EFM

ESSENTIAL FLEET MANAGER *Magazine*

For fleet professionals operating within the ***Public Sector, Housing, Utilities*** *and* ***Infrastructure Management***

ISSUE 3
2026

Special Feature: Driver Risk Management

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Essential Fleet Manager Magazine

ISSUE 3(2026)

Essential Fleet Manager is a dedicated publication created for the professionals who keep the UK's most critical services moving. From emergency response and healthcare to utilities, local authorities, and infrastructure, fleet operators play a vital role in ensuring vehicles are reliable, compliant, and ready to serve at all times. This magazine exists to support those responsibilities with timely, relevant, and practical information.

Focused on the unique demands of essential service fleets, Essential Fleet Manager delivers in-depth news, expert insights, and industry updates that matter. It covers everything from supplier innovations and procurement strategies to vehicle technology, sustainability, regulatory changes, and operational best practices. A key feature of Issue 3 (2026) is driver risk management, offering practical guidance to help organisations identify, assess, and reduce driver-related risks through training, policy development, telematics, and data-led safety strategies. Whether navigating the transition to electric fleets, managing costs, or improving efficiency, compliance, and safety, readers will find content designed to inform decision-making and drive performance. Selected feature pages from this issue are also available to download for easy reference and sharing.

By bringing together voices from across the sector—including fleet leaders, manufacturers, service providers, and policy experts—Essential Fleet Manager provides a trusted platform for knowledge-sharing and collaboration. It reflects the challenges and opportunities shaping the industry today, while helping fleet professionals prepare for what comes next.

Hope you enjoy reading this issue!

Debbie Cheadle, Editor.

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Essential Fleet Manager Magazine
is owned and published by:
Essential Fleet Group Ltd
128 City Road, London. EC1V 2NX.
Company Reg No: 12345195
www.essentialfleetgroup.co.uk

Essential Fleet Group Ltd's other title is:
Essential Fleet Operator
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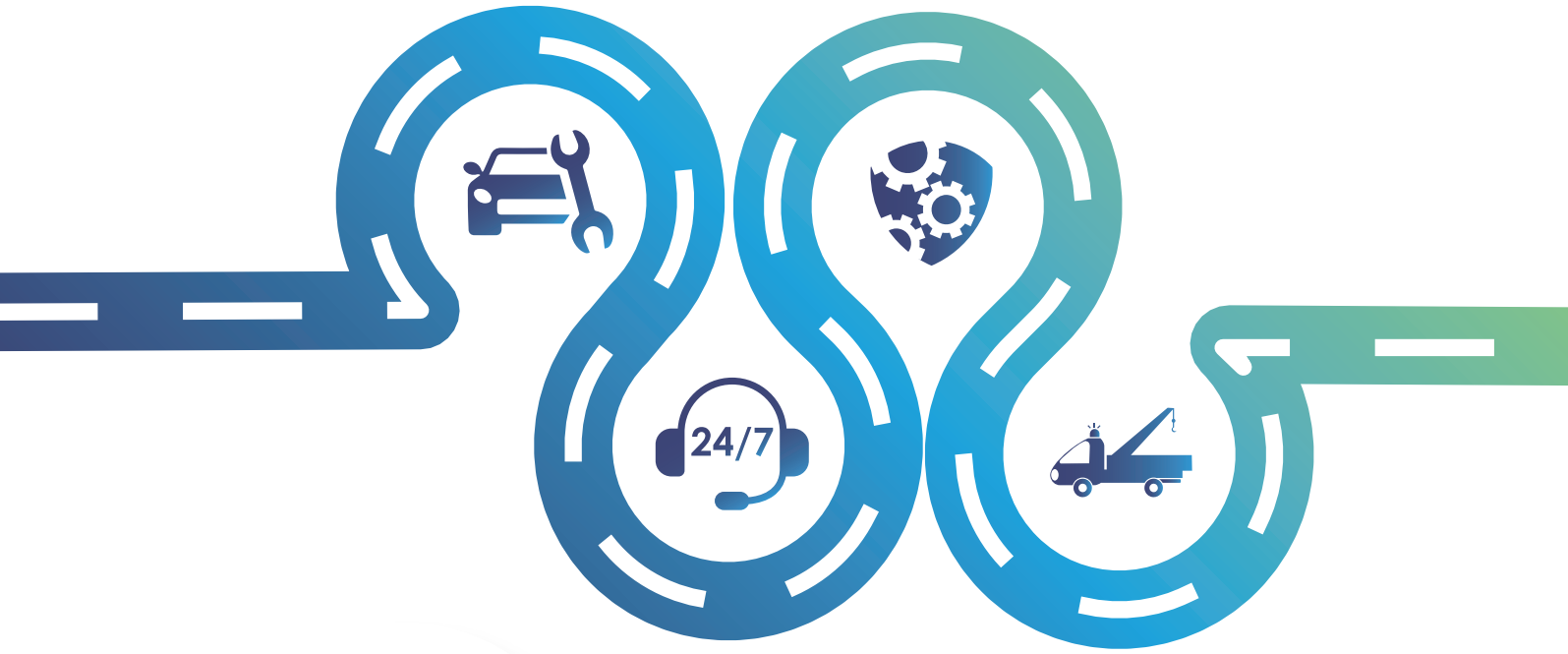

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Record Number of New and Replacement Ambulances Delivered

A record number of new and replacement ambulances have been delivered to NHS Trusts across England over the past year, boosting frontline capacity and helping paramedics respond to patients faster.

New data shows that a total of 1,141 new or replacement Double Crewed Ambulances (DCAs) were delivered to NHS ambulance Trusts between April 2025 and March 2026.

Funded through a combination of national investment and local funding, this marks the highest number of replacement ambulances delivered in a single year since records began.

The majority of the 1,141 vehicles replace older ambulances, ensuring patients and staff benefit from a modern, reliable fleet. The remainder of the new vehicles will provide additional fleet capacity, further supporting services under pressure.

Health Minister, Zubir Ahmed said:

"By modernising the NHS fleet, our hardworking paramedics are equipped with all the tools they need to do their jobs safely and effectively, while ensuring patients receive the highest possible standard of care."

"Replacing older vehicles with state-of-the-art ambulances means we are not only improving reliability and reducing downtime, but crucially helping more crews stay on the road and respond to emergencies.

"These vehicles are equipped with the technology to better protect staff and support faster, more effective treatment. This is a vital step in ensuring the NHS can continue to deliver world-class care for patients when they need it most".

Dr Fenella Wrigley, National Medical Adviser, Ambulance, NHSE said:

"New and replacement ambulances are crucial in providing care for patients, whether taking care to the patient home or conveying a patient to an emergency department.

"Reliable, modern, well-equipped ambulances allow emergency teams can stay out on the road and do what they do best, responding to patients quickly and ensuring they get the care they need.

"The new Double Crewed Ambulances are equipped with the modern technology and enhanced safety features, helping protect patients and staff while enabling paramedics to deliver high-quality pre-hospital care.

"Modern ambulances are more reliable and less likely to require repairs, reducing the amount of time vehicles spend off the road. This means more ambulances are available to respond to 999 calls, helping cut waiting times and improve patient outcomes.

"The rollout forms part of wider action to improve urgent and emergency care services, including improving flow through hospitals, improving delays to discharge through better join up with social care, putting more power in the hands of local leaders and improving strategic leadership.

Anna Parry, Managing Director of the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE) said:

"Delivering more than 1,100 new and replacement ambulances in a single year is a great achievement by NHS ambulance services in collaboration with DHSC and NHSE, and a genuine boost for patients and our people. Replacing older vehicles with modern, better-equipped ambulances means greater reliability, fewer breakdowns and more time on the road where they are needed most.

"For our crews, these vehicles make a tangible difference. The enhanced safety features and improved working environment support paramedics and other clinicians to deliver high-quality care under intense pressure, and they help our people feel safer and better supported on shift.

"This level of investment is essential as ambulance services continue to face sustained demand. A modern, resilient fleet is fundamental to improving response times and ensuring patients receive timely, safe care wherever they are when it is needed. We welcome this record year of delivery and look forward to continued progress in strengthening ambulance services across the country."

This winter, the NHS has seen a significant improvement in performance despite record demand, with Category 2 response times, including for strokes and heart attacks quicker than they have been for half a decade.

Waiting times are also at their lowest in A&E for almost half a decade, thanks to the hard work of NHS staff, better planning and modernisation.●

Picture: Oxford City Council: The new OBC and Stagecoach electric buses at the Oxford launch.

Oxford's Electric Bus Rollout **Cuts Air Pollution** by **Up to 24%** and **Slashes City Noise**

The introduction of 159 electric buses across Oxford is delivering significant reductions in air pollution and noise, according to new provisional data.

The £82.5 million investment, agreed in 2023 between Oxfordshire County Council, the UK government, the Oxford Bus Company and Stagecoach, is already transforming environmental conditions across the city.

Data shows that electrifying the bus fleet has reduced roadside nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) levels by an average of 10% between 2023 and 2024, with reductions of up to 24% in high-traffic areas such as St Aldates and High Street.

Noise pollution has also fallen, with traffic-related sound levels in central Oxford dropping by an average of 5.1 decibels — equivalent to moving three times further away from a busy road.

Councillor Andrew Gant, Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Transport Management, said:

"We are proud to have worked with our partners to deliver a safer, cleaner and greener county. This data shows the real difference these electric buses are already making to people's lives."

The findings come from analysis led by the NIHR-funded Public Health Intervention Responsive Studies Team, in partnership with the University of Oxford and other academic institutions. The research examined environmental changes before, during and after the rollout, alongside public experiences of the new fleet.

Dr Suzanne Bartington, Clinical Associate Professor in Environmental Health at the University of Birmingham, said:

"The transition to electric buses has had a measurable and meaningful impact on both air quality and noise. Importantly, people are noticing these changes — from reduced diesel fumes to fewer sleep disturbances."

The project was supported by the government's Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) scheme, a national initiative aimed at decarbonising public transport. In Oxfordshire, the county council contributed £6 million and secured £32.8 million from the Department for Transport, alongside £43.7 million f rom operators.

Electric buses now account for 69% of daily bus mileage within Oxford and 49% of total bus journeys.

Luke Marion, Managing Director of the Oxford Bus Company, said:

"This project demonstrates what can be achieved when organisations share a clear vision. We are continuing to build on this progress, with 13 additional electric buses entering service in spring 2026."

Chris Hanson, Managing Director of Stagecoach West, added:

"These buses are delivering cleaner, quieter journeys while improving comfort for passengers. This marks an important step towards our goal of a fully zero-emission fleet by 2035."

Air pollution remains the UK's largest environmental health risk, contributing to an estimated 30,000 early deaths annually and increasing the risk of conditions including asthma, heart disease and stroke.

Roads and Buses Minister Simon Lightwood said:

"Zero emission buses not only provide smoother, quieter journeys, they also play a crucial role in improving air quality in our towns and cities."

While air pollution levels in Oxford have declined in recent years, they still exceed World Health Organisation guidelines. Noise pollution also continues to impact public health, contributing to sleep disruption and increased risk of cardiovascular and mental health conditions.●

Hull and **East Riding** Launch First **Electric Bus Fleet**, Paving Way for **Cleaner Travel**

Hull and the East Riding have taken a major stride toward greener transport as East Yorkshire Buses introduced its new fleet of zero-emission vehicles.

The £16.5 million investment, funded through the Government's Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) initiative, is a collaboration between Hull City Council, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, and East Yorkshire Buses, part of the Go-Ahead Group. A total of 27 British-built electric buses will join the fleet, marking some of the first zero-emission buses in Hull. Switching from diesel to electric is expected to reduce emissions, lower traffic noise, and provide passengers with a smoother, quieter, and more comfortable journey. The new fleet is set to operate on routes 56, 57, and 58, connecting Hull with Cottingham and Hessle, and supporting commuting, education, and community links across the region.

To celebrate the launch, East Yorkshire Buses hosted a special event at the iconic The Deep, featuring a dramatic "power up" moment to showcase the new vehicles in action.

Kerry Ryan, Head of Transport and Traffic Management at Hull City Council, said: *"These new electric buses mark the start of a revolution in Hull's public transport network. They will not only improve journeys for passengers but also enhance service reliability and encourage more people to travel by bus."*

Matthew Ashton, Managing Director of East Yorkshire Buses, added: *"This investment shows what can be achieved when councils, operators, and Government work together. These electric buses will deliver tangible benefits for our customers and for the dedicated drivers who operate our services, creating a smoother, quieter, and more enjoyable travel experience."*

The launch event also highlighted the region's commitment to sustainability. **Freya Cross, Head of Business and Corporate at The Deep**, said: *"Hosting the launch was a great way to celebrate this step toward a greener Humber region. It's been inspiring to collaborate with East Yorkshire Buses and HPSS to bring this event to life."*

The arrival of these electric buses represents a new chapter for public transport in Hull and the East Riding, supporting cleaner air, quieter streets, and a more sustainable future for communities across the region.●

New **Housing Maintenance Fleet** for **Cannock** District Council

Cannock Chase District Council has announced the introduction of a brand-new vehicle fleet dedicated to supporting the Council's Housing Repairs Team. This significant investment will improve the efficiency, reliability, and sustainability of housing repair services delivered to residents across the district.

The upgraded fleet features modern vehicles designed with enhanced safety features, improved fuel efficiency, and upgraded storage solutions. These improvements will enable operatives to respond more swiftly to repair requests and carry essential tools and equipment required to complete work on the first visit wherever possible.

In addition to enhancing service delivery, the transition to a modernised fleet supports the Council's wider environmental goals. The new vehicles offer cleaner, more efficient performance, helping to reduce emissions and lower operational costs. This aligns with the Council's commitment to a greener, more sustainable future for communities throughout Cannock Chase.

The Council looks forward to the positive impact this upgrade will have on service performance, staff safety, and resident satisfaction as it continues to strengthen its housing repairs service.●

ESPO's VCI3 Framework, Expanding **Opportunities** for **Public Sector EV Infrastructure**

The latest iteration of ESPO's Vehicle Charging Infrastructure framework, VCI3 (636_25), represents a significant evolution in how public sector organisations can plan, procure and deliver electric vehicle (EV) charging projects. Building on previous frameworks, VCI3 introduces a more comprehensive and flexible structure designed to support the growing complexity of EV adoption acros the UK.

At its core, the framework provides access to a wide range of charging solutions, including fast, rapid and ultra-rapid charge points, alongside the software and services required to operate them effectively. This ensures organisations are not only able to install infrastructure, but also manage it efficiently over time.

One of the defining features of VCI3 is its four-lot structure, which allows public sector buyers to tailor procurement to their specific needs.

- **Lot 1** focuses on the purchase of EV charge points and includes full turnkey solutions, covering supply, installation, feasibility studies and ongoing maintenance.
- **Lot 2** provides access to back-office systems, also known as Charge Point Management Systems, enabling organisations to monitor, control and optimise charger usage.
- **Lot 3** is dedicated to servicing and maintaining existing infrastructure, particularly useful for assets that are no longer under warranty.
- **Lot 4** offers consultancy support, helping organisations with early-stage planning, site design, energy assessments and long-term fleet decarbonisation strategies.

This modular approach is particularly valuable as it recognises that not all organisations are at the same stage in their EV journey. Some may require full end-to-end delivery, while others may only need software integration or maintenance support for existing assets.

Another key strength of the framework is its ability to support projects from concept through to operation. Consultancy services available under Lot 4 allow organisations to assess grid capacity, evaluate usage patterns and develop sustainable business models before committing to installation. This reduces the risk of underperforming infrastructure and ensures investments are aligned with long-term transport strategies.

VCI3 also reflects the increasing importance of scalability. As EV adoption accelerates, infrastructure must be capable of expanding alongside demand. The framework enables organisations to start with smaller deployments and grow over time without needing to reprocure entirely new contracts, making it easier to adapt to changing requirements.

In addition, ESPO has placed emphasis on supplier quality and social value. All suppliers on the framework have been assessed not only for technical capability, but also for their ability to deliver wider benefits in line with public sector priorities. This ensures that projects contribute not just to decarbonisation, but also to broader economic and community outcomes.

The framework is available to a wide range of public sector bodies, including local authorities, NHS organisations, schools and central government departments. Its national scope and pre-approved supplier base make it a practical and compliant route to market, reducing procurement complexity while maintaining high standards of delivery.

Ultimately, VCI3 demonstrates how procurement frameworks are evolving to meet the realities of the energy transition. By combining flexibility, technical support and end-to-end delivery options, it provides public sector organisations with the tools needed to implement effective and future-proof EV charging infrastructure. As the shift towards zero-emission transport continues, frameworks like VCI3 will play a crucial role in turning ambition into action.●

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Drives Fleet Efficiency and Sustainability with Michelin Tyres

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council has significantly improved the efficiency and sustainability of its 160-vehicle fleet, reducing CO_2 emissions by 27.7 tonnes over a three-year period following its transition to Michelin tyres.

Since 2021, the Council has standardised its fleet by exclusively fitting Michelin tyres across both vans and heavy goods vehicles (HGVs), replacing a previously mixed-brand approach. This partnership has been supported through the UK Government's Crown Commercial Service (CCS) framework, ensuring access to a trusted, high-quality supplier.

A Council spokesperson commented:

"Switching to Michelin tyres through the CCS framework is one of the best decisions we've made. It guaranteed quality from the outset, and more than four years on, we are seeing clear benefits. By adopting a multi-life tyre policy for our HGVs, alongside improved tyre longevity across the fleet, we've delivered strong lifecycle value, increased operational efficiency, and achieved measurable sustainability gains."

The Council's fleet comprises approximately 100 vans supporting essential frontline services—including dog wardens, medical and welfare checks, and parks maintenance—alongside 60 HGVs such as 32-tonne hook loaders and 26-tonne refuse collection vehicles. Operating 24/7 in all weather conditions, the fleet demands high standards of performance, safety, and compliance.

A key driver of these improvements has been the implementation of a multi-life tyre policy. HGV tyres are regrooved when tread depth reaches 3–4mm and subsequently retreaded at Michelin's facility in Stoke-on-Trent, significantly extending the lifespan of each casing. Between 2023 and 2025, this approach has:

- Diverted 10.2 tonnes of waste from landfill
- Reduced raw material consumption by 13.2 tonnes
- Lowered CO_2 emissions by 27.7 tonnes

While premium tyres represent a higher initial investment, the Council has realised clear value for money through reduced whole-life costs and operational benefits. The use of Michelin tyres has led to a noticeable reduction in punctures, minimising vehicle downtime and enabling more reliable service delivery. It has also improved driver satisfaction by keeping vehicles on the road and reducing disruption.

In addition, the Council utilises Michelin Connected Fleet services to monitor fuel consumption, analyse driving behaviour such as harsh braking, and support driver coaching. These insights contribute to improved safety standards and further emissions reductions. Day-to-day tyre maintenance is delivered locally by Modern Tyres in Ballyclare.

The CCS framework continues to provide local authorities with a transparent and efficient route to market, enabling organisations such as Mid and East Antrim Borough Council to partner with trusted suppliers, enhance service delivery, reduce costs, and meet ambitious sustainability targets.●

Cornwall Airport Newquay Strengthens **Emergency Response** with **Next-Generation Panther Fleet**

Cornwall Airport Newquay has announced a major upgrade to its emergency response capability with the introduction of three state-of-the-art Rosenbauer Panther aircraft rescue and firefighting (ARFF) vehicles.

Located on Cornwall's rugged Atlantic coast, the airport continues to evolve as a critical regional hub, with this latest investment reflecting both advancements in aviation safety and the growing importance of specialist fleets within national infrastructure.

The deployment of the new Panther vehicles represents a significant strategic enhancement, replacing legacy units that have been in service since the airport's transition from military to civilian operations in 2008. The move underscores the airport's commitment to maintaining the highest safety standards while future-proofing its emergency response capabilities.

One of the newly delivered vehicles also marks a milestone as the 100th Rosenbauer Panther supplied across the UK and Ireland, reinforcing the platform's reputation as a benchmark in airport firefighting fleets.

