system to make charging safe and simple for users. It is leased by NHS Scotland from 3ti, saving the health board the upfront cost of installing charge points. The Papilo3 will support destination and workplace EV charging for hospital staff, while offering

additional accessible and convenient charging in an area where visitors often stay for long periods and don't require rapid or ultra-rapid charging.

According to Brian Johnstone, head of energy, environment and sustainability at NHS Highland, *"As part of our commitment to supporting the delivery of healthcare in the future, we understand that our environmental responsibilities go beyond our own services. With the introduction of Papilio3, NHS Highland is now better positioned to support patients, staff and visitors with EVs at Raigmore. We hope that this investment in EV infrastructure helps to convince others to make the switch over to zero-emission vehicles."* ●



Mitie marks major milestone in Plan Zero journey as it welcomes 4,000th electric vehicle

Mitie has welcomed the 4,000th electric vehicle (EV), a Volkswagen ID Buzz, to its fleet. This significant milestone underscores Mitie's commitment to creating a zero emission fleet. Over the past year alone, Mitie has added over 1,000 new EVs, solidifying its position as one of the largest electric fleets in the UK.

The vehicle was unveiled by Matt Western, MP for Warwick and Leamington at National Grid House. Matt serves as the Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on EVs and was able to hear how Mitie is decarbonising Britain through sustainable transport, from deploying electric vehicles to its colleagues and customers, to installing thousands of EV

charge points across the nation.

The 4,000th EV is one of 650 new Volkswagen ID Buzz's ordered by Mitie. These long-range electric vehicles will cater to a wide range of Mitie colleagues, including cleaning operatives, landscaping colleagues, and mobile engineers traveling between sites. The vehicle is part of a new multi-million pound partnership between Mitie and National Grid, with Mitie delivering facilities management services at over 260 National Grid sites.

With 60% of its fleet now electric (as of 27 February 2024), Mitie is on track to meet its target of electrifying its fleet by the end of 2025. This ambitious journey started in 2020 with the launch of Plan Zero, a wider initiative aimed at reaching net zero operations in the same timeframe. A large component contributing to Mitie reaching this objective has been implementing a robust EV roadmap, replacing Internal Combustion Engine vehicles with EVs across its contracts and own estate.

Along with deploying electric vehicles, Mitie is also ensuring the UK has access to the clean, renewable energy it needs to power the EV revolution, having installed over 2,800 charge points across its colleagues' homes and customer sites. It is also supporting many of its customers, including National Grid, with their own EV strategies, from rolling

out EV's across fleets, through to the installation and upkeep of charging infrastructure.

Matt Western, MP for Warwick and Leamington, and Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Electric Vehicles, said:

"It was great to have the opportunity to welcome Mitie's 4,000th electric vehicle to its fleet and hear from the team about the important work they are doing. It is seriously impressive how Mitie are leading the way with one of the largest electric fleets in the UK. Businesses have a significant role in reducing transport emissions and I encourage all businesses to look at decarbonising their fleets."

"Reaching our 4,000th EV is a major milestone on our journey to reaching a zero-emission fleet by the end of 2025. The vehicle joining our fleet at National Grid will serve a crucial role for our cleaning operatives on the contract. It was a pleasure to be joined by the local MP, Matt Western, who in his role as the Chair of the APPG on EVs is driving forward the importance of fleet electrification, championing UK businesses to embrace EV strategies."

Heidi Thompson, Group Fleet Manager, Mitie. ●

FleetEV secures Wales's largest ever electric vehicles contract to drive sustainability across the Public Sector

Cardiff-based electric vehicle provider, FleetEV, has announced that it has been awarded a significant contract by the Welsh Government to spur sustainability efforts across the public sector in Wales.

This latest win is the largest ever collaborative procurement of electric vehicles – and is expected to deliver savings of £660,000. It also reinforces the award-winning EV firm's commitment to making the switch to electric vehicles simple and attainable within Wales.

As part of the contract, FleetEV will supply over 300 vehicles, including cars, vans, and specially adapted vehicles to 15 regions across Wales. To effectively deliver this, the Welsh Government Energy Service consulted with eligible public sector organisations in Wales to identify vehicles that are suitable for the switch to electric, and in some cases have funded the gap to aid the transition from petrol and diesel vehicles to EVs.

The initiative also aligns with the Future Generations Act. Working together, the Welsh Government Energy Service will provide additional technical support for local authorities, while FleetEV's contribution is expected to generate as much as £2.89 million in social value throughout Wales.

This latest milestone follows FleetEV's recent rebranding to meet market demands and position itself for a new phase of substantial growth in 2024. Commenting on this latest contract



win, Jarrad Morris, Founder and CEO of FleetEV said:

"It's fantastic to see FleetEV partnering with Welsh Government to provide electric vehicles to Wales's public sector as part of a collaboration that reflects our mutual commitment to a sustainable future.