Designed for rapid response, each vehicle is capable of reaching any point on the runway in under three minutes, ensuring compliance with stringent aviation safety regulations. The Panthers are equipped with advanced High Reaching Extendable Turret (HRET) systems, enabling firefighters to combat blazes from above and penetrate aircraft fuselages to extinguish internal fires.

With a 12,000-litre water capacity and integrated specialist foam systems, the vehicles significantly enhance operational effectiveness in high-risk scenarios, while also supporting a more streamlined, multi-functional fleet approach.

In a forward-looking move, Cornwall Airport Newquay will operate all three vehicles on Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) as part of a 12-month trial. This renewable fuel has the potential to reduce lifecycle carbon emissions by up to 90% compared to conventional diesel, aligning the airport's operational performance with its sustainability objectives.

The investment is particularly significant given the airport's role as a key regional gateway, supporting commercial air routes across the UK and Europe, as well as hosting vital emergency services including the Cornwall Air Ambulance and HM Coastguard.

As airports continue to expand their role as multi-functional transport and emergency hubs, the demand for high-performance, sustainable fleet solutions is increasing. Cornwall Airport Newquay's latest fleet upgrade demonstrates how targeted investment can deliver enhanced capability, improved resilience, and meaningful environmental benefits.●

Trailer Maintenance Tips to Reduce Downtime and Extend Fleet Life

For businesses that depend on transport to deliver equipment and goods to site, vehicle downtime is more than an inconvenience, it has a direct financial impact. Maintaining a trailer fleet in a roadworthy, compliant condition is essential for operational efficiency, safety, and long-term productivity.

A structured maintenance approach helps ensure trailers remain reliable, compliant with relevant road safety standards, and capable of performing consistently under demanding conditions. Preventative maintenance is therefore a critical part of effective fleet management.

The Importance of Preventative Maintenance

Routine inspections and servicing play a key role in reducing the likelihood of unexpected breakdowns. By identifying wear and damage early, operators can avoid costly repairs and minimise disruption to operations.

A well-maintained trailer fleet delivers several operational benefits, including improved reliability, reduced downtime, enhanced safety, and stronger overall performance. These outcomes are particularly important in industries such as construction, utilities, and logistics, where delays can have significant knock-on effects.

Trailer Maintenance Checklist

To support safe and efficient operation, the following daily checks should be carried out by operators:

- **Coupling and Hitch**: Inspect the towing hitch for signs of wear, including the ball hitch or towing eye. Check the drawtube for damage and examine the breakaway cable for corrosion or deterioration. Ensure the bellows (gaiter) are intact and free from splits or tears.
- **Chassis and Frame**: Examine the trailer chassis for cracks, rust, or structural weaknesses. Although galvanised steel provides corrosion resistance, regular inspections remain essential to ensure ongoing integrity.
- **Tyres:** Tyre pressure and tread depth should be monitored regularly. Before every journey, tyres should be inspected for visible damage, including cuts, bulges, or embedded objects.
- **Brakes and Bearings**: Confirm that the handbrake engages correctly. As a general reference point, the lever should sit approximately at the 1Ø o'clock position (or 2 o'clock when viewed from the offside). If the lever rises above this position, brake adjustment may be required.

  Brake systems typically require adjustment every three months, depending on usage. Brake components such as pads and drums should be inspected for wear, and wheel bearings should operate smoothly without noise or resistance.
- **Lighting**: All lighting systems should be checked before each journey. This includes indicators, brake lights, and tail lights. Any cracked lenses, dirt buildup, or malfunctioning bulbs should be addressed immediately.
- **Lubrication and Cleaning**
- Regular cleaning reduces the risk of corrosion and prevents damage caused by road debris. Lubrication of moving components improves operational efficiency, extends service life, and reduces unnecessary wear. In most cases, lubrication should be carried out on a quarterly basis.

Scheduled Servicing and Fleet Upkeep

In addition to daily checks, trailers should undergo routine servicing at recommended intervals of three, six, and twelve months. Regular servicing supports long-term reliability, reduces the likelihood of mechanical failure, and helps maintain compliance with safety requirements**.**

Manufacturers typically provide detailed maintenance guidance within the user manual, and these recommendations should be followed closely to ensure correct care and operation.

Reducing Downtime Through Effective Fleet Management

Operational efficiency can be further improved through proactive maintenance strategies, including:

- Maintaining a stock of essential spare parts such as brake components and lighting units to reduce repair delays
- Training drivers and operators to carry out basic pre-journey inspections
- Implementing digital maintenance logs to track inspections, servicing schedules, and compliance records

These practices help streamline maintenance processes and reduce the risk of avoidable downtime.

Conclusion

Regular trailer maintenance is not solely a compliance requirement—it is a fundamental component of effective fleet management. By adopting a structured inspection routine and scheduled servicing programme, businesses can reduce downtime, improve safety, and extend the operational lifespan of their trailer assets.●

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Driver CPC: Are You **Doing Enough**?

Chris Harrington
Associate Legal Director and Solicitor
CE Transport Law

What is Driver CPC?

The Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (Driver CPC) is a legal requirement for professional drivers, designed to ensure they are properly trained and competent to carry out their duties safely and effectively.

It applies to drivers of:

- Large goods vehicles (LGVs) over 3.5 tonnes, and
- Passenger-service vehicles (PSVs) with 9 or more seats

where driving is undertaken in the course of employment or in connection with a business.

Who Must Hold a Driver CPC?

In most fleet operations, any driver operating an in-scope vehicle as part of their work will require a valid Driver CPC, unless a specific exemption applies.

Operators should exercise caution when relying on exemptions. These are often narrowly interpreted and frequently misunderstood. Incorrect reliance on an exemption is a common compliance failure and can lead to enforcement action.

Where there is any doubt, legal advice should be sought.

Duration and Ongoing Requirements

A Driver CPC qualification is valid for five years, after which it will expire unless renewed.

To maintain it, drivers must complete:

- 35 hours of approved periodic training within each five-year cycle

Upon completion, the driver is issued with a Driver Qualification Card (DQC), which must be carried when undertaking in-scope driving.

Tip: Don't leave this until the last minute. Best practice is to spread your modules over time to ensure continuous, up-to-date training.

As a practical step, Driver CPC cards can be checked during routine gate checks.

Consequences of Non-Compliance

Failure to ensure drivers hold a valid CPC where required can result in:

- Fixed penalties
- Criminal prosecution
- DVSA investigation into compliance
- Regulatory action by the Traffic Commissioner, which may impact your operator's licence

For operators, this is not just a driver issue it is a licence issue if not managed effectively.

Managing Risk in Fleet Operations

While there is no legal obligation on operators to provide CPC training, there is a clear obligation to ensure that drivers are properly qualified when driving company vehicles.

Tip: Best practice is to take control of this area. If you organise the training periodically as an operator you know the status of the CPC the areas where training has been delivered and mitigate the risk to your operation.

Monitor CPC Expiry Dates

Maintain accurate records of all driver CPC expiry dates and review them regularly.

Implement Reminder Systems

Use systems (such as compliance software or spreadsheets with alerts) to notify drivers in advance of expiry. Written reminders (email or letter) should be issued to create a clear audit trail and avoid a scenario where a vehicle is driven by a driver without a valid Driver CPC.

Refuse Work Where Necessary

Drivers without a valid CPC must not be permitted to undertake in-scope driving. Robust systems should support the ability to stand drivers down where required. This is the minimum expected by a Traffic Commissioner and demonstrates good oversight, as well as effective and continuous control of the operator's licence.

Verify Agency and Temporary Drivers

Agency drivers present a particular risk.

Operators must ensure that all drivers regardless of how they are engaged hold valid CPC and licence entitlements before driving your vehicle.

Review Training Quality and Relevance

Operators should not treat CPC as a tick-box exercise.

Tip: As a practical step, you can request access to, or copies of, the training modules completed by your drivers.

This helps ensure:

- Training is relevant to your operation
- Knowledge gaps are identified, enabling additional training (e.g. toolbox talks)
- Wider compliance and safety standards are improved

Common Operator Mistakes

A number of recurring mistakes arise in practice:

- Overreliance on assumptions around exemptions
- Failure to actively monitor CPC validity
- Inadequate checks on agency drivers
- Treating CPC as an administrative task rather than a compliance risk

Failing to properly monitor Driver CPC is a fast track to fixed penalties, prosecution or the loss of your licence. So make sure your doing enough!●

CheckedSafe

GB **Domestic Hours** Management. **Fully Digital**, Finally **Simple**

Driver fatigue is one of those risks that rarely announces itself until it's too late. For operators running under GB Domestic Hours rules, it can be even harder to stay on top of. Paper logbooks leave room for error, and more importantly, they leave room for risk.

That's where better driver management needs to step in.

For years, GB Domestic Hours recording has been treated as a tick-box exercise. Drivers fill in sheets, managers file them away, and unless something goes wrong, they're rarely revisited. But fatigue doesn't sit neatly inside a piece of paper. It builds over time, across shifts, across weeks, and across multiple responsibilities. Without clear visibility, it becomes incredibly difficult to spot patterns or intervene early.

Digital recording changes that completely.

CheckedSafe's GB Domestic Hours App was built to move operators away from reactive compliance and into proactive risk management. Instead of relying on handwritten logs, drivers can record their hours live or retrospectively within the app, creating a far more accurate and reliable record of their activity. That alone reduces the risk of errors, but the real value goes much further.

The app introduces structure and visibility into an area that has traditionally lacked both. Automatic alerts flag infringements to managers, giving them the opportunity to act early. Rather than discovering a problem weeks later when reviewing paperwork, you can address it in real time.

From a fatigue management perspective, that shift is critical.

When driver hours are recorded digitally and centrally, it becomes far easier to identify trends. Are drivers breaching the rules? Are certain drivers consistently working longer days? Are rest periods being pushed to their limits? Are there patterns forming across specific routes or job types? These are the kinds of insights that simply aren't possible with paper-based systems.

And it's not just about protecting drivers, it's about protecting the business.

Non-compliance with GB Domestic Hours rules can lead to serious consequences, from enforcement action to reputational damage. But beyond that, fatigue-related incidents carry a much greater cost. They impact safety, operations, and ultimately, trust. Having a robust, digital system in place demonstrates that you are taking these risks seriously and actively managing them.

What makes the CheckedSafe approach different is that it doesn't sit in isolation. The GB Domestic Hours App is fully integrated into a wider compliance platform, meaning driver hours, vehicle checks, and other critical compliance data all sit in one place. For transport managers, that visibility is invaluable. It removes the need to juggle multiple systems and creates a single system for all your fleet management.

It also makes life easier for drivers.

The app is simple to use, removes the burden of paperwork, and ensures records are always accessible. Timesheets can be downloaded instantly, and managers can access detailed reports through the back-office portal without chasing documents or deciphering handwriting.

Ultimately, managing GB Domestic Hours shouldn't just be about meeting minimum requirements. It should be about reducing risk, improving visibility, and making better decisions.

Fatigue isn't going away, but with the right tools, it becomes far more manageable.

And that's the real opportunity here. Moving from paper to digital isn't just an upgrade in process, it's a step change in how driver risk is controlled.●

Simplify your **fleet compliance** — **stay safe**, **stay legal**.

If you would like further information, please visit: **www.checkedsafe.com**

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Bott & **Van Guard Accessories**: **Moving Forward** as One **Complete Van Conversion** Solution

Van storage and security specialist Van Guard Accessories became part of leading vehicle conversion expert, The Bott Group on 31st March 2025, creating a partnership that is already redefining sector standards. Just over a year later, the combined expertise is driving innovation at pace, delivering smarter, fully integrated solutions for operators of all sizes, from large fleets to independent tradespeople.

The Commercial Vehicle Show 2026 provided the ideal backdrop for Essential Fleet Manager Magazine to hear more. We caught up with Nick Smith, CEO at Bott Ltd, who explained the thinking behind the acquisition, reflected on a strong first year, and outlined an ambitious vision for the future.

The Background

Both Bott Ltd and Van Guard Accessories are long-established names in the sector, each with decades of experience and a shared reputation for quality, reliability and customer commitment. Van Guard was already an established supplier to Bott Ltd, and Nick explained what ultimately led to the decision to deepen the relationship and integrate the business more closely.

"One of the primary reasons was that we recognise that, increasingly, fleet operators, bott's core customers, are looking for a one-stop-shop solution. Depending on the requirement, we were often able to provide that, but we lacked security and roof storage solutions."

So, what made Van Guard such a strong fit? Nick continued:

"We knew from our existing relationship that Van Guard would be a great fit. The Bott Group was established over 90 years ago and combining that depth of engineering expertise with Van Guard's 50-year reputation for quality and innovation creates a business with a very strong foundation. It gives us the ability to develop, adapt and evolve, meeting a much broader range of customer needs and with a wider customer base. Since the integration, we've been very excited about the opportunities ahead."

From a practical standpoint, the benefits were equally clear:

"Van Guard products are well known for being easy to fit and highly durable. That has a direct impact on efficiency, reducing installation times and minimising technical issues. It might sound simple, but it plays a significant role in supporting our overall reputation for dependability."

Following the Acquisition

Since the acquisition between The Bott Group and Van Guard Accessories, both brands have already seen clear benefits, not only for customers but across the business as a whole.

Nick highlighted an important shift in brand visibility:

"We're very proud of the bott brand and what it represents, but until now, once our interior work is complete, the brand hasn't been visible. Van Guard will become bott branded by the autumn, meaning Van Guard products fitted to the outside of the vehicle will give us constant exposure, promoting our enhanced capabilities."

Alongside improved visibility, the integration has also brought together two highly skilled engineering teams, creating a stronger combined capability for future product development.

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One-stop-shop solution for fleets of all sizes

The first jointly developed product under the bott brand: the bott Ladder Clamp. Launched at the Commercial Vehicle Show 2026

...Cont'd from page **15**

"We've created a powerhouse of investment to support the development of future products and the skills of our engineering teams. There is a constant opportunity to learn from each other and refine every development to ensure we deliver the best possible solutions."

The acquisition has also opened up new market opportunities across both brands, as Nick explained.

"Traditionally, Bott Ltd has succeeded as a conversion specialist for fleets, including many of the UK's largest operators. Van Guard, while operating in the same space, has a customer base that includes installers who typically service the small to mid-size fleet trade as well as single-van trades. We now have an opportunity to bring high-quality, whole-van conversion solutions to that wider market and indeed are now working closely with Van Guard connections who have become part of our wider partner network. Demand will also be supported by the increased awareness generated through exterior branding."

There are clear advantages in the opposite direction too:

"We can now feed the important security message into the bott network, confident in delivering trusted solutions from Van Guard's range of security products. These, as well as the storage solutions, can be fitted as part of a new conversion or retrofitted during a vehicle's operational life. It's about creating a true one-stop-shop, where customers have a single source of both solution and responsibility. That simplicity is hugely valuable, particularly for fleet operators with complex requirements, but equally relevant for any van operator, large or small."

Finally, Nick highlighted the broader opportunity created by bott's international presence:

"Van Guard is now able to take advantage of The Bott Group's global footprint, with operations in Europe and ongoing developments in the USA. As we build on these opportunities, we want to ensure customer engagement becomes even closer and more consistent, evolving in line with requirements as we continue to learn from each other."

The CV Show 2026 & The Story So Far

The Commercial Vehicle Show 2026 marked the first opportunity for Van Guard Accessories to showcase its products, expertise and solutions as part of The Bott Group. Visitors saw Van Guard products both as standalone solutions and fully integrated within bott conversions, making a clear statement of intent for the future.

Alongside established favourites such as the UTILoader Ladder Loading System, the show also served as the launch platform for the first jointly developed product under the bott brand: the bott Ladder Clamp.

Manufactured from high-quality stainless steel and glass-reinforced nylon, the Ladder Clamp offers a lightweight yet durable alternative to traditional systems. It features an innovative triple-start thread, significantly reducing the time required to secure and release ladders. Over-tightening is prevented by an audible click when the correct tension is reached, while an integrated locking mechanism provides additional security. A further refinement is the built-in ball-bearing system, which maintains consistent pressure on the clamping bar, ensuring ladders remain secure even under sustained vibration during transit.

These developments highlight the strength of combining R&D expertise and engineering capability across both businesses, enabling teams to identify real-world challenges and develop practical, user-led solutions. More broadly, they reflect the direction of travel for Van Guard as part of The Bott Group, offering customers a complete *"inside and out"* conversion capability, where every component is designed and engineered to the highest possible standard.

The Future

The acquisition of Van Guard Accessories by The Bott Group has created an organisation capable of meeting the vast majority of van conversion requirements across the UK market and beyond.

In the UK, Bott Ltd's established strengths in large-fleet solutions, supported by advanced systems such as sophisticated vehicle configurators, are now accessible to a far broader customer base.

Ongoing investment in design, innovation and people will continue at a new level, driving product development and reinforcing a comprehensive conversion offering. The combined business is positioned to serve everyone from self-employed plumbers and electricians to the UK's largest fleet operators, delivering consistent quality and capability across the board.●

Contact **sales@van-guard.co.uk** for further information on **Van Guard's** range of storage and security products, or visit: **www.van-guard.co.uk**

bott Ladder Clamp will be available from June 2026.

Barnsley Council Signals Long-Term **Fleet Strategy** with **Multi-Million Investment**

Barnsley Council has outlined an ambitious programme to modernise its operational fleet, committing over £17 million towards the phased replacement and upgrade of vehicles across multiple service areas. The investment reflects a broader shift among UK local authorities towards more sustainable, efficient, and fit-for-purpose fleet operations.

Rather than a simple like-for-like replacement exercise, the programme is understood to focus on aligning vehicle capability with evolving service demands, particularly in waste collection, housing maintenance, and environmental services.

At the heart of the strategy is the planned renewal of hundreds of vehicles over several years. This includes specialist assets such as refuse-collection vehicles, alongside smaller service vans used in daily frontline operations. By staggering procurement, the council aims to manage costs while maintaining continuity of service.

A key driver behind the initiative is the need to reduce ongoing maintenance costs associated with ageing assets. Older vehicles typically lead to increased downtime, higher repair bills, and reduced fuel efficiency, all of which put pressure on already-stretched local authority budgets. Investing upfront in newer models is expected to improve reliability while lowering whole-life costs.

Sustainability is also a central consideration. Like many councils, Barnsley is working towards environmental targets that require a gradual transition away from traditional diesel-powered fleets. While not all replacements will be zero-emission immediately, the programme provides a framework for integrating low- and zero-emission vehicles, as infrastructure and funding permit.

In addition to environmental benefits, newer vehicles are anticipated to deliver improved safety standards and better working conditions for operators. Advances in vehicle technology—ranging from driver assistance systems to enhanced cab ergonomics, are increasingly influencing procurement decisions across the public sector.

From a fleet management perspective, the scale of the investment highlights the importance of long-term

Picture: Barnsley Council

planning. Coordinating procurement, maintenance schedules, driver training, and infrastructure upgrades requires a holistic approach, especially when introducing new technologies such as electric drivetrains.

The council's approach reflects a wider trend across the UK, where local authorities are treating fleet renewal not as a periodic expense but as a strategic lever for service improvement. By linking vehicle investment to operational efficiency, sustainability goals, and workforce needs, fleet managers are playing a more central role in organisational decision-making.

Ultimately, Barnsley's programme underscores a key message for the sector: effective fleet management is no longer just about vehicles; it is about enabling resilient, efficient public services in an increasingly complex operating environment.●

Building an Effective **Fleet Driver Risk Policy**: From **Compliance** to **Culture**

*"**Policy** is only as effective as its **implementation** — **without action**, it's just **paperwork**."*

A fleet driver risk policy is not a "*nice to have.*" For any organisation operating vehicles, whether company-owned, leased, or part of the grey fleet, it is an essential foundation for safe, compliant, and cost-effective operations.

A well-designed policy goes beyond ticking compliance boxes. It provides a structured, defensible approach to identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks across all driving activities. When implemented effectively, it protects drivers, reduces operational costs, and safeguards the organisation's reputation. Conversely, a poorly executed, incomplete, or absent policy leaves organisations exposed to operational, legal, and reputational risks.

Start with Driver Management

Effective fleet risk management begins with the driver. Behaviour behind the wheel remains one of the largest controllable risk factors in any fleet.

Eligibility and recruitment are the first lines of defence. Clear criteria should be established at recruitment and regularly reassessed. Driving licence checks must verify entitlement, endorsements, and any disqualifications to ensure that only competent, eligible drivers operate vehicles on behalf of the organisation.

Training is equally critical. Policies should mandate induction training for all new drivers, complemented by regular refresher sessions covering defensive driving, hazard perception, and risk awareness. Where incidents occur, or telematics data highlights higher-risk behaviour, drivers should receive targeted coaching and support to address specific issues.

Fitness to drive must also be included in the policy. This encompasses eyesight standards, fatigue management, and strict rules around drugs and alcohol. Policies should define working hours, required rest breaks, and procedures for reporting concerns. Providing a driver handbook ensures that expectations and safe practices are clearly communicated. The policy should be easily accessible, so drivers can refer to it at any time.

Prioritising Vehicle Safety

Vehicles are a key part of the risk equation. A policy should mandate daily walk-around checks or Driver Vehicle Inspection Reports (DVIRs), covering tyres, lights, mirrors, wipers, and other safety-critical components. Documenting these checks ensures accountability and auditability.

Planned maintenance should follow manufacturer recommendations and operational needs. Combining regular servicing with prompt defect reporting reduces mechanical failure risk and enhances safety.

Vehicle selection policies are equally important. Minimum safety standards should include ABS and advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS). Grey fleet vehicles, those personally owned but used for work, must meet similar standards. Organisations should verify roadworthiness, insurance coverage for business use, and ongoing maintenance, as oversight in this area is often weakest.

Establishing Clear Operational Rules

Daily operations demand clear rules and expectations. Mobile phone use should be strictly controlled, including handheld restrictions, with careful guidance on hands-free systems to minimise distraction.

Route planning and scheduling should be realistic, preventing drivers from feeling pressured to speed or take unsafe risks. Policies should provide guidance on personal use of company vehicles and enforce speed management through telematics where appropriate. This ensures driving behaviour is monitored objectively and supports both compliance and safety culture.

Managing Incidents Effectively

Even the best policies cannot prevent all incidents. Drivers must have step-by-step guidance on responding to incidents, including who to contact, what information to collect, and reporting timelines.

Organisations should investigate all incidents, including near misses, focusing on root causes rather than assigning blame. Efficient claims management, supported by accurate data collection, reduces downtime and helps control costs, while also identifying patterns.

Using Technology Responsibly

Telematics, dash cams, and AI-based monitoring systems offer invaluable insights into driver behaviour. Policies must define acceptable use, emphasising transparency and proportionality.

Compliance with GDPR and other data protection regulations is essential. Drivers should be informed and give consent where necessary. Using technology responsibly allows fleet managers to coach drivers effectively, reward safe behaviour, and intervene where risks are increasing, without compromising privacy.

Embedding Governance and Accountability

A fleet risk policy is only effective when backed by strong governance. Responsibilities should be clearly defined, from senior leadership through to line managers and drivers.

Regular reviews, audits, and updates—particularly following major incidents or regulatory changes, ensure the policy remains current. Clear disciplinary procedures must be in place so that non-compliance is addressed consistently, reinforcing the importance of safety and accountability.

From Policy to Practice

A fleet driver risk policy is only effective when it is actively implemented and embedded in daily operations. It should be a living document, reinforced through:

- **Training**: Ensuring drivers understand expectations and best practices.
- **Communication**: Sharing updates, insights, and lessons learned from incidents.
- **Leadership**: Demonstrating that management prioritises safety, not just compliance.

Building a Safety-First Culture

Beyond compliance, a fleet risk policy is a tool for shaping organisational culture. It sends a message to drivers that safety, responsibility, and accountability matter. Over time, embedding risk-aware behaviours leads to:

- **Reduced** incidents and collisions
- **Lower** insurance and repair costs
- **Improved** driver retention and morale
- **Enhanced** reputation and compliance with regulators

By treating risk management as a cultural priority, not just a procedural obligation, operators achieve tangible operational and financial benefits.

Conclusion

A comprehensive fleet driver risk policy is a cornerstone of safe, cost-efficient, and sustainable operations. From recruitment and training to vehicle safety, incident management, and technology use, every element contributes to reducing risk and protecting both drivers and the organisation.

For fleet operators, the message is clear: policy is only as effective as its implementation. When actively applied, regularly updated, and backed by leadership, a risk policy becomes more than compliance, it becomes a living framework for a safer, more efficient, and sustainable fleet.

Organisations that approach policy this way cultivate a culture of safety where drivers understand, expect, and actively participate in risk management. Duty of care is under increasing scrutiny. Making the policy visible, clear, and actionable is no longer optional, it is essential.●

Managing **Lone Worker** Risk

For many organisations in the Essential Services sector, the working day for a significant part of their workforce does not begin in an office or depot. It begins at home, followed by travel to tenant properties, roadside locations, construction sites, or remote operational environments.

From housing maintenance operatives and NHS staff to gas engineers, planning officers, and infrastructure teams, lone workers play a critical role in delivering frontline services. Yet their safety is often managed at a distance, both physically and organisationally.

That gap is where risk begins.

Once a worker leaves a depot or starts their day remotely, direct supervision reduces significantly. Environments become less predictable, decision-making becomes more autonomous, and the ability to respond quickly to incidents is limited. In this context, lone worker safety is not only a health and safety issue—it is central to operational continuity, workforce wellbeing, and organisational responsibility.

Alone, But Not Without Risk

Lone working is not new, but its scale and complexity have increased significantly. Modern service delivery depends on mobile, dispersed teams working under time pressure and across wide geographic areas.

A housing operative entering an occupied property may face unknown conditions. A field engineer may encounter conflict during a routine visit. A planning officer may be working alone in isolated environments with limited connectivity or immediate support.

In each case, the absence of nearby assistance changes the nature of the risk.

Routine tasks can escalate quickly. Misunderstandings can become confrontations. Travel issues or vehicle breakdowns can leave individuals isolated. A missed check-in may indicate a technical issue, or something far more serious.

These risks are not theoretical; they are part of daily operational reality for many sectors across the UK.

Legal Duties That Apply Wherever Work Takes Place

Employers have a clear legal duty of care that applies regardless of location.

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, employers must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare of employees. This duty does not end when a worker leaves a central workplace.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 further require employers to carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments. For lone workers, this means assessing not only generic workplace risks but also the specific hazards associated with remote, unsupervised, and public-facing work.

These requirements place responsibility on organisations to actively consider:

- the nature of the task being performed
- the environment in which it is carried out
- the level of supervision available
- the means of communication and emergency response

From Compliance to Proactive Prevention

Across the health and safety landscape, there is a clear shift towards more proactive risk management.

Rather than relying solely on policies or post-incident reporting, organisations are increasingly expected to identify foreseeable risks and implement preventative measures in advance.

For lone working environments, this shift is particularly important. When response times are delayed by geography, prevention becomes the most effective

form of protection.

The key question for organisations is increasingly:

What steps have been taken to reduce the likelihood of harm before an incident occurs?

Managing Third-Party and Public-Facing Risk

A significant proportion of lone workers interact directly with members of the public, tenants, or customers. These interactions can occasionally involve challenging or unpredictable behaviour.

Employers are expected to take reasonable steps to assess and manage these risks as part of overall risk planning. This may include:

- identifying higher-risk visits or locations
- providing advance information to workers where appropriate
- establishing escalation and withdrawal procedures
- ensuring workers can summon assistance quickly

While not all situations can be predicted or prevented, structured planning reduces exposure and improves response capability.

The Often-Overlooked Impact of Isolation

Lone working is not only a physical safety issue; it can also have psychological effects.

Extended periods of working alone, reduced peer interaction, and high operational pressure can contribute to fatigue, stress, and reduced wellbeing. Over time, these factors can also influence judgement and safety outcomes.

Modern health and safety practice increasingly recognises that psychosocial risks should be considered alongside physical hazards. For lone workers, this includes:

- workload pressure
- isolation
- reduced supervision
- and limited informal support networks

Addressing these risks supports both wellbeing and operational performance.

What "Reasonably Practicable" Means in Practice

The concept of *"so far as is reasonably practicable"* is central to UK health and safety law. In practical terms, it requires organisations to balance risk against the time, cost, and effort required to mitigate it.

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*"**No one** should be **placed at risk** simply because they are **working alone**."*

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For lone worker management, this typically involves:

- structured risk assessments for field-based activity
- clear communication and check-in procedures
- defined escalation routes for emergencies
- appropriate training for lone working situations
- and ongoing review of incidents and near misses

Importantly, organisations must be able to demonstrate that reasonable steps were taken before incidents occur, not only after they have happened.

Technology as an Enabler, Not a Solution on its Own

Digital tools have significantly improved lone worker protection in recent years.

Mobile applications now enable scheduled check-ins, live location sharing, and immediate emergency alerts. Wearable devices and discreet alarms provide additional layers of protection, particularly in higher-risk environments.

However, technology is only effective when embedded within wider operational processes. Without clear response procedures and active monitoring, even the most advanced systems have limited impact.

Effective lone worker safety depends on the integration of:

- people
- processes
- and technology

Working together as a coordinated system.

Understanding the Core Operational Risks

Despite changes in tools and systems, the core risks associated with lone working remain consistent:

- Fatigue, particularly in high-travel or high-demand roles
- Emergencies, where delayed assistance increases severity
- Aggression or conflict, particularly in public-facing roles
- Isolation, which can affect both wellbeing and decision-making

Recognising these risks is the foundation of effective management. Addressing them requires structured planning and consistent application of safety procedures.

From Policy to Practice

Strong lone worker safety frameworks are defined not by documentation, but by operational reality.

Effective organisations typically:

- assess risk based on task and environment, not just role
- ensure reliable communication systems are in place
- provide clear escalation and emergency procedures
- train staff specifically for lone working scenarios
- review incidents and near misses to improve controls

This approach treats risk management as a continuous process rather than a static policy.

Building a Culture That Supports Safety

Systems and procedures are only effective when supported by organisational culture.

Workers need to feel confident that safety concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon. This requires:

- open reporting without blame
- visible management engagement with safety issues
- integration of safety into operational decision-making
- and consistent reinforcement that safety takes priority over output where necessary

Organisations that embed this culture often see improved engagement, reduced incidents, and stronger trust across their workforce.

Conclusion: a Practical Responsibility, Not Just a Policy Requirement

Lone working is an unavoidable feature of many essential services. The challenge is not eliminating it, but managing it effectively.

Legal duties under UK health and safety legislation already require employers to assess and manage risks wherever work takes place. Increasing operational complexity, mobile workforces, and evolving expectations around wellbeing make this even more important.

Ultimately, effective lone worker safety is based on a simple principle:

no individual should be placed at avoidable risk because they are working alone.

For organisations managing field-based or mobile teams, this means ensuring that safety is not confined to policies or locations—but is embedded in every task, every journey, and every decision.●

*"**Isolation** is a risk that **often goes unseen** until it **impacts safety**."*

Supplier Insight: **Driving Down Risk**: Inside **RoSPA's** Approach to **Safer Fleets**

*"No **two fleets** are the **same**, and training should **reflect that reality**."*

Introduction

Founded as the London Safety First Council in 1916, with the intention of improving road safety standards, RoSPA has unrivalled experience that has seen its portfolio of driver training courses and qualifications adapt and expand to meet the complex and demanding needs of today. Essential Fleet Manager Magazine was delighted to speak with Penny Brooks, Driver Qualifications Portfolio Manager at RoSPA about her key role in shaping how this unique level of experience helps fleet operators reduce risk, improve performance and ultimately save lives.

Interview

Q: What do you see as the main challenges in occupational road risk that have evolved over recent years and how has RoSPA adapted to meet those challenges?

Occupational road risk has become increasingly complex in recent years. Organisations are managing more diverse fleets, higher mileage expectations, and evolving vehicle technologies, while also addressing driver distraction, fatigue and pressure on operational delivery.

At the same time, hybrid working patterns means employees are spending less time behind the wheel which means lack of familiarity with traffic levels and road conditions putting them at greater risk when driving for work even though they may be driving fewer miles.

RoSPA has adapted by expanding its portfolio of driver training to include behavioural coaching and blended learning approaches. Our programmes combine online learning and in person workshops to in-vehicle coaching and qualifications, ensuring organisations can address risk at multiple levels. This approach focuses not only on driving skills but also on driver behaviour and safety culture, helping fleets reduce collisions, downtime and operational costs.

Q: Fleets in the public sector and essential services operate a diverse range of vehicles. How does RoSPA tailor training to meet such diverse operational needs?

RoSPA recognises that no two fleets are the same. Our training covers everything from cars and vans through to specialist vehicles, off-road environments and motorcycles. This breadth allows us to design programmes that reflect operational realities rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all model.

We tailor training through a mix of on-road coaching, specialist off-road training and role-specific development. Courses can be adapted to vehicle type, operational environment and driver experience, ensuring the training is practical, compliant and relevant to day-to-day duties.

Q: How do you work with fleet operators to identify exact training requirements?

We begin by working collaboratively with fleet managers to understand operational risks, driver demographics and organisational objectives. This typically involves reviewing incident data, journey and vehicle types, driver roles and existing competencies.

From there, we recommend targeted interventions such as driver assessments, behavioural coaching and defensive or advanced driving programmes. The emphasis is always on aligning training outcomes with organisational goals, whether that's reducing collisions, improving compliance or supporting sustainability targets.

Q: How does driver training support organisations in meeting their legal and duty-of-care responsibilities?

Driving for work remains one of the highest-risk activities employees undertake. Effective driver training demonstrates that organisations are taking reasonable steps to manage occupational road risk. RoSPA programmes embed safe driving practices, awareness of regulations and risk-based decision-making, helping organisations meet their duty of care.

By improving driver competence and behaviour, organisations can reduce incidents, minimise liability and demonstrate proactive risk management — key components of legal compliance and responsible fleet governance.

Q: RoSPA is uniquely positioned as the only provider of accredited and recognised driver qualifications. How does this benefit organisations and drivers?

RoSPA's accredited qualifications provide both credibility and consistency. Organisations, delivering recognised driver qualifications demonstrate a clear commitment to managing road risk and maintaining high training standards. For drivers, qualifications offer structured development and recognition of competence.

RoSPA qualifications are widely regarded as benchmarks in risk management, supporting both professional development and organisational assurance that training meets industry standards.

Q: How does RoSPA design tailored training programmes?

Once training needs are identified, RoSPA uses its extensive course portfolio to build targeted programmes. This may include driver assessments, defensive driving courses, behavioural coaching, online learning and train-the-trainer options.

Because our courses can be delivered as standalone training or combined into structured programmes, we can address specific operational priorities resulting in a flexible pathway that supports measurable improvements in safety and performance.

Q: What challenges do fleet operators most commonly raise?

Common challenges include managing diverse driver experience levels, addressing behavioural risks such as fatigue, distraction or complacency, and ensuring training remains consistent across large or dispersed fleets. Another frequent concern is balancing operational pressures with time for development.

We also see occasional oversights, such as focusing purely on driving skills without addressing behaviour, or not revisiting training after incidents. Sustainable improvement comes from combining skills development with cultural change and ongoing assessment.

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Q: How does RoSPA differentiate between operational skills training and risk reduction?

Operational driving skills and risk reduction are closely linked but distinct. RoSPA offers specialist training for operational environments, including off-road or vehicle-specific skills to develop competency and capability, while also delivering behavioural risk reduction programmes focused on human factors and exposure to risks linked to the driving environment.

This distinction ensures drivers are not only capable of handling their vehicle but also equipped to make safer decisions in complex environments. Our approach addresses risk at its source, improving both competence and judgement.

Q: Beyond skills, how does RoSPA address driver behaviour and attitude?

RoSPA's training philosophy emphasises behaviour and safety culture. Programmes incorporate coaching techniques, reflective learning and personalised feedback to encourage drivers to think about how they act on the road.

Incidents are increasingly linked to attitudes and complacency not just on vehicle-handling skills, so, addressing awareness of how personal tendencies influence behaviour behind the wheel is essential.

By focusing on these, we help organisations embed safer driving behaviours that deliver long-term improvements, including fewer collisions and reduced operational costs.

Q: In which ways does RoSPA contribute to a sustained and continuously improving safe driving culture?

RoSPA supports sustained improvement by taking a long-term, evidence-based approach to managing occupational road risk, rather than viewing driver training as a one-off intervention. Our programmes are designed to build competence, influence behaviour and reinforce positive driving attitudes over time.

A key element is our focus on behaviour, reflection and accountability. Through coaching-led training, structured feedback and recognised qualifications, drivers are encouraged to understand their own risk exposure and take ownership of safe driving practices. This helps move organisations beyond compliance towards a proactive safety culture. By combining accredited qualifications, behavioural coaching, expert guidance and organisational collaboration, RoSPA enables fleets to create driving cultures that adapt, improve and deliver lasting reductions in risk, collisions and harm.

Q: As vehicle technology evolves, how does this affect driver training needs?

Technology such as ADAS and telematics are changing how people drive. While these systems can enhance safety, they also require drivers to understand their limitations. and avoid over-reliance.

As vehicle technology evolves, driver training needs are moving to include understanding and managing in-vehicle systems and the associated risks of becoming distracted by visual and audible alerts, touchscreens and information displays, or spending time interacting with systems rather than focusing fully on the driving environment.

There is a growing risk of over-reliance on safety and warning features, and without proper training, drivers may assume systems will intervene in all situations, and delay responding to hazards.

RoSPA is adapting training to include awareness of emerging technologies, ensuring drivers can use systems effectively while maintaining core hazard perception and decision-making skills. Training increasingly focuses on managing technology safely.

Q: Looking ahead, how will RoSPA retain its unique position?

RoSPA will continue to lead by combining over a century of road safety expertise with modern, evidence-based training methods. By expanding accredited qualifications, enhancing behavioural coaching and embracing technology-driven insights, we will continue to provide comprehensive solutions.

Our focus remains on helping organisations create safer driving cultures, reduce risk and ultimately save lives — ensuring RoSPA continues to set the benchmark for driver training and occupational road risk management.●

ROSPA
accidents don't have to happen

Find out more visit: **www.rospa.com/shop/health-and-safety-courses/fleet-safety-services**

Camden Speeds up **Transition to Electric** Vans via a **Flexible Partnership** with **Europcar**

The London Borough of Camden has taken a significant step towards reducing its operational emissions by introducing a fleet of electric vans, supported by a partnership with Europcar Mobility Group UK.

The move forms part of Camden's wider Climate Action Plan, which aims to achieve net-zero emissions by 2030. After reviewing its fleet, the council found that many of its smaller vans could be replaced immediately with electric alternatives without disrupting day-to-day services.

Rather than purchasing vehicles outright or committing to long-term leasing contracts, Camden opted for a flexible long-term rental model. This approach allows the council to scale its fleet as needed while avoiding the high upfront costs and rigidity typically associated with ownership.

The initial rollout includes electric vans such as the Renault Kangoo E-Tech, Volkswagen e-Transporter and Vauxhall Vivaro Electric. Many of the vehicles have been adapted with specialist equipment, including racking systems, roof bars and secure tool storage, to meet the practical demands of council operations.

A key focus of the project has been supporting staff through the transition. While there was some early hesitation among drivers—particularly around vehicle range and usability—these concerns were addressed through targeted training and real-world performance data. Europcar provided guidance on charging, regenerative braking and efficient driving techniques, helping drivers build confidence in the new technology.

Data from the connected vehicles showed that the electric vans were performing well within expected limits, reinforcing their suitability for everyday use. These insights have been instrumental in overcoming initial resistance and improving overall efficiency.