"The contract not only impacts today but also offers opportunities for future growth, inviting and encouraging more public sector organisations throughout Wales to reconsider the impact of their fleets and to reduce their carbon footprint.

"We're committed to extending the benefits of electric vehicles, cutting carbon emissions, and supporting Wales's environmental objectives while also delivering a programme of meaningful social value – and we're thankful to Welsh Government for trusting us to play a crucial part in this

initiative for a greener and cleaner Wales."
Rebecca Evans MS, Minister for Finance and local Government said:

"I am pleased to see local authorities leading the way on decarbonising their fleet whilst also driving down costs. It is essential we collaborate and use our existing funding and procurement levers in a more innovative and cooperative way to achieve net zero. This is a really good example of working together to achieve more."

This latest contract win is expected to create several job opportunities within the dynamic green automotive sector in Wales. It also solidifies FleetEV's position as a frontrunner in the sector – underscoring the award-winning firm's ongoing commitment to keep Wales at the forefront of green innovation, sustainability, and the adoption of electric vehicles. ●

Investment in new gritting vehicles keeps Dorset moving

During the winter months, the gritting crews of Dorset Council have been using their new vehicles to keep the roads safe for people to drive on throughout the County.

The council has invested £3.5 million in 25 new gritting vehicles, of which 10 are currently being used, and 15 more will be delivered by next winter. The old vehicles were over 10 years old and were no longer reliable, causing expensive maintenance costs. The new vehicles

are the cleanest and most efficient diesel heavy goods vehicles available in the UK, meeting Euro 6 requirements to reduce exhaust emissions.

Cllr Ray Bryan, Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel, and Environment said:

"Investing in a new fleet of vehicles was a necessity for the council. The old lorries have provided years of steadfast service, but the time had come to replace them with vehicles that are more reliable, efficient and better for the environment.

"Combined with our route-based system using local ground temperatures, we can identify the roads needing to be gritted, rather than a blanket approach, saving money, salt and time.

"Our crews are on call for six months every winter to keep our roads safe."

The vehicles treat 684 miles of roads that form our 23 main gritting routes.

Dorset Council uses a route-based weather forecasting system to identify which roads need to be gritted. This enables the Council to grit roads only when needed. This is better for the environment, and saves money, with less salt used and fewer lorry journeys.

It is a core requirement of the council to keep its primary salting network free of snow and ice so this takes priority night or day over all other works. This can sometimes impact the delivery of planned highways work during the winter. ●



Enterprise Flex-E-Rent and Costain drive new multi-site electric van project to showcase potential of electric vehicles in construction

Costain, has completed one of the UK construction sector's first pilots to test the use of electric vans on major project sites.

The pilot programme, in partnership with Enterprise Flex E-Rent, tested the use of electric vehicles (EVs) within construction projects, with electric vans trialled across a range of different teams and workplace scenarios.

The three Costain projects included on the pilot were the Preston Western Distributor Road scheme in Lancashire, the A30 Chiverton to Carland Cross project near Truro in Cornwall, and the A12 widening scheme near Chelmsford in Essex.

Electric vans were used by Costain's health and safety, environmental and laboratory

teams, with the vehicles typically carrying lighter materials and equipment that work within electric van payload guidelines.

Enterprise fitted the vehicles used for the pilot with technology to capture detailed data and provide insights on the electric vehicle usage.

To meet the challenge of long-distance charging, banks of up to 25 EV charging points were installed at the three pilot locations to ensure that the teams had easy and safe access to power.

Mark Ashenden, head of plant and fleet supply chain at Costain, said: "Understanding and reducing the impact of vehicle emissions at our project sites will be key to us reaching our net zero targets.

"We wanted to test how electric vans could

be deployed as part of an effective and more environmentally-friendly working fleet and how they can be a viable vehicle option for major infrastructure projects. After listening to our people's needs and adopting a flexible approach, we have been able to meet tight budgetary requirements while supporting decarbonisation.

"This trial has given our project teams a greater understanding of what commercial EVs can do and helps give them the confidence to utilise EVs where they can. By showing what can be possible, we hope to help create a blueprint for the industry to minimise carbon emissions and pave the way for a greener future for infrastructure."

Danny Glynn, managing director at Enterprise Flex-E-Rent, said: "This pilot is an important step towards understanding how EV vans can best be used in real-world scenarios such as construction and infrastructure. It showcases that there are clear applications for electric vans within these and other sectors.

"Organisations are looking for help in identifying how they can evolve to electric vehicles, which is why we were so keen to partner with our long-time partner Costain. The flexibility of rental means that businesses like Costain can introduce EVs across a number of departments and gradually increase the number of vehicles in line with user uptake."