Following a successful first phase, Camden has already begun expanding its electric fleet. The project highlights how flexible rental solutions, combined with data insights and driver engagement, can make the transition to zero-emission transport more practical for public sector organisations.●

Fleetclear Partners with **SUEZ** Recycling and Recovery UK for New **Integrated Fleet Safety System**

SUEZ is switching its vehicle fleet to a fully integrated safety platform following a comprehensive tender process that led to fleet technology company, Fleetclear being awarded the nationwide contract.

In the UK, SUEZ operates across hundreds of sites and handles approximately 11 million tonnes of waste materials every year – a significant proportion of the UK's total waste. Through collection, treatment, recycling and logistics, it operates 1700 vehicles across multiple locations.

Dave Shaw, Head of Fleet at SUEZ recycling and recovery UK said: *"We went out to tender and Fleetclear came out as the clear winner with their fully integrated system. It's much easier now to pull together the information we need, which means we can properly analyse the performance of our vehicles and use the information to improve safety and enhance service delivery."*

The transition to the new system has been well managed as Dave explains: *"We didn't go for the big bang approach and opted instead for a phased roll out. We selected certain vehicles we wanted to fit with the system first, including all new vehicles."*

One of the first tranche of vehicles to be equipped with the Fleetclear system was the new fleet that SUEZ manage on behalf of Milton Keynes City Council as part of their collections and street cleansing contract.

Dave commented: *"The transition at Milton Keynes has been executed very well with minimal disruption to operations. We received the new fleet of vehicles at the depot and Fleetclear came in en-masse to fit the equipment over a few weeks."*

The company is currently trialling other Fleetclear technologies, such as the Live Lane Information System (LLIS), which uses AI to detect oncoming traffic in the adjacent live-lane and alert operatives, reducing the risk of collisions.

Added Dave: *"The team at Fleetclear are easy to deal with and very collaborative. We want to work with them to engage with new technologies such as AI to help us further enhance our safety and our performance."*

Why Fleetclear?

With over 15 years of expertise delivering credible solutions proven in the field, Fleetclear helps fleets operate safely, efficiently and responsibly. With fully qualified in-house engineers, leading after-sales support and comprehensive warranties, Fleetclear is your fleet safety partner.●

Fleetclear

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NHS Introduces **New Framework** for **Mileage Reimbursement** Calculations

New guidance from NHS Employers confirms a revised approach to calculating mileage reimbursement for NHS staff, marking a significant shift in how travel costs are assessed under Agenda for Change (AfC) terms and conditions.

The update, agreed through the NHS Staff Council, introduces a new mechanism for determining reimbursement rates for employees who use their own vehicles for work-related travel. The move reflects growing recognition that existing models have not fully captured the true cost of motoring.

Moving Beyond Fuel-Only Calculations

Historically, mileage rates have been largely driven by fuel price fluctuations. While responsive, this approach has often overlooked wider ownership costs such as insurance, servicing, and depreciation.

The newly agreed framework aims to address this gap by incorporating a broader range of cost inputs, signalling a shift toward a more balanced and sustainable reimbursement model.

Phased Implementation and Rate Changes

The new mechanism will be introduced in stages, with a series of defined adjustments over the next 12 months:

- From 1 June 2026, the standard mileage rate will rise to 59p per mile (for the first 3,500 miles), while the reduced, or "drop-down", rate will increase to 36p per mile beyond that threshold.
- From 1 July 2026, the mileage threshold for the drop-down rate will increase from 3,500 to 4,500 miles per annum, allowing staff to claim the higher rate over a greater distance.
- From 1 April 2027, the annual mileage counter reset will move from 1 July to 1 April, aligning more closely with the financial year.

These changes will apply to staff employed on NHS Terms and Conditions of Service, as well as those covered by the Terms and Conditions of Service for NHS Doctors and Dentists in Training (England) 2016.

Systems and Policy Updates

Supporting infrastructure will also be updated to reflect the new framework. The Electronic Staff Record (ESR) system will be revised to accommodate the changes, ensuring accurate processing of claims.

In parallel, the NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook will be updated from June 2026, providing employers with clear guidance on implementation.

Addressing Longstanding Concerns

The changes follow sustained concern that mileage reimbursement has not kept pace with the real cost of vehicle use—particularly as insurance and maintenance costs have risen. By broadening the calculation methodology, the NHS aims to ensure staff are not left out of pocket when undertaking essential travel.

For high-mileage users, such as community healthcare workers, the extension of the higher-rate threshold is likely to be particularly significant.

Implications for Fleet and Workforce Strategy

For fleet managers and workforce planners, the development underscores the growing importance of grey fleet policy. As organisations continue to rely on employees' personal vehicles, reimbursement structures are becoming a key factor in cost control, staff retention, and regulatory compliance.

The NHS approach may also act as a benchmark for other public sector organisations reviewing their own mileage frameworks in light of evolving economic pressures.●

CheckedSafe

Driving licence checking, made **simple**, **fast** and **reliable**!

Driving licence checking is often treated as a simple admin task, something to complete at onboarding and revisit occasionally. In reality, it's one of the most important aspects of managing your driver risk and maintaining compliance.

A lot of companies carry out licence checks during onboarding or revisit it annually, the problem is, risk doesn't work to an annual schedule.

Endorsements can be added at any time, drivers can be disqualified without their employer's knowledge, and licence entitlements can change. If you're only checking periodically, there's a significant window where issues can go unnoticed. For any organisation with employees driving on business, that's a risk that's hard to justify.

Beyond the obvious safety concerns, the consequences can be serious. Fines, invalidated insurance, reputational damage, and in some cases prosecution. Yet despite this, many businesses still rely on manual checks, photocopies, or oudated processes that don't provide a clear or reliable audit trail.

Part of the challenge has always been practicality. Traditional licence checking is time-consuming. It involves chasing drivers, logging into government systems, recording results, and trying to keep everything organised. For larger fleets or dispersed teams, it quickly becomes an administrative burden, and inevitably slips down the priority list.

That's where digital solutions have started to make a real difference.

At CheckedSafe, we've developed an inexpensive fully digital driving licence checking solution, which completely transforms compliance. Instead of one-off checks, licences can be automatically re-checked, with automatic alerts for endorsements, expiries, or disqualifications. It shifts the process from reactive to proactive, giving businesses far greater control.

Just as importantly, it removes the admin. Checks are carried out quickly and accurately, records are stored securely, and a full audit trail is always available. For fleet and transport managers, that visibility is key. You can see the status of your drivers at any time, identify risks early, and take action before they escalate.

Another benefit is how licence checking fits into the bigger picture. It shouldn't sit in isolation. It's part of our wider compliance system that includes vehicle checks, accident reporting, and domestic drivers hours. CheckedSafe's approach has always been to bring these elements together in one system, so businesses aren't juggling multiple platforms or disconnected processes.

That joined-up view makes a real difference. It streamlines operations, improves accuracy, and ultimately makes compliance easier to manage. More importantly, it helps create a culture where safety and accountability are part of everyday operations, not just periodic checks.

Of course, technology is only part of the answer. The most effective organisations are those that combine the right systems with clear policies and good communication. Drivers need to understand why licence checking matters. When it's positioned as a safety measure rather than a box-ticking exercise, engagement tends to follow.

Driving licence checking might not be the most visible part of running a fleet, but it's one of the most important. Done properly, it protects your business, supports your drivers, and reduces risk across the board.

The good news is that it doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. With our driving licence checking service, we take the admin burden away for just £1.60 per check! No set up fees, no hidden costs, no credits needed. Simply pay as you go!●

Simplify your **fleet compliance** — **stay safe**, **stay legal**.

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Why **Vans Require** a **Different Driving Training** Approach

Within most mixed fleets in the Essential Services sector, panel vans form the backbone of daily operations. However, the majority of drivers operating them will have passed their driving test in a vehicle that offers full, all-round visibility and a clear rearward view through a back window.

Standard panel vans are fundamentally different. With no rear seats and often no rear side windows, rear visibility is severely restricted or, in many cases, non-existent. As a result, drivers must rely much more heavily on wing mirrors, correct observation techniques, and where fitted, technology such as reversing cameras, parking sensors, and blind-spot monitoring systems.

Consequently, many drivers transitioning from passenger cars into larger, less visually transparent vehicles require additional guidance and structured training. Without this support, the change in vehicle type can increase the risk of low-speed collisions and reversing incidents.

Driving a van is not simply a matter of operating a larger version of a car. There are important differences, not just as mentioned in visibility, but vehicle weight, dimensions, and load behaviour, all of which affect how the vehicle responds on the road. These factors become more critical in busy urban environments, where tight streets, frequent stops, and vulnerable road users demand greater awareness and precision.

Understanding Size, Weight and Stopping Distances

Even an empty panel van is substantially heavier than a typical passenger vehicle, and once loaded, braking distances increase considerably.

This has immediate implications in everyday driving. Tailgating becomes significantly more hazardous, particularly in urban traffic where sudden stops are common. Maintaining a greater following distance is not simply good practice, it is essential for maintaining control and avoiding rear-end collisions, which remain one of the most common incident types in van fleets.

Acceleration and cornering characteristics also change under load. A van carrying tools, equipment or goods will respond more slowly to throttle inputs and require more time to settle through bends. Drivers who fail to adjust their expectations often find themselves braking later and harder than is ideal for both safety and fuel efficiency.

Spatial Awareness and Vehicle Dimensions

Unlike cars, vans demand a heightened level of spatial awareness. High rooflines, longer wheelbases and extended rear overhangs all increase risk when navigating tight streets, car parks and work sites.

Height restrictions are a particular risk area, especially when entering car parks or commercial sites. While signage is generally clear, drivers under time pressure may misjudge clearances, leading to avoidable and often costly incidents. Turning circles are also wider than many drivers expect, meaning multi-point turns and careful positioning are frequently required in confined environments.

Mirror usage is therefore critical. Blind spots are larger and more numerous, particularly along the nearside and directly behind the vehicle. Regular mirror checks, combined with correct adjustment before setting off, are essential habits that should be embedded within any fleet training programme.

Loading, Balance and Vehicle Stability

How a van is loaded has a direct impact on how it drives. Uneven or poorly secured loads can shift during acceleration, braking or cornering, altering the vehicle's centre of gravity and increasing the risk of instability.

Heavier items should always be placed low and as far forward as practical, with lighter items secured on top. This helps maintain balance and reduces the likelihood of load movement affecting handling. Loading should always be carried out with care, and many modern fleet vehicles are now equipped with purpose-built racking systems designed to prevent movement and secure equipment during transit.

Bulkheads and load restraint systems are not simply compliance features, they are critical safety systems. They prevent cargo from entering the cab in the event

of sudden braking or a collision and help maintain predictable vehicle behaviour under load. Regular inspection of securing equipment should form part of a driver's daily vehicle checks.

Reversing and Low-Speed Manoeuvring

A significant proportion of van incidents occur at low speeds, particularly during reversing manoeuvres in depots, construction sites and residential areas.

Even with modern reversing sensors and 360-degree camera systems, these aids should be treated as support tools rather than substitutes for observation.

Where possible, reversing should be planned rather than improvised. Taking time to assess the space before moving can significantly reduce the risk of collisions with pedestrians, vehicles or fixed objects.

It is also important that all low-impact collisions are reported to the fleet manager and properly recorded, however minor the damage may appear. While these incidents may seem insignificant in isolation, they can provide valuable insight when reviewed collectively.

Patterns such as repeated kerb strikes, low-speed scrapes or reversing impacts can indicate that a driver may benefit from additional training or targeted support. Accurate reporting and consistent recording therefore play a key role in identifying risk early, improving driver standards and preventing more serious incidents.

Urban Pressure and Time Constraints

Van drivers often operate under tight schedules, particularly in service and delivery roles. This can create pressure to take risks, including parking in unsuitable locations or completing rushed manoeuvres.

From a fleet safety perspective, this is a key concern. Many incidents are not caused by a lack of skill, but by behavioural adaptation to time pressure.

Training that reflects operational reality, while reinforcing safe driving standards, is typically more effective than purely theoretical instruction.

Fuel Efficiency and Driving Style

Driving style has a clear and measurable impact on van fuel consumption. Harsh acceleration, high engine speeds and excessive idling all increase operating costs over time. By contrast, smooth throttle inputs, early gear changes and anticipation of traffic flow can significantly improve efficiency without reducing productivity.

For electric vans, these principles translate into energy management. Regenerative braking, steady speed control and effective route planning all contribute to maximising range, particularly in stop-start urban conditions.

The Fleet Perspective

From a fleet management standpoint, van-specific driver training is one of the most effective ways to reduce incident rates and improve operational consistency. Light commercial vehicles are often among the most heavily used assets in a fleet, yet they are frequently the least formally trained for.

Investing in structured van driver training supports not only safety outcomes, but also improved vehicle care, reduced downtime and better fuel efficiency. In many cases, it also enhances driver confidence, particularly for those new to larger vehicles.

Ultimately, safe and efficient van driving is about adaptation. Understanding how size, weight and load affect vehicle behaviour allows drivers to operate with greater awareness and control. For fleets, that translates into fewer incidents, lower costs and more reliable day-to-day operations.●

ESPO's VCI3 Framework, Expanding **Opportunities** for **Public Sector EV Infrastructure**

The latest iteration of ESPO's Vehicle Charging Infrastructure framework, VCI3 (636_25), represents a significant evolution in how public sector organisations can plan, procure and deliver electric vehicle (EV) charging projects. Building on previous frameworks, VCI3 introduces a more comprehensive and flexible structure designed to support the growing complexity of EV adoption acros the UK.

At its core, the framework provides access to a wide range of charging solutions, including fast, rapid and ultra-rapid charge points, alongside the software and services required to operate them effectively. This ensures organisations are not only able to install infrastructure, but also manage it efficiently over time.

One of the defining features of VCI3 is its four-lot structure, which allows public sector buyers to tailor procurement to their specific needs.

- **Lot 1** focuses on the purchase of EV charge points and includes full turnkey solutions, covering supply, installation, feasibility studies and ongoing maintenance.
- **Lot 2** provides access to back-office systems, also known as Charge Point Management Systems, enabling organisations to monitor, control and optimise charger usage.
- **Lot 3** is dedicated to servicing and maintaining existing infrastructure, particularly useful for assets that are no longer under warranty.
- **Lot 4** offers consultancy support, helping organisations with early-stage planning, site design, energy assessments and long-term fleet decarbonisation strategies.

This modular approach is particularly valuable as it recognises that not all organisations are at the same stage in their EV journey. Some may require full end-to-end delivery, while others may only need software integration or maintenance support for existing assets.

Another key strength of the framework is its ability to support projects from concept through to operation. Consultancy services available under Lot 4 allow organisations to assess grid capacity, evaluate usage patterns and develop sustainable business models before committing to installation. This reduces the risk of underperforming infrastructure and ensures investments are aligned with long-term transport strategies.

VCI3 also reflects the increasing importance of scalability. As EV adoption accelerates, infrastructure must be capable of expanding alongside demand. The framework enables organisations to start with smaller deployments and grow over time without needing to reprocure entirely new contracts, making it easier to adapt to changing requirements.

In addition, ESPO has placed emphasis on supplier quality and social value. All suppliers on the framework have been assessed not only for technical capability, but also for their ability to deliver wider benefits in line with public sector priorities. This ensures that projects contribute not just to decarbonisation, but also to broader economic and community outcomes.

The framework is available to a wide range of public sector bodies, including local authorities, NHS organisations, schools and central government departments. Its national scope and pre-approved supplier base make it a practical and compliant route to market, reducing procurement complexity while maintaining high standards of delivery.

Ultimately, VCI3 demonstrates how procurement frameworks are evolving to meet the realities of the energy transition. By combining flexibility, technical support and end-to-end delivery options, it provides public sector organisations with the tools needed to implement effective and future-proof EV charging infrastructure. As the shift towards zero-emission transport continues, frameworks like VCI3 will play a crucial role in turning ambition into action.●

How **Smarter Defect Reporting** Helps Fleets **Stay Compliant** and **Reduce Downtime**

For many fleet operations, vehicle defect reporting still starts with a paper form, a clipboard, and a process that depends too heavily on memory, handwriting, and forms making their way back to base.

It may feel familiar, but in practice, it often creates delays, duplicated admin, and limited visibility of the issues that matter most. When defects are reported slowly or with incomplete detail, repairs take longer to assess, managers have less control, and compliance becomes harder to evidence. Fleetclear Go has been designed to solve exactly that problem.

Daily vehicle checks are one of the earliest and most important points in the maintenance process. If a driver spots an issue but the report is delayed, unclear, or difficult to retrieve later, the knock-on effect can be felt across the entire operation.

- Workshop teams lose time chasing information.
- Managers have to interpret handwritten notes or re-enter details into other systems.
- Vehicles can remain on the road with unresolved issues or sit idle longer than necessary while decisions are made.

Over time, what should be a straightforward reporting task becomes a wider operational risk.

That is why defect reporting should not be seen as a minor administrative step. It is a critical part of fleet maintenance, uptime, and compliance management. The faster issues are identified, reported, and escalated; the faster fleets can act.

Better reporting improves visibility. Better visibility supports better decisions. And better decisions help keep vehicles safe, available, and roadworthy. The UK Government's own guidance reinforces the importance of daily walkaround checks and ensuring vehicles are safe to operate.

Fleetclear Go brings that process into one simple mobile-first workflow. The app replaces paper-based vehicle checks with digital inspections that are quicker to complete and easier to manage. Drivers can record defects and incidents immediately, adding photos and notes at the point of discovery so managers and workshop teams receive clearer, more useful information straight away. Instead of waiting for forms to be handed in and processed later, teams gain real time visibility while there is still time to respond.

That speed matters. When defect reports are submitted with more context and less delay, teams can triage issues sooner, prioritise repairs more effectively, and reduce avoidable downtime.

Fleetclear Go also supports manager alerts when checks are missed, skipped, or incomplete, helping operators maintain oversight of the process itself, not only the defects that happen to be recorded. It gives fleet managers a stronger grip on compliance and a clearer view of day-to-day operational risk.

For many fleets, another challenge is working in environments where signal is unreliable. A digital process only works if drivers can depend on it in the field. Fleetclear Go includes offline capability, allowing checks to continue without signal and sync automatically when connectivity returns. That helps maintain consistency across routes, depots, and working conditions without forcing teams back into paper-based workarounds.

The benefits extend beyond faster reporting. Digital records make it easier to demonstrate what was checked, when it was checked, and what action followed. That matters for audit readiness as much as daily operations. When records are complete, accessible, and traceable, compliance is easier to manage and easier to prove. Fleetclear Go also supports operational audits and configurable forms, helping fleets move from fragmented manual processes to a clearer and more defensible digital trail.

For fleets already using Fleetclear Connect, Fleetclear Go adds another advantage. Live telematics data such as odometer readings, fuel or battery levels, and location can automatically populate inspection forms, helping reduce manual entry, improve accuracy, and speed up every check. This connected approach gives drivers a simpler experience while giving managers more reliable data and stronger oversight.

The result is a better day to day experience for both drivers and managers. Drivers get a practical, intuitive way to complete checks and report issues in the moment. Managers get faster access to information, stronger audit trails, and greater visibility across the fleet. In a sector where downtime, compliance, and operational efficiency are closely linked, that is a meaningful shift.

Fleetclear Go helps fleets move away from paperwork and towards a more connected, proactive, and controllable way of managing vehicle checks and defect reporting.

To find out how Fleetclear Go can simplify vehicle checks, improve defect reporting, and strengthen fleet compliance, visit Fleetclear online or speak to the team.●

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Fleetclear

Building a **Fuel-Efficient Fleet**: The **Role** of **Driver Management**

For fleet operators, fuel represents one of the most significant ongoing expenses. With prices continuing to rise and fluctuate unpredictably, selecting fuel-efficient vehicles and optimising routes is essential, but driver behaviour remains a critical factor in reducing consumption.

By promoting simple, manageable adjustments, such as smooth acceleration and deceleration, maintaining steady speeds, and reducing idling, operators can achieve substantial fuel savings across the entire fleet. Ensuring fuel security is equally important, safeguarding this vital asset and supporting overall operational efficiency.

Promote Smooth and Consistent Driving

Driver behaviour directly affects fuel consumption. Harsh acceleration, sudden braking, and inconsistent speeds all increase fuel use. Encouraging drivers to adopt a smoother driving style, with gradual acceleration and better anticipation of traffic, can lead to measurable savings. Training programmes and regular reminders help reinforce these habits, improving efficiency and extending vehicle lifespan.

Encourage Speed Awareness

Higher speeds increase fuel consumption due to greater engine strain and air resistance. Fleet operators should emphasise the importance of maintaining moderate, consistent speeds, particularly on long journeys. Where appropriate, cruise control can help drivers maintain steady speeds and reduce unnecessary fuel use.

Ensure Regular Vehicle Checks

A well-maintained vehicle is a fuel-efficient vehicle. Under-inflated tyres, worn engine components, and other minor issues can raise fuel consumption. Operators should implement regular maintenance routines and encourage daily walkaround checks to prevent small issues from becoming costly inefficiencies.

Reduce Unnecessary Weight and Drag

Excess weight and poorly managed loads can significantly increase fuel consumption. Drivers should be advised to carry only necessary cargo and remove unused equipment whenever possible. Properly securing loads also reduces drag and improves fuel efficiency.

Minimise Idling

Most commercial vehicles feature start-stop technology, but when it is unavailable, unnecessary idling wastes fuel and increases emissions. Drivers should turn off engines during extended stops, wherever safe.

Many vehicles also rely on their engines to power auxiliary equipment, resulting in prolonged idling that consumes fuel without moving the vehicle. This practice increases operational costs, accelerates engine wear, and contributes to environmental damage.

Switching to rechargeable battery-powered units offers a cleaner, more efficient alternative. Reducing idling in this way helps fleets save fuel, lower maintenance costs, improve air quality, and advance sustainability goals.

Improve Route Planning

Effective route planning minimises time spent in traffic and reduces stop-start driving. Providing drivers with optimised routes and real-time traffic updates enhances efficiency. GPS tracking and telematics systems allow fleet managers to monitor route performance, prevent unnecessary mileage, and track driver behaviour in real time. By analysing acceleration, braking, and idling patterns, managers can provide targeted coaching to improve fuel efficiency.

Using Fuel Cards to Cut Costs

Fuel cards are a powerful tool to manage fuel expenses. Many offer discounts, loyalty rewards, and access to nationwide fuel networks, making it easier for drivers to refuel at the best prices.

Encouraging drivers to use fuel cards strategically and plan refuelling at cost-effective stations can generate significant savings, particularly for large fleets. When linked to individual vehicles and drivers, fuel cards also allow managers to track consumption, monitor usage patterns, and identify potential misuse, optimising fleet efficiency.

Strengthen Fuel Security

Fuel theft and misuse are growing concerns, costing fleets millions annually. Even small losses from theft or unauthorised use can strain budgets, disrupt operations, and create safety risks. Recent reports indicate that some fleets lose up to 5% of fuel annually.

To protect fuel assets, operators should:

- Secure on-site fuel storage with locks and surveillance
- Conduct frequent audits and reconcile fuel usage with mileage logs
- Educate staff about the financial and operational impact of fuel theft
- Incentivise proper fuel use and reporting of suspicious activity

Advanced telematics and GPS tracking enable real-time monitoring of vehicle location, mileage, and fuel levels. Some systems even detect unauthorised siphoning, alerting management immediately.

Building a Fuel-Efficient Driving Culture

Enhancing fuel efficiency requires a unified, fleet-wide strategy. By integrating driver training, clear policies, and regular oversight, fleet operators can foster a culture centred on efficiency. Over time, these incremental behavioural adjustments lead to significant cost reductions, lower environmental impact, and prolonged vehicle life.●

Fleet Insurance: Getting it Right for Mixed Fleets

By **Ben Peters,** Hummingbird Insurance Services

For many fleet operators, insurance only comes into focus a few weeks before renewal.

By then, the outcome is largely set, driven by claims experience, how incidents were handled, and how well risk has been managed throughout the year. Simply shopping around for a better premium is no longer enough, particularly for mixed fleets, where different vehicle types, drivers and usage patterns each bring their own challenges.

So what should operators really focus on?

Understand What's Happening Across Your Fleet

Most operators already have a good feel for how their fleet runs, but the detail behind that picture is increasingly important.

Mixed fleets often include cars, vans and HGVs operating in very different environments. A van doing multi-drop work in urban areas carries a very different risk profile from an HGV covering long motorway miles.

At renewal, decisions are often based on a snapshot in time. The clearer you can evidence how vehicles are used, who is driving them, and where incidents are occurring, the easier it becomes to secure cover that genuinely reflects your operation.

Focus on the Cost Behind the Premium

Premium matters, but it's only part of the overall cost.

The bigger impact often comes from:

- Vehicle downtime
- Lost productivity
- Time spent managing claims
- The knock-on effect on future renewals

A small saving on premium can quickly be outweighed by one poorly managed claim. Looking at the total cost to the business, not just the insurance price, gives a clearer view of performance.

Pay Attention to How Claims Are Managed

A common frustration for operators is the lack of visibility once a claim has been reported.

Delays, limited updates, and rising costs without explanation can all have a significant impact.

Simple improvements can make a difference:

- Reporting incidents immediately
- Capturing accurate information at the roadside
- Tracking claim progression and costs
- Identifying repeat incident types

Your broker should play an active role in supporting the claims process, helping to chase updates, challenge costs, and provide visibility. However, the best outcomes are typically achieved when operators, brokers and insurers work together, with clear and consistent oversight throughout the life of a claim. Fleets that take a more active role in the claims process often see reductions in both cost and frequency over time.

Make Sure Your Cover Fits a Mixed Fleet

A mixed fleet introduces complexity, and your insurance needs to reflect it.

Consider:

- Whether the policy wording reflects how vehicles are used
- Whether driver cover applies across all vehicle types
- How excess levels apply to higher-risk vehicles
- Whether additional covers align with your operation

As fleets evolve, policies need to adapt without creating unnecessary friction.

*"The **operators** who **win on insurance** are the ones who **stay engaged all year**, not just **at renewal.**"*

Use Data to Strengthen Your Position

Insurers are increasingly looking beyond claims history to assess how risk is managed in real time.

Operators who can demonstrate visibility into driver behaviour, clear processes, and consistent reporting are often in a stronger position when negotiating terms.

It doesn't require complex systems, but it does require consistency.

Understanding the Market Cycle

Fleet insurance is currently benefiting from relatively soft market conditions, with increased insurer appetite and competitive pricing.

While this presents an opportunity, it's important to recognise that insurance operates in cycles. A strong renewal today doesn't necessarily mean the underlying risk has improved; it may simply reflect increased competition.

Operators should use current conditions to strengthen their approach, improve claims oversight, and build a clear picture of performance.

When the market tightens again, as it inevitably will, insurers will focus on claims trends and risk management. Those who can demonstrate control and consistency are far more likely to achieve stability rather than face sharp increases.

Final Thought

Fleet insurance is no longer just about transferring risk; it's about managing it.

Operators who understand their fleet, engage with claims, and take a consistent approach to risk will be in a far stronger position, not only at renewal

About Hummingbird Insurance Services

Ben Peters is co-founder of Hummingbird Insurance Services, specialising in data-led fleet insurance. He works with commercial operators to improve claims outcomes, reduce total cost of risk, and bring greater visibility to fleet performance through practical, technology-driven solutions.

HUMMINGBIRD INSURANCE SERVICES

Find out more visit: **https://hisltd.uk/**

Grey Fleet: The **Hidden Risk** in **Plain Sight**

For many organisations, the grey fleet, the use of privately owned vehicles for business travel, remains one of the least scrutinised areas of operational risk.

For office-based staff, managers, and administrative personnel, this often includes journeys to meetings, site visits, or travel between offices. These trips may appear informal or incidental, yet they represent a significant and largely unmanaged part of day-to-day operations.

Despite their relatively low mileage compared to frontline vehicles, grey fleet journeys carry risks that can have serious consequences if left unaddressed.

The Visibility Challenge

The primary challenge lies in visibility.

Grey fleet vehicles sit outside the organisation's traditional fleet structures. They are not leased, maintained, or insured by the employer, meaning fleet managers and compliance teams often have limited insight into vehicle condition, insurance coverage, or driver behaviour.

Flexibility vs Risk

While relying on personal vehicles can offer flexibility and reduce the cost of maintaining a larger company fleet, it also introduces complexities that are frequently overlooked.

Without proper monitoring, there is no guarantee that vehicles are roadworthy or adequately insured for business use, leaving organisations exposed to legal, financial, and reputational risk.

For example, a regional manager working for a housing association and travelling between sites may assume their car is suitable for business travel. However, any mechanical fault, worn tyres, or insufficient insurance could result in a serious incident, and potential liability for the employer.

Legal Responsibility: Where It Sits

A common misconception is that responsibility shifts to the employee when using their own vehicle for work. Legally, this is not the case.

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, employers are required to ensure the safety of employees *"so far as reasonably practicable,"* which explicitly includes driving for work purposes. The Road Traffic Act 1988 regulates driver behaviour and vehicle standards, while the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 emphasises organisational accountability in cases of negligence leading to fatalities.

In practical terms, this means that if a journey is work-related, the employer retains responsibility, regardless of vehicle ownership.

The Reality of Uncontrolled Vehicles

One of the most significant difficulties organisations face is maintaining control over something they do not directly manage.

Private vehicles vary widely in age, condition, and suitability for business use. While many employees maintain their vehicles responsibly, others may delay servicing or repairs due to cost, inconvenience, or lack of awareness.

Without structured oversight, employees may be driving:

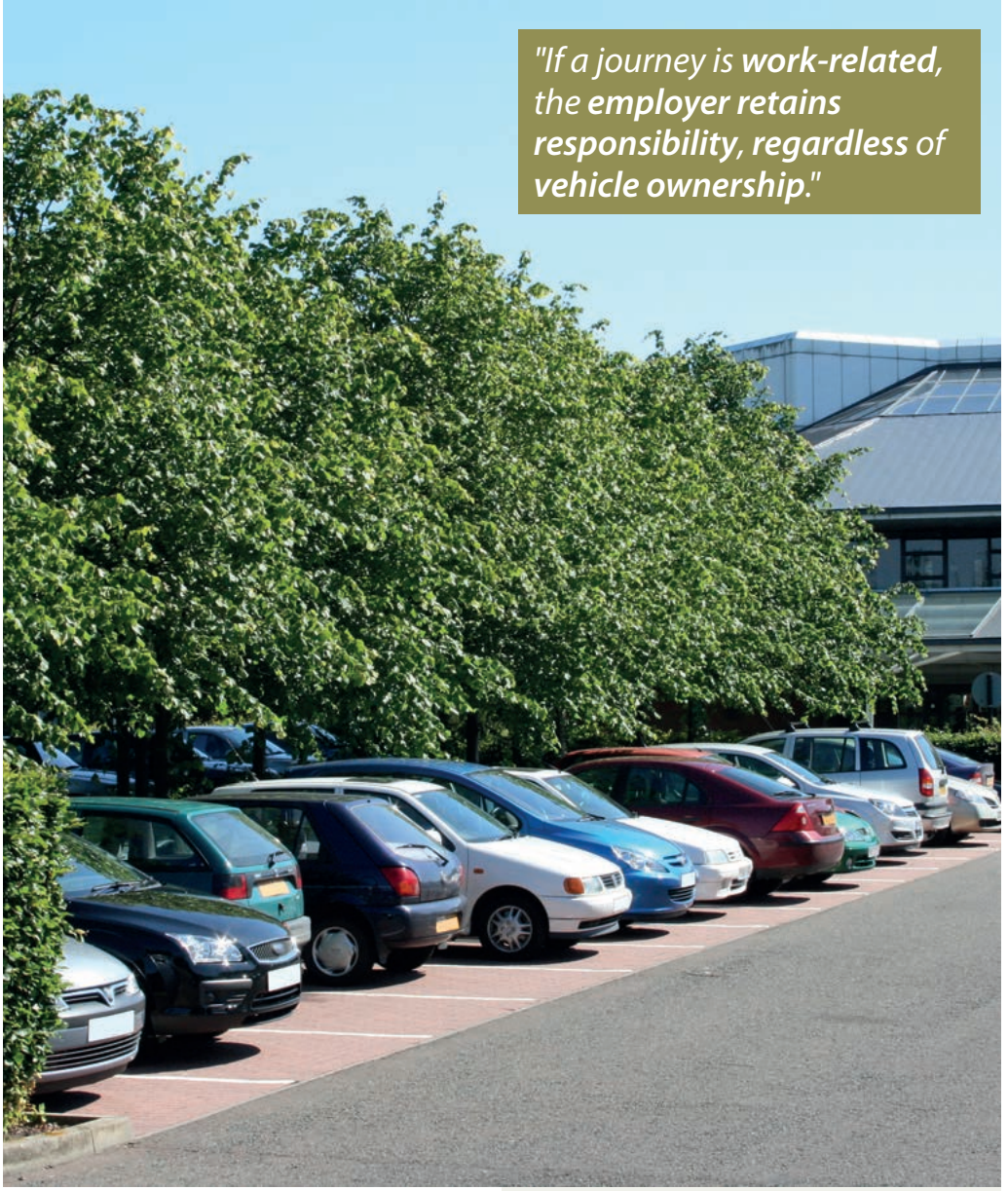
- without a valid MOT
- without insurance covering business use
- with worn tyres or faulty brakes
- with malfunctioning lights
- in vehicles unsuitable for frequent or extended travel

These risks are rarely visible until an incident occurs, at which point the organisation may face prosecution, insurance claims, or financial liability.

Driver Behaviour and Awareness

Driver-related factors also contribute significantly to grey fleet risk.

Office-based staff and managers using personal vehicles for work are less likely to receive formal guidance or training compared to employees assigned company vehicles. This creates gaps in



*"If a journey is **work-related**, the **employer retains responsibility, regardless** of **vehicle ownership**."*

awareness around:

- safe driving practices
- fatigue management
- journey planning

For instance, an HR manager attending multiple meetings across a city may drive while fatigued or without planning efficient routes. While the journey appears routine, the underlying risk is real.

Even short, regular trips can expose organisations to liability if the vehicle is not properly maintained or the driver lacks awareness of safe practices.

Building a Structured Approach

Effective grey fleet management does not require eliminating the practice entirely, rather, it demands structure, consistency and accountability.

Organisations should implement a framework that includes:

- regular driving licence checks
- verification of insurance for business use
- confirmation of MOT and servicing status
- clear usage policies
- guidance on safe driving, fatigue, and journey planning

Even employees travelling short distances benefit from clear, consistent standards.

The Role of Technology

Technology can play a pivotal role in supporting these initiatives.

Digital grey fleet management systems allow organisations to:

- centralise records
- automate compliance checks
- track mileage and expenses
- strengthen audit trails

For example, a regional coordinator in a healthcare trust can have all vehicle and driver information stored centrally, making compliance easier to manage and verify.

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*"**Risks** are **rarely visible** until an **incident** occurs"*

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Creating a Culture of Accountability

However, effective grey fleet management is not just about processes or technology, it requires a cultural shift.

Grey fleet should not be treated as informal or secondary. It is an extension of the organisation's fleet and should be managed with the same level of scrutiny and duty of care.

Embedding oversight into health and safety programmes, aligning policies with corporate risk management, and ensuring employees understand their responsibilities all contribute to a stronger culture of accountability.

Practical Alternatives to Grey Fleet

Organisations can also reduce risk by offering practical alternatives.

These include:

- pool cars for shared, compliant travel
- short-term hire vehicles for specific journeys
- salary sacrifice schemes providing access to newer, safer vehicles

These options help maintain control over vehicle standards while reducing reliance on privately owned vehicles.

The Operational Benefits

Proactive grey fleet management delivers both compliance and operational benefits.

From Liability to Asset

Grey fleet may often be out of sight, but it should never be out of mind.

With structured oversight, the use of technology, and alternative vehicle solutions, organisations can transform grey fleet from a potential liability into a managed, compliant, and valuable part of their operational strategy.

By treating these journeys with the same attention as company vehicles, businesses protect their people, reduce risk, and retain the flexibility that personal travel can offer.

Safer, more reliable journeys:

- reduce accident risk
- minimise downtime
- maintain service continuity
- improve employee confidence

At the same time, organisations demonstrate due diligence, meet legal obligations, and support sustainability goals.●

Rising Driving Pressures Highlight Why **Driver Safety Technology** is Essential **All Year Round**

Geoff Cross, Managing Director at Centrad, says growing everyday driving pressures highlight the need for greater in-cab support.

Commercial vehicle drivers face increasing cognitive and physical strain every day, from long hours and night driving to congested roads and demanding schedules.

Geoff Cross, Managing Director at Centrad, explains how these pressures significantly increase risk and underline why in-cab safety technology must be viewed as an essential, year-round support system and no longer be seen as a 'nice to have' reserved for extreme events, but as a core layer of everyday protection.

He commented: *"Having spent years operating fleets myself, I know how quickly routine journeys can become high-risk, whether that be due to severe rain or a sudden plunge in temperature.*

"When visibility drops, road conditions deteriorate, or traffic becomes unpredictable, the margin for error narrows even further."

According to the RAC, braking distances increase significantly in wet and icy conditions due to reduced tyre grip. On wet roads, stopping distances can be at least double those required in dry conditions, while on icy or snowy surfaces they can be up to ten times longer, showing how quickly everyday driving conditions can escalate into high-risk situations.

He continued: *"Even the most experienced of drivers operate under constant pressure, and rapidly changing road or traffic conditions can catch anyone out, adding to that load.*

"That's why proactive, built-in support has become so important for protecting drivers and other road users."

Driver assistance technology is playing a critical role in protecting drivers after an incident. By providing clear, objective video evidence, operators can ensure incidents are investigated fairly and efficiently, reducing both stress and anxiety while also avoiding any chance of misplaced blame.

AI-enabled driver-facing cameras, for instance, can monitor signs of fatigue, distraction or mobile phone use, issuing real-time alerts that prompt drivers to refocus before risk escalates.

Meanwhile, forward-facing and blind-spot cameras, integrated with telematics, improve situational awareness and help identify unsafe behaviours such as harsh braking or close following – behaviours that become more significantly more dangerous when conditions become more adverse.

"Driver safety technology doesn't just react after something has gone wrong," Cross added. "It actively reduces the likelihood of an incident while giving drivers confidence that, if something does happen, the facts will be clear and fair, ultimately helping to resolve disputes quickly and alleviating any anxiety on the driver's behalf."

Beyond the cab, real-time fleet management platforms add another crucial layer of protection by giving operators live visibility of traffic disruption, emerging risk hotspots and changing conditions. This enables quicker, proactive decisions around rerouting, timing, or warning drivers of potential hazards, giving operators a second set of eyes that facilities a preventative approach to incidents rather than simply responding to them after the fact.

Cross continued: *"Camera systems enhance driver awareness in the moment, while fleet management platforms allow operators to manage risk proactively, highlighting danger well in advance by giving operators real-time visibility of weather conditions, traffic disruption and affected areas.*

"When the two work together, they give drivers and fleet operators a unified, real-time view of what's happening on the road, allowing vehicles to be rerouted if needed.

"That combination reduces uncertainty, lowers cognitive load, and helps drivers undertake their job with total confidence, and that applies to any day across a calendar year, not just when driving conditions are particularly unsafe." ●

Find out more visit: **https://centrad.co.uk/**

Driver Distraction in Fleet Operations: Risks, Technology, and Best Practice

Driver distraction remains one of the most persistent and often under appreciated risks facing today's fleet operators, particularly in the Essential Services sector. Whether supporting utilities, infrastructure repair, emergency response, or critical public services, any incident that results in vehicle downtime can have consequences that extend well beyond the driver, affecting service continuity, public safety, and operational resilience.