Enterprise is committed to putting customers at the centre of the transition to EVs as part of a more sustainable mobility future. The business's top focus is on the overall experience, not just the vehicle, but the details of the customer journey and of operating an EV fleet across diverse mobility lines. ●

Cornwall Blood Bikes celebrate new BMW models

Gathering at Ocean BMW Bikes, volunteers from Cornwall Blood Bikes were honoured guests at the unveiling of BMW's latest motorcycle models: the F900GS/GSA, F800GS, and R12 Nine T. The event, hosted by Ocean BMW Motorrad, Falmouth, provided an opportunity for the volunteers to celebrate the enduring partnership that keeps their vital service operational.

Cornwall Blood Bikes, which operates a fleet of seventeen BMW motorcycles,

relies heavily on the support of Ocean Motorrad's team, including Andy, Chris, Dave, and mechanics Richie and Noah, under the guidance of their Fleet Manager, John. This collaboration ensures that the motorcycles are always ready to serve the community, highlighting the challenges and dedication required to maintain such an essential fleet.

The event was made even more special by the appearance of Roy, a respected member of the Cornwall Blood Bikes team. Having undergone extensive neck and spinal surgery earlier in the year, this marked Roy's first outing in over five weeks, bringing joy and a sense of camaraderie among the volunteers. Attendees, some of whom travelled from as far as Launceston, shared smiles, handshakes, and laughter, reaffirming the

strong sense of community within the group.

A highlight of the day was the opportunity to take a group photograph with Roy, capturing the spirit of support and togetherness that defines Cornwall Blood Bikes. The organization also took a moment to acknowledge the challenges faced by some of their volunteers and their families, offering love and support and expressing hope for brighter days ahead.

The event underscored the importance of community and mutual support, not just in keeping the wheels of the Blood Bikes turning, but also in fostering a network of care and solidarity among those who give so much to help others. ●

Source: <https://cornishstuff.com>

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Van market - best February since 1998

UK demand for new light commercial vehicles (LCVs) grew by 2.2% in February to 17,934 units, marking 14 months of consecutive growth, according to the latest figures published by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT).

While February is traditionally a lower volume month, as many operators delay procurement until March for the new numberplate, the increase represents the best February performance since 1998.

Registrations of vans weighing greater than 2.5 to 3.5 tonnes rose by 1.4% to 12,300 units, representing almost seven in 10 (68.6%) of all new vans as the trend for larger units continues. Deliveries of small vans weighing up to and including 2.0 tonnes, and medium-sized vans weighing greater than 2.0 to 2.5 tonnes, both saw declines, falling by —20.5% to 275 units and -5.9% to 3,162 units respectively.

The smaller volume 4x4 segment saw registrations more than double, rising by 108.3%, while pickups, crucial for many rural and construction business operations, were the third most popular

REGISTRATIONS OF VANS plus HCVs 3.5T-6T by YEAR-TO-DATE

	YTD-24	YTD-23	% change
Pickups	4,897	4,102	19.4%
4x4s	1,031	594	73.6%
Vans <= 2.0t	627	785	-20.1%
Vans > 2.0 - 2.5t	8,202	6,494	26.3%
Vans > 2.5 - 3.5t	27,139	27,663	-1.9%
All Vans to 3.5t	41,896	39,638	5.7%
Rigids > 3.5 - 6.0t	1,044	597	74.9%

class of commercial vehicle after heavy and medium vans, with registrations rising 21.2%. Fleet renewal is crucial for decarbonisation, and the government's recent decision to scrap changes to double cab pick-up vehicle taxation will ensure that operators can continue to invest in newer, lower-emission models. The sector believes that it would be fairer and simpler to use a vehicle's type approval as the basis to define it as a car or commercial vehicle for all tax purposes.

With each manufacturer now mandated to achieve a minimum proportion of zero-emission registrations every year, February saw a decline in registrations of battery electric vans weighing up to 3.5 tonnes, falling by 119 units to 847 units, and taking a 4.7% market share, down from 5.5% a year ago. Maintaining existing purchase incentives and ensuring charge point rollout including van-specific charging infrastructure, will be essential to help raise demand to the level needed to deliver net zero rapidly.

"Britain's appetite for new vans remains undiminished with 14 months of growth and, with last month's rethink of taxation for pickups, expansion looks to be sustained. However, this growth and confidence must be translated into zero-emission vehicles if we are to deliver our green goals.

Maintenance of essential incentives and a ramp-up of dedicated van-suitable charge point installation will be vital if we are to help keep long-term, net zero fleet investment moving forward at the pace needed."

Mike Hawes, SMMT Chief Executive. ●

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