Despite significant advances in vehicle safety systems, telematics, and connected fleet technology, driver behaviour remains the most influential factor in collision risk, insurance exposure, and overall fleet performance. For fleet operators, managing distraction is therefore not only a safety priority but also a core operational requirement directly linked to compliance.

> *"For HGVs, research suggests that 41% of collisions are caused by driver error, of which, 70% are a result of some form of inattention or distraction, with a further 17% down to fatigue,"* explains Stuart Davis, Senior Product Manager at Brigade Electronics.

Distraction is generally categorised into three types: **visual** (eyes off the road), **manual** (hands off the wheel), and **cognitive** (mental focus away from driving). In essential services operations, these risks are often intensified by demanding schedules, live job updates, and expectations that drivers remain responsive while on the move, creating an environment where attention is frequently divided.

> Davis goes onto say: *"In terms of severity, looking or interacting with a screen or electronic device has been shown to increase the response time of a driver by up to 57%. When driving, especially at higher speeds, it does not take much of a distraction to cause a collision, so even a small increase in driver response can significantly increase risk levels."*

Mobile Phone Distraction

Mobile phone distraction represents a huge and growing risk for essential fleets.

> *"The most critical distractions are those that combine multiple dimensions at the same time. The clearest example is mobile phone usage, which typically involves all three types – visual, cognitive and manual – simultaneously,"* explains Felipe Lima, International Sales & Business Development Director of Queclink Wireless Solutions.

A clear, consistently enforced policy framework is the foundation of any effective approach. This must include a strict prohibition on handheld mobile phone use while driving. However, policy alone is not sufficient. The most effective fleets reinforce expectations through ongoing engagement, structured training, and clear communication of real-world consequences, underpinned by incident data and near-miss reporting.

Technology is also increasingly central to risk reduction. A notable example is the smartphone-blocking system from Blackout Technologies, designed to remove temptation at source.

> As Mark Hadley, Co-Founder and CEO explains:*"Fleets need to remove the impulse for drivers to take their eyes off the road. At Blackout, we've created a tool that tackles the problem at its root by preventing illegal smartphone use before it becomes a risk."*

The system uses an app installed on a driver's smartphone linked to a telematics unit or dashcam, restricting access to non-essential functions while driving, including messaging apps, social media, streaming services, internet browsing, and camera use, and suppressing incoming notifications. It also includes a two-minute delay to prevent drivers using their smartphone when in stationary traffic.

The Role of ADAS

Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) are now becoming standard across most fleet vehicles.

While some drivers may feel that ADAS contribute to in-cab distraction, these

systems are designed to reduce risk rather than increase it. Features such as lane departure warnings, blind-spot monitoring, and forward collision alerts are intended to support driver awareness and help maintain focus on the road. When correctly specified and calibrated, ADAS can enhance situational awareness and provide an additional layer of protection.

However, system design and usability remain critical. If ADAS features are overly complex, poorly integrated, or excessively intrusive, they can increase cognitive load and contribute to fatigue or confusion. Proper configuration and structured driver training are therefore essential to ensure that safety benefits are fully realised.

Importantly, ADAS should always be viewed as an aid to driving rather than a replacement for driver alertness, judgement, or skill. Drivers must remain fully engaged and maintain their core driving competence at all times, as safe operation of the vehicle ultimately depends on human awareness and control.

The Role of Telematics and AI Cameras

Telematics have become a cornerstone of modern fleet management, providing real-time visibility into driving behaviour. Metrics such as harsh braking, rapid acceleration, cornering forces, idling, and inconsistent speed patterns can help identify early signs of distraction or reduced concentration.

For essential services fleets, this capability enables a shift from reactive incident response to proactive risk prevention. Instead of waiting for collisions or near misses, operators can monitor behavioural trends across teams and identify emerging risks before they escalate.

AI-powered driver-facing cameras further strengthen this approach. Using in-cab video and machine learning, these systems can detect signs of distraction in real time, including mobile phone use, prolonged eye-off-road time, fatigue indicators such as yawning or head nodding, and other behaviours such as eating or smoking that may reduce control or attention.

When risk is detected, immediate in-cab alerts can prompt drivers to refocus, creating a real-time feedback loop that helps prevent incidents, particularly in high-pressure environments where attention is frequently divided. This in-cab coaching is claimed to be highly effective, especially amongst higher-risk drivers.

"Driver behaviour remains the single most influential factor in collision risk, making distraction not just a safety issue but a core operational concern."

> According to Sam Footer, Partnership Director at SureCam: *"Targeting the bottom 10 per cent of drivers in terms of safety certainly has huge potential for securing improvements. One fleet found that their worst performing drivers were generating 17 times more risk events than the best drivers. Within four months of adopting AI dashcams with a coaching system, the high-risk drivers had cut events by 56 per cent and were only generating four times the number when compared to their better performing peers."*

The effectiveness of these systems depends heavily on implementation. Without clear communication, they may be perceived as intrusive. Fleet operators, therefore, need to position them as safety tools, not surveillance measures, supported by transparency around data use and monitoring.

Equally, value is maximised through trend analysis rather than isolated events. Aggregated insights across journeys and time periods can highlight systemic issues, such as fatigue patterns, distraction hotspots, or operational pressures that contribute to unsafe driving.

Used together, telematics and AI cameras create a layered safety system that combines behavioural insight with real-time intervention, helping protect drivers and maintain service continuity.

Operational Pressure and Service Demand

Unlike standard commercial fleets, essential services operators often work under unpredictable demand and urgent response conditions. Tight response windows, reactive scheduling, and extended shifts can significantly increase cognitive load and encourage multitasking while driving.

> *"A major driver distraction challenge is workflow contradiction. Many essential fleets tell drivers to stay focused while simultaneously requiring them to interact with dispatch, compliance, route changes, customer updates, and proof-of-service tools in real time. In other words, part of the distraction burden is created by the fleet's own operating model,"* suggests Queclink's Felipe Lima.

Regular review of routing, workload allocation, and compliance with driving regulations is therefore essential to ensure that operational expectations do not compromise safety. Fatigue management and realistic scheduling remain central to reducing distraction-related risk.

Conclusion

Reducing driver distraction requires a joined-up approach. The most effective operators combine clear policy enforcement, continuous driver education, intelligent use of technology, carefully configured ADAS systems, and realistic operational planning.

Those that take a proactive stance not only improve safety outcomes but also strengthen service reliability, reduce operational disruption, and support driver well-being in some of the most demanding fleet environments.●

Charged and **Ready**: **EV Safety** and **Range Management** for **Fleet** Drivers

As Electric Vehicles (EVs) become increasingly common within UK fleets, the conversation is shifting from adoption to optimisation. For drivers, this means understanding not just how to operate an EV, but how to do so safely, efficiently and with confidence, particularly when it comes to charging and managing range.

While EVs remove many of the complexities associated with traditional fuel vehicles, they introduce new considerations that fleet drivers must be aware of. Charging safety, battery care and range awareness are now essential parts of the role.

Charging Safely: Best Practice on Site and on the Road

Charging an EV is straightforward, but it still requires care and attention. Whether at a depot, workplace or public charging point, drivers should always begin by visually checking the cable and connector for damage. Frayed cables, exposed wiring or debris in the connector can pose both safety and reliability risks.

It is equally important to ensure that the vehicle is correctly positioned before charging begins. Stretching cables across walkways or access routes can create trip hazards, particularly in busy depot environments. Once connected, drivers should confirm that charging has started properly. Most vehicles and charge points provide a clear visual or audible confirmation.

In wet weather, which is a frequent consideration in the UK, modern charging systems are designed to operate safely. However, drivers should still avoid unnecessary handling of connectors with excessively wet hands and ensure connections are secure before leaving the vehicle unattended.

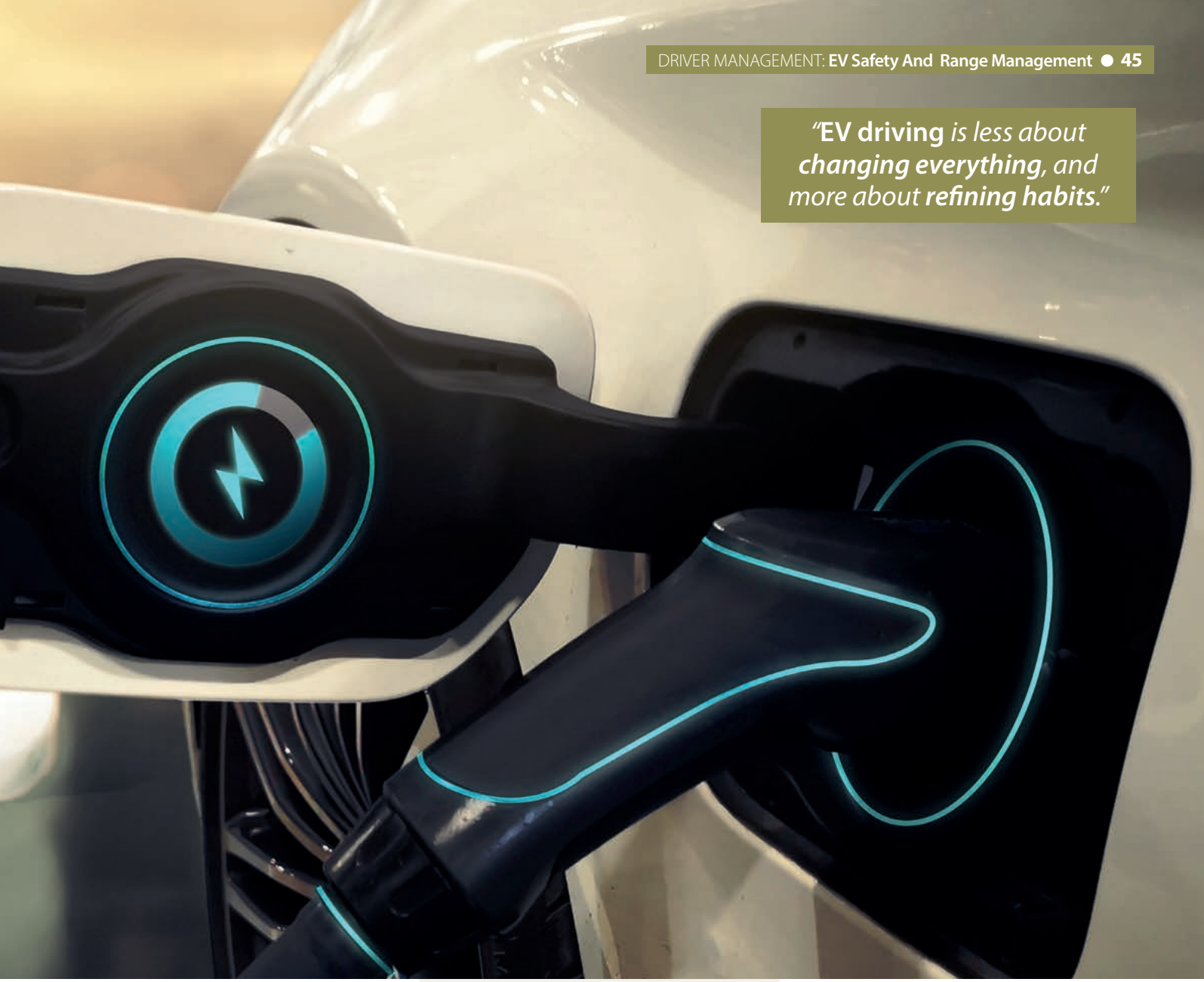
Public charging introduces additional variables. Drivers should remain aware of their surroundings, avoid leaving cables loosely coiled on the ground, and return equipment neatly after use. Good habits not only reduce risk but also help maintain shared infrastructure for other users.

Battery Awareness and Everyday Use

Unlike refuelling a conventional vehicle, charging is often integrated into the working day. This makes battery awareness a key skill. Drivers should avoid consistently running the battery down to very low levels where possible, as this can increase stress on the battery over time and reduce operational flexibility.

Equally, keeping the battery permanently at 100% charge is not always necessary for day-to-day use. Many fleets recommend charging to around 80% for routine operations, reserving full charges for longer journeys. This approach can help support long-term battery health while maintaining sufficient range.

Temperature also plays a role. Cold weather can temporarily reduce available



> *"**EV driving** is less about **changing everything**, and more about **refining habits**."*

range, while energy use may increase due to heating systems. Planning for these variations is essential, particularly during winter months.

Managing Range in Real-World Conditions

Range anxiety remains one of the most commonly cited concerns among drivers new to EVs. In practice, however, effective range management is largely about planning and driving style.

Drivers should make full use of the vehicle's onboard range indicators and route planning tools. These systems are designed to provide real-time updates based on driving conditions, traffic and energy consumption. Understanding how to interpret this information can help drivers make informed decisions about when and where to charge.

Driving style has a direct impact on range. Smooth acceleration, consistent speeds and effective use of regenerative braking all contribute to improved efficiency. Aggressive driving, by contrast, can significantly reduce available range, particularly on motorway journeys.

Where possible, drivers should also take advantage of opportunity charging, topping up the battery during breaks or downtime rather than relying solely on a single full charge. This approach can help reduce pressure on range and provide greater operational flexibility.

Planning Ahead: The Fleet Perspective

For fleet drivers, EV operation is rarely isolated from wider operational planning. Knowing the location of charging points along a route, understanding charging speeds and allowing time for recharging are all part of the process.

Depot charging remains the most reliable and cost-effective option for many fleets, particularly when vehicles can be charged overnight. However, public infrastructure plays an important supporting role, especially for drivers covering longer distances or operating in unfamiliar areas.

Communication between drivers and fleet managers is also key. Reporting issues with charging equipment, range performance or vehicle behaviour helps ensure that problems are addressed quickly and that lessons can be shared across the fleet.

Safety, Efficiency and Confidence

The transition to electric fleets is as much about behaviour as it is about technology. Drivers who understand how to charge safely, manage their battery effectively and adapt their driving style will not only reduce risk but also maximise the benefits of EV operation.

Ultimately, EV driving is less about changing everything and more about refining habits. With the right knowledge and approach, fleet drivers can operate electric vehicles safely, efficiently and with confidence, ensuring they remain productive, regardless of how they are powered.●

Insight Expands Its **Emergency Services Telematics Platform** with **HASS Alert Partnership** Bringing **Digital Road Safety** to the UK

UK emergency services face mounting operational pressure: denser road networks, rising demand, and the need for faster, safer response times. Insight, the UKs leading telematics and fleet intelligence provider for emergency services is now partnering with HAAS Alert, creators of the Safety Cloud® digital alerting platform. The partnership brings features such as connected vehicle-to-everything (V2X) road safety technology to British blue-light fleets.

A Partnership Built on Shared Purpose

As the established market leader in emergency services telematics across the UK, Insight sees the collaboration as a natural extension of its platform and a further step ahead of the sector equipping blue-light fleets with next generation connected technology.

"Together, we're helping emergency services get to patients more safely and efficiently, while giving road users clearer, earlier warnings when crews are operating on the road network," says Julian Harris, Head of Business Development at Insight.

This shared focus on innovation, safety, and operational excellence forms the foundation of the new partnership.

Transforming Road Safety with Safety Cloud®

HAAS Alert's Safety Cloud® is a leading digital alerting system used across millions of vehicles. When an emergency vehicle activates its lights — either en-route or on scene — Safety Cloud® automatically sends a real-time alert to nearby drivers through in-vehicle infotainment systems and popular navigation platforms.

These alerts can provide up to 30 seconds advance warning, dramatically improving driver awareness and reducing struck-by incidents.

Safety Cloud® supports two critical functions:

- Stationary alerts when vehicles are stopped with lights activated
- Moving alerts during emergency response runs

This dual system enables earlier, clearer communication with motorists — even through distractions, weather, or low visibility.

Bulit Into Insight's Industry-Leading Platform

One of the partnership's strongest advantages is the ease of implementation. Safety Cloud® can be activated through many existing telematics and fleet technology platforms without requiring additional hardware.

This is a direct benefit of Insight's integrated platform architecture, already one of the most widely deployed emergency services telematics ecosystems in the UK. Services running Insight will gain:

- Instant access to digital alerts for their fleets
- Richer operational and safety data
- Enhanced situational awareness
- Improved road safety performance backed by analytics from Safety Cloud®

Elevating Safety and Efficiency for UK Emergency Services

With public expectations rising and fleets under pressure to deliver faster, safer responses, the adoption of advanced digital alerting is quickly becoming a necessity.

Safety Cloud® helps emergency services achieve:

- Greater compliance with Move Over rules
- Safer on-scene working environments
- Reduced likelihood of secondary collisions
- Quicker response pathways as driver's clear lanes earlier

Combined with Insight's operational and fleet expertise, this partnership gives UK services a modern, data-driven route to improving safety for responders and the communities they protect.

A Milestone for Connected Road Safety

For HAAS Alert, partnering with the UK's foremost emergency services technology provider gives Safety Cloud® better access to a key international market. For Insight, it reinforces its position at the forefront of blue-light telematics by adding V2X digital alerting to an already comprehensive platform, setting a new benchmark for connected emergency operations.

HAAS Alert's mission - a connected, collision-free world where everyone gets home safely — now takes a significant step forward for UK emergency fleets.

About HAAS Alert

HAAS Alert develops lifesaving mobility technology through its Safety Cloud® platform, which delivers real-time digital alerts from emergency vehicles, work zones, and fleets to nearby drivers. Safety Cloud® is the world's largest commercially deployed V2X digital alerting network.

About Insight

Insight is the UK's leading provider of telematics, asset monitoring, CCTV and fleet-intelligence solutions for emergency services and other mission-critical sectors across the UK. Its integrated platform provides real-time vehicle tracking, blue-light analytics, asset visibility, synchronised video, and deep operational insights to help organisations improve safety, efficiency and decision-making. With continued innovation and capabilities such as Safety Cloud® digital alerting integration, Insight enables safer, smarter and more connected frontline operations.●

Find out more visit: **https://haasalert.eu**

Electric HGVs: When **Regulation Undermines** the **Transition**

The shift towards zero-emission heavy goods vehicles is accelerating. Operators are making investments, manufacturers are increasing production, and the future is clear. However, worries are rising that current regulations are not keeping pace with the realities of operating electric HGVs.

At the core of the problem is payload.

Electric HGVs have a fundamental downside compared to diesel vehicles: the weight of the batteries. Although allowances exist to compensate for this, they do not fully make up for it, especially for heavier vehicle combinations operating at the upper end of weight limits.

This can restrict operators' payload capacity, forcing tough operational choices. They might carry less on each trip, make more trips, or use extra vehicles; none of these options promote efficiency or help manage costs.

Growing Industry Concern

The Road Haulage Association has been vocal in highlighting the issue, warning that current rules could threaten the economic case for adopting electric HGVs.

From the RHA's perspective, the concern isn't a lack of willingness from operators. The industry is dedicated to decarbonisation. The worry is that the regulation isn't aligned with real-world logistics, especially for high-capacity, long-distance journeys.

The Practical Impact

Payload reductions directly affect financial performance. Lower capacity means less productivity per vehicle, which increases the cost per delivery.

For an industry already working on thin margins, even small inefficiencies can quickly add up. More trips mean more driver hours, energy use, and vehicle wear, which over time can undermine the financial viability of switching to electric, particularly without regulatory support.

Limitations of the Current System

Although zero-emission vehicles are allowed a higher gross weight, this doesn't completely solve the problem. In practice, operators can still face restrictions related to axle weight limits and vehicle configuration.

This means that even where additional weight is permitted in theory, it cannot always be fully utilised in operation. The result is a system that recognises the challenge, but does not fully solve it.

Efficiency vs Emissions

There is also a broader question about overall efficiency. If reduced payloads require more vehicles or journeys to transport the same amount of goods, the environmental benefits become less clear.

The RHA has warned that without adjustments, the industry risks causing unintended consequences, where the push for lower emissions leads to operational inefficiencies that undermine wider sustainability goals.

What the Industry Is Calling For

Rather than lowering ambitions, industry groups including the RHA are advocating for practical reforms to support the transition. Key areas under discussion include:

- Reviewing maximum authorised weight limits for electric HGVs
- Reassessing axle load restrictions
- Updating vehicle design rules to accommodate battery requirements
- Ensuring policy reflects real-world operating conditions

These changes would not eliminate the challenges but would create a more level playing field between electric and diesel vehicles.

A Transition That Must Work in Practice

The logistics sector is not opposing change; it is requesting conditions that make the change feasible. Technology alone is not sufficient. Regulations must develop alongside it.

Electric HGVs are vital to the future of road freight, but adoption depends on more than mere intention.

As the Road Haulage Association continues to emphasise, the challenge is not whether the industry is ready to transition, but whether the framework surrounding it is prepared to support that shift.

Until both are aligned, the business case will continue to face pressure.●

Why **Vans Require** a **Different Driving Training** Approach

Within most mixed fleets in the Essential Services sector, panel vans form the backbone of daily operations. However, the majority of drivers operating them will have passed their driving test in a vehicle that offers full, all-round visibility and a clear rearward view through a back window.

Standard panel vans are fundamentally different. With no rear seats and often no rear side windows, rear visibility is severely restricted or, in many cases, non-existent. As a result, drivers must rely much more heavily on wing mirrors, correct observation techniques, and where fitted, technology such as reversing cameras, parking sensors, and blind-spot monitoring systems.

Consequently, many drivers transitioning from passenger cars into larger, less visually transparent vehicles require additional guidance and structured training. Without this support, the change in vehicle type can increase the risk of low-speed collisions and reversing incidents.

Driving a van is not simply a matter of operating a larger version of a car. There are important differences, not just as mentioned in visibility, but vehicle weight, dimensions, and load behaviour, all of which affect how the vehicle responds on the road. These factors become more critical in busy urban environments, where tight streets, frequent stops, and vulnerable road users demand greater awareness and precision.

Understanding Size, Weight and Stopping Distances

Even an empty panel van is substantially heavier than a typical passenger vehicle, and once loaded, braking distances increase considerably.

This has immediate implications in everyday driving. Tailgating becomes significantly more hazardous, particularly in urban traffic where sudden stops are common. Maintaining a greater following distance is not simply good practice, it is essential for maintaining control and avoiding rear-end collisions, which remain one of the most common incident types in van fleets.

Acceleration and cornering characteristics also change under load. A van carrying tools, equipment or goods will respond more slowly to throttle inputs and require more time to settle through bends. Drivers who fail to adjust their expectations often find themselves braking later and harder than is ideal for both safety and fuel efficiency.

Spatial Awareness and Vehicle Dimensions

Unlike cars, vans demand a heightened level of spatial awareness. High rooflines, longer wheelbases and extended rear overhangs all increase risk when navigating tight streets, car parks and work sites.

Height restrictions are a particular risk area, especially when entering car parks or commercial sites. While signage is generally clear, drivers under time pressure may misjudge clearances, leading to avoidable and often costly incidents. Turning circles are also wider than many drivers expect, meaning multi-point turns and careful positioning are frequently required in confined environments.

Mirror usage is therefore critical. Blind spots are larger and more numerous, particularly along the nearside and directly behind the vehicle. Regular mirror checks, combined with correct adjustment before setting off, are essential habits that should be embedded within any fleet training programme.

Loading, Balance and Vehicle Stability

How a van is loaded has a direct impact on how it drives. Uneven or poorly secured loads can shift during acceleration, braking or cornering, altering the vehicle's centre of gravity and increasing the risk of instability.

Heavier items should always be placed low and as far forward as practical, with lighter items secured on top. This helps maintain balance and reduces the likelihood of load movement affecting handling. Loading should always be carried out with care, and many modern fleet vehicles are now equipped with purpose-built racking systems designed to prevent movement and secure equipment during transit.

Bulkheads and load restraint systems are not simply compliance features, they are critical safety systems. They prevent cargo from entering the cab in the event

of sudden braking or a collision and help maintain predictable vehicle behaviour under load. Regular inspection of securing equipment should form part of a driver's daily vehicle checks.

Reversing and Low-Speed Manoeuvring

A significant proportion of van incidents occur at low speeds, particularly during reversing manoeuvres in depots, construction sites and residential areas.

Even with modern reversing sensors and 360-degree camera systems, these aids should be treated as support tools rather than substitutes for observation.

Where possible, reversing should be planned rather than improvised. Taking time to assess the space before moving can significantly reduce the risk of collisions with pedestrians, vehicles or fixed objects.

It is also important that all low-impact collisions are reported to the fleet manager and properly recorded, however minor the damage may appear. While these incidents may seem insignificant in isolation, they can provide valuable insight when reviewed collectively.

Patterns such as repeated kerb strikes, low-speed scrapes or reversing impacts can indicate that a driver may benefit from additional training or targeted support. Accurate reporting and consistent recording therefore play a key role in identifying risk early, improving driver standards and preventing more serious incidents.

Urban Pressure and Time Constraints

Van drivers often operate under tight schedules, particularly in service and delivery roles. This can create pressure to take risks, including parking in unsuitable locations or completing rushed manoeuvres.

From a fleet safety perspective, this is a key concern. Many incidents are not caused by a lack of skill, but by behavioural adaptation to time pressure.

Training that reflects operational reality, while reinforcing safe driving standards, is typically more effective than purely theoretical instruction.

Fuel Efficiency and Driving Style

Driving style has a clear and measurable impact on van fuel consumption. Harsh acceleration, high engine speeds and excessive idling all increase operating costs over time. By contrast, smooth throttle inputs, early gear changes and anticipation of traffic flow can significantly improve efficiency without reducing productivity.

For electric vans, these principles translate into energy management. Regenerative braking, steady speed control and effective route planning all contribute to maximising range, particularly in stop-start urban conditions.

The Fleet Perspective

From a fleet management standpoint, van-specific driver training is one of the most effective ways to reduce incident rates and improve operational consistency. Light commercial vehicles are often among the most heavily used assets in a fleet, yet they are frequently the least formally trained for.

Investing in structured van driver training supports not only safety outcomes, but also improved vehicle care, reduced downtime and better fuel efficiency. In many cases, it also enhances driver confidence, particularly for those new to larger vehicles.

Ultimately, safe and efficient van driving is about adaptation. Understanding how size, weight and load affect vehicle behaviour allows drivers to operate with greater awareness and control. For fleets, that translates into fewer incidents, lower costs and more reliable day-to-day operations.●

Off the **Beaten Track:** Practical **Off-Road Driving** Tips

For many fleet operatives, the job doesn't end when the tarmac does. From utilities and construction to infrastructure maintenance, operating on uneven, muddy or unpaved terrain is often part of the daily routine. Yet off-road driving remains an area where confidence and capability can vary widely, particularly for drivers more accustomed to urban or motorway environments.

With the right approach, however, off-road driving can be both safe and efficient. It is less about speed or bravado and more about control, preparation and understanding how a vehicle behaves when grip is limited.

Understanding the Vehicle

Before leaving the road, it is essential that drivers are familiar with the capabilities and limitations of their vehicle. Many modern fleet vehicles, particularly SUVs and pick-ups, are equipped with selectable drive modes, hill descent control and all-wheel drive systems. Knowing when and how to use these features can make a significant difference.

Four-wheel drive systems, for example, improve traction but do not eliminate the risk of getting stuck. Similarly, electronic aids can support stability, but they cannot overcome poor judgment or excessive speed. For fleet operators, this underlines the importance of ensuring drivers receive at least a basic level of vehicle-specific training.

Planning Ahead

Off-road conditions are often unpredictable. Weather, ground composition and vehicle load all influence how a route will behave. A track that is firm and manageable in dry conditions can quickly become difficult after rain.

Drivers should assess the route before committing. If possible, walking a section in advance can help identify hazards such as deep ruts, loose gravel or standing water. For fleets operating in remote areas, ensuring communication devices are functional and that drivers are not working in isolation is equally important.

Maintaining Momentum—But Not Speed

One of the key principles of off-road driving is maintaining steady momentum. Sudden acceleration can lead to wheel spin, while harsh braking increases the risk of losing control. Smooth, consistent inputs are far more effective.

On loose or slippery surfaces, a higher gear can often provide better traction by reducing torque to the wheels. This is particularly relevant in muddy or sandy conditions, where too much power can quickly result in the vehicle becoming bogged down.

Tyres: The Critical Contact Point

Tyres play a crucial role in off-road performance, yet they are often overlooked in fleet operations. Adequate tread depth is essential for maintaining grip, particularly in wet or loose conditions. Drivers should also be aware of tyre pressures; slightly reduced pressures can improve traction on soft surfaces, although this must be managed carefully and reinflated for road use.

Regular inspection is key. Cuts, embedded debris and uneven wear can all compromise performance and safety, particularly when vehicles are used across mixed terrain.

Dealing with Common Challenges

Mud is one of the most frequent challenges. If a vehicle begins to lose traction, spinning the wheels will usually make the situation worse. Instead, easing off the throttle and attempting to regain grip gradually is more effective. If necessary, reversing out along the same track can be safer than pushing forward.

When tackling inclines, maintaining a consistent speed is critical. Stopping midway can make restarting difficult, particularly on loose surfaces. Descents require a different approach, with low gears and engine braking helping to control speed without over-reliance on the brakes.

Water crossings should always be approached with caution. Depth can be deceptive, and entering too quickly risks water ingress or loss of control. If there is any doubt, the safest option is to avoid the crossing altogether.

Load Management and Stability

Fleet vehicles are often carrying tools, equipment or materials, all of which affect handling. An uneven or unsecured load can shift during off-road driving, altering the vehicle's centre of gravity and increasing the risk of instability.

Ensuring loads are properly secured and evenly distributed is not only a safety requirement but also a practical necessity. Drivers should also be mindful that a fully loaded vehicle will behave differently, requiring longer stopping distances and more careful throttle control.

Safety First, Always

Off-road driving should never be rushed. Deadlines and productivity pressures are a reality in fleet operations, but pushing too hard in challenging conditions can lead to incidents, vehicle damage and costly downtime.

Equipping vehicles with basic recovery gear, such as tow ropes, traction mats or shovels, can provide reassurance, particularly for drivers operating in isolated locations. More importantly, drivers should know when to stop and seek assistance rather than attempting to push through unsafe conditions.

The Fleet Perspective

From a fleet management standpoint, off-road driving capability is increasingly relevant as operations extend into more varied environments. Investing in appropriate vehicles, maintaining tyres and providing driver training can all contribute to reduced risk and improved efficiency.

Ultimately, off-road driving is about adapting to conditions rather than overcoming them. For fleet drivers, adopting a measured, informed approach not only improves safety but also ensures vehicles remain operational, delivering both people and equipment where they are needed, regardless of what lies beyond the road.●

Maxus eTerron **9**

While traditional models in the main continue to rely on diesel power and established mechanical simplicity, the eTerron 9 takes a very different route as one of the first fully electric, all-wheel-drive pick-ups designed for genuine working use.

It's not positioned as a lifestyle truck or a niche experiment. Instead, it's designed to do the same job as a conventional pick-up, just without tailpipe emissions.

Bold Design with a Functional Focus

Visually, the eTerron 9 stands apart from anything else in the segment.

The front end is fully enclosed, giving it a distinctly electric identity, while the LED lighting signature and upright stance maintain a sense of toughness. It's large, square-shouldered and clearly designed around function as much as style.

At the rear, the load bed is properly proportioned for work use, with a focus on practicality rather than lifestyle detailing. It's a design that signals intent: this is a commercial vehicle first, even if the execution feels more modern than that of traditional rivals.

Cabin: High-Tech and SUV-Like

Inside, the biggest departure from conventional pick-ups becomes clear.

The cabin feels far closer to a modern SUV than a utilitarian work truck, with large digital displays, premium materials and a layout that prioritises comfort and technology. Higher trim versions add features such as heated, ventilated and even massaging seats, reinforcing the impression that this is a more upmarket interpretation of the pick-up formula.

For operators used to stripped-back interiors, the eTerron 9 represents a significant shift in both presentation and feel.

Electric Powertrain: Serious Capability, Different Delivery

Under the surface, the eTerron 9 is built around a dual-motor all-wheel-drive system producing around 325kW (about 440hp), delivering strong performance for a vehicle of this size.

A large 102kWh battery provides a WLTP range of up to around 267 miles, depending on use and conditions.

Capability figures are broadly in line with established diesel rivals where it matters most:

- Up to 3,500kg towing capacity
- Around 620kg payload
- Fast DC charging with roughly 10–80% in about 40 minutes (depending on conditions)

The key contrast is not towing ability, but usability under load. Like many early electric pick-ups, payload is limited compared to diesel competitors, reflecting the weight of the battery system.

Real-World Use: Where it Makes Sense Today

In practical terms, the eTerron 9 is aimed less at traditional rural or heavy-duty operators and more at fleets transitioning toward electrification.

Its strongest roles are likely to include:

- Urban utility and maintenance fleets
- Corporate and government users
- Predictable daily-route operations with depot charging

Real-world testing and early fleet trials suggest it is being positioned

as a working tool rather than a novelty EV, with a focus on uptime, connectivity and predictable operating costs.

Technology and Usability

Where the eTerron 9 stands out most clearly against conventional pick-ups is its technology layer.

Features such as advanced driver assistance systems, multiple terrain modes, and vehicle-to-load functionality make it highly adaptable for modern fleet operations. It can also act as a mobile power source for tools and equipment, reinforcing its role as a modern work platform rather than just transport.

Over-the-air updates and connected fleet systems further underline its positioning as a software-led vehicle as much as a physical one.

The Trade-Offs

As with all electric pick-ups at this stage, the compromises are clear.

Payload capacity is the most obvious limitation, and charging infrastructure will remain a deciding factor for many operators, especially in rural or high-mileage environments. The size and weight of the vehicle also place it in a very specific operational category rather than a universal replacement for diesel pick-ups.

But in return, it offers zero-emissions operation, strong performance and a level of onboard technology that traditional rivals cannot yet match.

In Summary

The Maxus eTerron 9 represents a genuine shift in the pick-up landscape rather than a simple update.

It doesn't replace established diesel workhorses like the, Hilux or D-Max, but it does introduce a credible alternative for operators ready to move toward electrification.

Fast, highly equipped and properly capable in core areas, it shows where the segment is heading. The challenge now is less about whether electric pick-ups can work, and more about where—and for whom—they make the most sense.●

Find out more visit: **www.saicmaxus.co.uk**

HMRC Changes Tax Rules for **Double Cab Pickups** from **April 2025**

From 6 April 2025, HMRC changed how double cab pickup trucks are classified for tax purposes, especially for Benefit in Kind (BIK) tax.

Before this change, classification mainly followed VAT rules. A double cab pickup was usually treated as a van if it could carry at least 1,000 kg of payload, and a car if it carried less. This made the system fairly straightforward and based mostly on weight.

However, HMRC has now moved away from this approach following a court decision (Coca-Cola / Payne case). The ruling confirmed that the correct way to classify a vehicle is based on its primary suitability, not just its weight.

HMRC now assesses double cab pickups based on their overall design and purpose when they are made available to an employee.

The key question is:

- Is the vehicle mainly designed for carrying goods or
- Is it equally suitable for carrying both passengers and goods?

Most double cab pickups have:

- Four or five passenger seats
- A rear load area for goods
- A design that supports both personal and work use

Because of this mixed purpose, HMRC's position is that most double cab pickups are equally suitable for passengers and goods.

From April 2025, most double cab pickups will be treated as cars rather than vans for tax purposes.

This is important because:

- Cars usually attract higher BIK tax charges
- Vans are taxed more lightly

So, employees using these vehicles may see an increase in tax liability.

There is a temporary exception. If a double cab pickup was:

Purchased, leased, or ordered before 6 April 2025

It can still be treated as a van until the earliest of:

- It is sold or disposed of
- The lease ends
- 5 April 2029

Summary

HMRC now focuses on how a vehicle is designed and used rather than weight. Since most double cab pickups are suitable for both passengers and goods, they will generally be taxed as cars from April 2025, with limited transitional protection for older agreements.●

Volkswagen Amarok: Not the **Newest**— But Still **One of the Smartest** Tools **On Site**

The Amarok isn't new anymore, but that's exactly why it deserves a closer look. In a market now chasing electrification and complexity, the Amarok sticks to a more traditional formula: diesel power, proven hardware, and a clear focus on real-world usability.

Built by Volkswagen as a modern, double-cab-only pick-up, it's aimed squarely at operators who want capability without giving up comfort. And even a few years into its lifecycle, it still feels like one of the most complete all-rounders in the segment.

The Amarok's styling leans more premium than purely functional, but it's not just for show.

The signature X-shaped grille and LED lighting give it presence, while details like the embossed tailgate branding and available styling bars push it toward lifestyle appeal. But underneath that, it remains properly usable:

- Load bay fits a Euro pallet across the arches
- Roof load capacity up to 350kg
- Wide, practical bed with multiple tie-down points

It's this balance that defines the Amarok, less *"toolbox on wheels,"* more *"multi-role operator vehicle."*

The cabin is closer to an SUV than a traditional pick-up, with a large central touchscreen (up to 12 inches), digital displays, and features like ambient lighting and premium audio systems.

Material quality and layout are a clear step above most rivals, and space is generous, important for operators covering long distances or using the vehicle as a mobile office.

This is where the Amarok really separates itself: it doesn't just do the job, it makes the job easier.

While competitors are moving toward hybrid and electric solutions, the Amarok stays focused on diesel power—and for many operators, that's exactly what matters.

Engine options centre around:

- 2.0-litre diesel (up to ~202bhp)
- 3.0-litre V6 diesel (up to ~240bhp, 600Nm)

All models are paired with automatic gearboxes and 4MOTION four-wheel drive.

Key working figures remain strong:

- Up to 1,101kg payload
- Up to 3,500kg towing capacity

It's not trying to reinvent the segment—it's delivering exactly what operators expect, and doing it well.

Built for Work—But Easier to Live With

Underneath, the Amarok uses a body-on-frame construction and shares its platform with the latest Ford Ranger, giving it serious off-road credibility alongside proven durability.

But Volkswagen's tuning leans toward refinement:

- More insulated cabin
- More composed on-road fee
- Strong ergonomics and visibility

The result is a pick-up that feels less agricultural than many rivals—something that becomes increasingly important the more time you spend in it.

The Operator Reality in 2026

While it's highly capable, it's also positioned at the premium end of the segment, so it won't be the cheapest option on the job sheet.

But for many operators, that's not the point.

The Amarok doesn't chase trends, it delivers consistency.

It's not electric, not revolutionary, and not the newest name in the segment. But it remains one of the most usable, comfortable and well-rounded pick-ups available today.

For operators who need a vehicle that can tow, carry, travel long distances and still feel civilised at the end of the day, the Amarok continues to make a very strong case for itself.●

Find out more visit: **www.volkswagen-vans.co.uk**

Toyota Hilux
A Legend Enters its **Electric Era**

The all-new ninth-generation Hilux marks one of the biggest shifts in the model's history. For decades, the Hilux has built its reputation on toughness and dependability, but now, Toyota is pushing its global icon into a radically different future: electrification.

In line with Toyota's "multipath" strategy, the new Hilux won't rely on a single powertrain. Instead, it spans traditional diesel, mild hybrid tech, a full battery-electric version, and even a hydrogen fuel cell model on the horizon. It's a bold attempt to future-proof one of the world's most recognisable pick-ups without alienating its loyal customer base.

Visually, the new Hilux leans into a *"Tough and Agile"* design philosophy. The front end is more upright and assertive, with slim headlights linked by a bold central bar spelling out TOYOTA a nod to heritage styling.

The fully electric version takes a different approach, ditching the traditional grille altogether for a smoother, more aerodynamic face, alongside unique alloy wheels.

Practicality hasn't been overlooked either. A new rear deck step improves access to the load bed, while redesigned side steps (on selected models) make everyday use easier—small touches that matter for working vehicles.

Inside, the shift is more dramatic. Inspired by the latest Toyota Land Cruiser, the cabin feels significantly more modern and upmarket.

A new horizontal dashboard layout houses a configurable 12.3-inch digital driver display and a central touchscreen of the same size (depending on trim). Controls for four-wheel drive and off-road systems are grouped logically, suggesting improved usability in tough conditions.

Connectivity is finally up to modern standards, with wireless charging, rear USB ports, and app-based remote services via the MyToyota platform. Fleet users in particular will appreciate the ability to monitor multiple vehicles, including location and energy usage.

Tech Upgrades: Steering and Safety

One of the most meaningful changes is the introduction of electric power steering, expected to improve manoeuvrability and reduce driver fatigue, especially off-road, where kickback has traditionally been an issue.

Safety tech has also taken a leap forward. The latest Toyota Safety Sense suite adds features such as:

- Low-Speed Acceleration Suppression
- Proactive Driving Assist
- Emergency Driving Stop System

Plus, additions such as Blind Spot Monitoring, Safe Exit Assist, and a driver-monitoring camera bring the Hilux closer to passenger-car levels of safety tech.

The headline act is undoubtedly the fully electric Hilux. Built on the same rugged body-on-frame architecture, it's designed

to retain the durability the Hilux is renowned for.

Key early figures include:

- 59.2kWh battery
- Dual-motor AWD (205Nm front / 268.6Nm rear)
- Approx. 150-mile WLTP range
- ~715kg payload
- 1,600kg towing capacity

Importantly, Toyota claims there is no compromise in off-road ability. The electric Hilux retains its wading depth and gains a Multi-Terrain Select system that mimics low-range gearing via software-controlled torque delivery.

For fleets and urban users, this could be a game-changer—offering zero-emissions capability without sacrificing the Hilux's core strengths.

While the EV grabs headlines, the 2.8-litre 48V mild-hybrid diesel is expected to be the volume seller—especially in Europe.

This system pairs a lithium-ion battery with a motor-generator to smooth acceleration and improve refinement. It doesn't radically change the Hilux formula, but it enhances it—particularly in stop-start driving and under load.

Crucially, capability remains intact:

- Up to 1,000 kg payload
- 3,500 kg towing capacity
- 700 mm wading depth

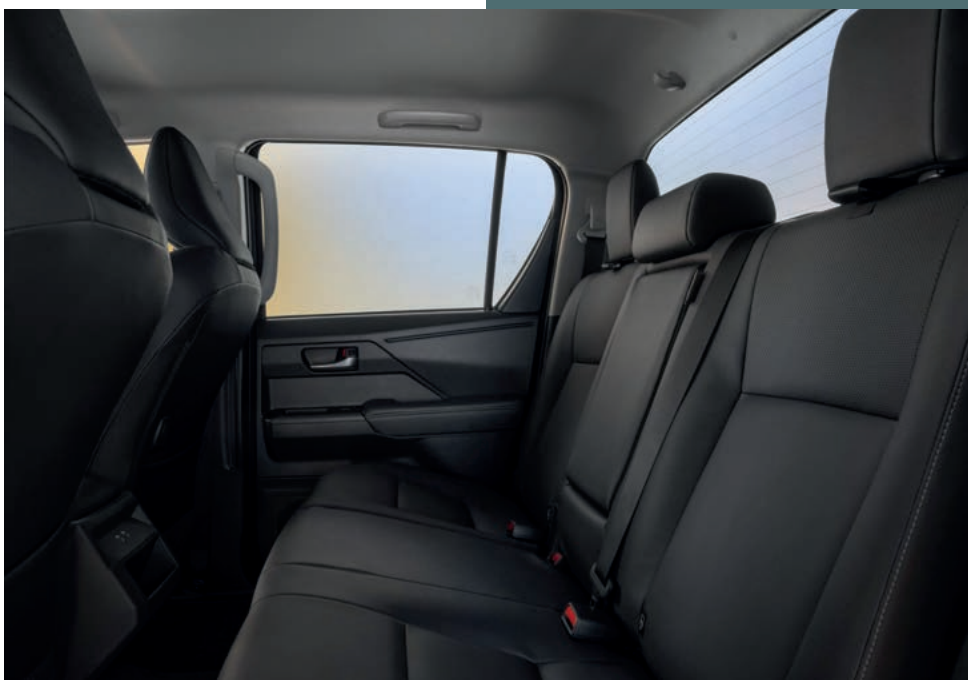
That balance of familiarity and incremental improvement will likely appeal to traditional buyers.

Hydrogen Future Already Confirmed

Looking further ahead, Toyota has confirmed a hydrogen fuel-cell Hilux for production around 2028. This version will showcase the brand's continued investment in hydrogen as a zero-emissions alternative, particularly relevant for commercial users, where downtime and range are critical concerns.

Without turning a wheel, the new Hilux already feels like a pivotal model. Toyota hasn't abandoned what made it successful; instead, it's layered new technology on top of its proven formula.

The real test will be whether the electric and electrified versions can match the legendary durability that the Hilux name is built on. But on paper, this is the most versatile and forward-thinking Hilux yet, one clearly designed for a very different automotive future.●



Find out more visit: **www.toyota.co.uk/**

Isuzu **D-Max**: **E**-volving

The Isuzu D-Max has always been about one thing: getting the job done. It doesn't chase trends, it doesn't overcomplicate things, and it doesn't pretend to be something it isn't.

But now, for the first time, it's evolving.

Alongside the familiar diesel model, Isuzu is preparing to introduce a fully electric D-Max, bringing zero-emissions capability to a truck that's built its reputation in some of the toughest working environments. And crucially, it's doing so without abandoning the core values that made the D-Max popular in the first place.

Function Over Form, Proven in the Field

The D-Max still looks and feels like a working vehicle first. Recent updates have sharpened the styling, but the fundamentals remain unchanged: a strong ladder-frame chassis, a properly usable load bed, and a design that expects to be used hard rather than polished.

This is a pick-up that earns its keep in real-world roles, such as towing and hauling equipment to remote job sites, and operating as part of utility fleets where reliability is non-negotiable. That's the environment it's built for, and it shows in every aspect of the design.

Cabin: Practical, Durable, Dependable

Inside, the D-Max sticks to a straightforward formula. There's modern infotainment and connectivity, but the emphasis remains on durability and ease of use.

Materials are hard-wearing, controls are simple, and the driving position offers excellent visibility, exactly what you want when you're spending long days in and out of the vehicle. It's not the most premium cabin in the segment, but it feels built for purpose.

Diesel Power: Simple, Proven, Effective

The existing diesel D-Max continues to rely on its 1.9-litre engine, delivering steady, predictable performance rather than headline figures. It's not the most powerful option in the class, but it's widely regarded as dependable and that matters more in this segment.

Capability remains exactly where it needs to be. With a 3.5-tonne towing capacity, around a tonne of payload, proper low-range four-wheel drive and strong off-road credentials, it's a vehicle that's designed to cope with demanding conditions without fuss.

The Electric D-Max: Same Job, Different Power

The big shift comes with the upcoming D-Max EV and what's striking is how little has changed in terms of its purpose.

Rather than reinventing the truck, Isuzu has focused on matching the diesel's core capabilities. The electric version uses a 66.9kWh battery and a dual-motor setup with full-time four-wheel drive, producing around 140kW and 325Nm.

More importantly for operators, the headline figures remain familiar:

- Around 1-tonne payload
- 3.5-tonne towing capacity
- Roughly 160-mile WLTP range

That's a crucial point. Unlike many early electric commercial vehicles, the D-Max EV isn't asking operators to compromise on capability—it's aiming to replicate it.

Real-world testing has already begun with utility companies, where engineers are using it in live working conditions to ensure it meets the demands of daily operations.

This kind of development suggests Isuzu understands exactly who this vehicle is for.

A Changing Role for Operators

The introduction of the EV version doesn't replace the diesel, it expands the D-Max's role.

For some operators, particularly those working in urban areas or under emissions regulations, the electric version could offer a practical alternative without sacrificing capability. For others, especially those operating in remote locations, the diesel will remain the more realistic option for now.

That dual approach feels deliberate. It allows the D-Max to move with the industry without leaving its core users behind.

The Trade-Offs Remain

The D-Max still isn't trying to be the most refined or luxurious pick-up on the market. The diesel engine can feel a little coarse, and the cabin doesn't have the polish of more premium rivals.

The EV version introduces new considerations too. range, charging infrastructure, and higher upfront cost will all play a role in how widely it's adopted.

But none of that changes the fundamental appeal.

The Isuzu D-Max continues to stand for reliability above all else—and now it's proving that approach can evolve.

The diesel model remains one of the most dependable, no-nonsense pick-ups available. And with the arrival of the electric version, Isuzu is showing that even a traditional workhorse can adapt to new demands without losing its identity.

For operators who value durability, simplicity and real-world capability, the D-Max still makes a strong case. And with an electric future now firmly in sight, it's a vehicle that looks set to stay relevant for years to come.●

Find out more visit: **www.isuzu.co.uk/**

KGM: Musso EV

The KGM Musso EV enters the market at a time when fleet operators are balancing the need to reduce emissions with the ongoing demand for practical, versatile vehicles. As one of the few fully electric pick-ups available, it represents a shift in how the segment is evolving, focusing less on outright capability and more on usability, efficiency and driver experience.

In terms of performance, the Musso EV offers a driving experience that differs significantly from traditional diesel pick-ups. The electric powertrain delivers smooth, immediate acceleration, making it particularly well-suited to urban and stop-start environments. With a quoted range of around 230 to 240 miles, it aligns with many day-to-day fleet requirements, especially where vehicles operate regionally or return to a central base for charging.

However, the Musso EV's capabilities reflect its positioning. With a payload of approximately 690kg and a towing capacity of up to 2.3 tonnes, it does not match the benchmarks set by diesel alternatives in the segment. For fleets that rely on maximum payload or regular heavy towing, this will remain a key consideration. That said, for operations where vehicles are not consistently used at full capacity, these figures may be sufficient.

Inside, the vehicle takes a more passenger-focused approach. The cabin features a modern design with dual digital displays and a layout more commonly associated with SUVs than traditional commercial vehicles. This results in greater comfort and refinement, which may appeal to fleets where driver experience and vehicle usability are important factors.

In everyday use, the Musso EV is designed to be straightforward and comfortable to operate. Its quiet, smooth performance makes it particularly suited to urban environments, while also reducing driver fatigue over longer periods behind the wheel. At the same time, it is not intended for more demanding applications such as heavy-duty work, challenging terrain or sustained towing.

From a fleet perspective, the Musso EV is likely to appeal to operators running mixed-use or urban-focused fleets, as well as those beginning to introduce electric vehicles into their pick-up line-up. It offers a practical option for businesses looking to reduce emissions while maintaining the flexibility of a pick-up format.

Overall, the Musso EV reflects a broader transition within the market. Rather than replicating the traditional diesel model, it introduces an alternative approach—one that prioritises efficiency, ease of use and everyday practicality. For some fleets, this will represent a logical next step; for others, it highlights that the move to electric in the pick-up sector is still evolving. ●

Find out more visit: **www.kgm-motors.co.uk/**

IVECO eSuperJolly Exterior

IVECO's Expanding **Electric Line-Up**

Following their debut at the Commercial Vehicle Show, IVECO's latest electric light commercial vehicles, the eJolly and eSuperJolly, mark a clear and confident step forward in the brand's zero-emission strategy. Rather than simply adding electric options for the sake of it, IVECO appears to be building a genuinely usable, flexible range designed around the varied demands of real-world operators.

Together with the established eDaily, these new models form a comprehensive electric lineup that spans everything from compact urban delivery to heavier-duty, high-capacity transport. It's a range that feels deliberately structured, offering distinct solutions rather than overlapping compromises..

eJolly, Compact Without Compromise

The eJolly enters the medium van segment with a strong emphasis on usability in urban environments. Its compact footprint and focus on manoeuvrability make it well suited to city-based operations, where tight streets and frequent stops are the norm.

Battery options of 49kWh and 75kWh deliver a claimed range of up to 271 miles (WLTP), while 100kW fast charging allows a 60-mile top-up in just 15 minutes. Those figures position it competitively within the segment, but it's the balance of size and payload that stands out most.

With a carrying capacity of up to 1,175kg and GVWs between 2.8 and 3.2 tonnes, the eJolly remains practical despite its compact design. It's a van that doesn't ask operators to sacrifice capability for efficiency, a crucial factor in day-to-day operations.

IVECO eSuperJolly Interior

eSuperJolly, Built for Bigger Demands

Sitting above the eJolly, the eSuperJolly is clearly aimed at operators with more demanding requirements. Its 110kWh battery offers up to 260 miles of range, supported by a 200kW motor that delivers the performance needed for heavier payloads and longer routes.

Cargo capacity of up to 17m^3 and payloads of up to 1.4 tonnes

make it particularly well suited to multi-drop delivery work, where both space and efficiency are essential. It also integrates with IVECO's digital platform, IVECO ON, giving fleet managers access to real-time data and operational insights.

The overall package feels well judged, combining strong range, solid payload capability, and modern connectivity in a way that aligns with the needs of larger fleets.

eDaily, A Familiar Workhorse, Electrified

The eDaily continues to anchor IVECO's electric offering, bringing zero-emission capability to heavy-duty applications. Built on the long-established Daily platform, it retains the versatility and robustness operators expect, while introducing a modular battery system that adds long-term flexibility.

With up to four battery packs and a maximum range of 248 miles, the eDaily can be configured to suit a wide range of roles. The ability to adapt battery capacity over time is a particularly forward-thinking feature, helping operators manage costs and extend vehicle usability.

Its class-leading ePTO, delivering up to 50kW of continuous power, further enhances its appeal for specialist applications, enabling efficient operation of auxiliary equipment directly from the vehicle.

A Connected, Supported Ecosystem

Across all three models, IVECO places strong emphasis on connectivity and support. The IVECO ON platform provides fleet managers with real-time vehicle data, while uptime monitoring tools are designed to minimise disruption through proactive maintenance.

Drivers benefit from the Easy App, which enables remote charging control and provides key information, including vehicle status and remaining range. Combined with IVECO's established dealer and service network, the overall ownership experience appears well thought out and commercially focused.

In Summary

IVECO's latest electric lineup doesn't just expand its offering; it strengthens it in meaningful ways. By clearly differentiating each model and focusing on practical capability, the brand avoids the pitfalls of a one-dimensional EV strategy.

From the agile eJolly to the more capable eSuperJolly and the highly adaptable eDaily, IVECO offers a range that is ready for real-world demands. It's a confident, well-rounded approach that suggests the company is not only committed to electrification but also increasingly adept at delivering it.●

IVECO eJolly Interior

IVECO eJolly Exterior

Find out more visit: **www.iveco.com/uk**

Kia strengthens PBV business with **expanded PV5 line-up** and approved Kia **PBV Conversion Partners**

Kia has reinforced its growing presence in the light commercial vehicle (LCV) sector at the 2026 Commercial Vehicle Show, unveiling an expanded PV5 range, new conversion partnerships, and enhanced customer support under its Platform Beyond Vehicle (PBV) strategy.

Expanded PV5 line-up

Kia introduced two new PV5 Cargo variants making their European debut: the L1/H1 and L2/H2. These additions broaden the existing line-up—now comprising L1/H1, L2/H1, and L2/H2—alongside Passenger and Chassis versions. The expanded range offers greater flexibility in cargo capacity and payload, enabling businesses to better match vehicles to operational needs.

Both new variants are built on Kia's E-GMP.S platform, designed specifically for electric light commercial vehicles (eLCVs), supporting modularity, durability, and integrated fleet management systems.

PV5 Cargo L1/H1:

Designed for urban logistics, this shorter variant (200mm shorter than L2) offers 4.0m^3 cargo space and up to 800kg payload. It includes 51.5kWh and 71.2kWh battery options, with a projected range of up to 400km (WLTP pending).

PV5 Cargo L2/H2:

Targeted at higher-volume transport, this model features a larger 5.2m^3 cargo capacity and increased height (1,815mm). It is equipped with a 71.2kWh battery and offers over 370km of range (WLTP pending), with payload estimated at 630kg.

Orders for the L1/H1 are expected to open in July with deliveries shortly after, while L2/H2 orders are planned for Q4 2026, with deliveries in early 2027.

MY27 Updates and Future Variants

Model-year 2027 updates for the PV5 Cargo improve comfort and usability, including:

- Standard driver lumbar support
- Adjustable armrest
- New composite bulkhead
- Reduced vehicle height (under 1.9m) for improved access
- Introduction of a three-seat configuration (initially on L2/H1)

Kia also confirmed upcoming Crew and Chassis variants, with Crew offering a flexible sliding bulkhead for passenger-to-cargo conversion.

Approved PBV Conversion Partners

Kia has announced its first group of UK-approved PBV conversion specialists, further enhancing the PV5's adaptability across a wide range of industries and operational requirements. These partners will deliver a broad spectrum of vehicle modifications, including racking systems, durable flooring, and enhanced security features, alongside lightweight tipper, dropside, and box body conversions.

Additional capabilities include refrigerated and dual-temperature solutions for temperature-sensitive transport, as well as bespoke racking configurations integrated with digital fleet management tools. Accessibility remains a key focus, with professionally engineered wheelchair-accessible vehicle (WAV) conversions also forming part of the offering.

Collectively, these conversion capabilities enable highly tailored vehicle solutions such as fridge vans, tippers, and specialist mobility vehicles, significantly broadening the PV5's appeal across logistics, construction, healthcare and public services,

Charging and Service Ecosystem

Kia is strengthening its end-to-end offering with preferred charging partners:

- Ohme for home charging
- Radius for depot and fleet charging

New support services include:

- Business Service Promise: £59/hour labour (+VAT) and 10% parts discount
- Enhanced SMR (Service, Maintenance, Repair) system: transparent cost planning tools
- PBV Service Plans: prepaid maintenance packages aligned with the PV5's two-year/20,000-mile service interval

Kia Rental and Fleet Accessibility

The PV5 is now available through Kia Rental, allowing businesses to hire vehicles from one day to over a month. This enables trial use before purchase or flexible short-term fleet expansion.

Market Momentum and Recognition

Kia's PBV strategy is gaining traction in the UK. In Q1 2026, PV5 Cargo and Passenger models achieved 1,604 registrations, placing Kia third in the zero-emission LCV market. The brand now operates a dedicated network of 65 PBV Centres across the UK.

The PV5 has also received significant industry recognition, including 2026 International Van of the Year and multiple UK *"Van of the Year"* awards.

Leadership perspective

Paul Philpott, President and CEO of Kia UK, emphasized the company's approach: delivering electric vans that integrate seamlessly into business operations, supported by predictable costs and tailored services.

Summary

Kia's 2026 CV Show presence highlights a maturing PBV strategy built around:

- Expanded electric van range
- Flexible conversion ecosystem
- Integrated charging and service solutions
- Growing market adoption

Together, these developments position Kia as a serious and fast-rising competitor in the rapidly electrifying commercial vehicle sector.●

Find out more visit: **www.kia.com/uk**

Brigade

Brigade Electronics Calls for **Safety-Led Implementation** of **GSR 2** in **UK Legislation**

Pictured: Emily Hardy, International Marketing and Regulations Manager, Brigade Electronics

Brigade Electronics, a global leader in commercial vehicle safety solutions, is urging the UK government to ensure that any implementation of General Safety Regulation 2 (GSR 2) strengthens, not compromises, the UK's position as a world leader in vehicle safety standards and protects UK industry.

The UK has long set the benchmark for best practice in commercial vehicle safety through initiatives such as Crossrail, FORS (Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme), and CLOCS (Construction Logistics and Community Safety). These schemes have been recognised worldwide, with CLOCS adopted as a mandatory framework for construction vehicles in New South Wales, Australia. The introduction of the Direct Vision Standard (DVS) in 2020 marked a global first in mandatory safety regulation and has been widely praised internationally.

Brigade warns that a wholesale adoption of European GSR 2 requirements, without adaptation to UK market strengths, risks undermining these achievements and could represent a step backwards in safety performance.

While fully supporting the ambition of zero fatalities on UK roads, Brigade highlights that OEM-led, factory-fit solutions can lag behind the pace of technological innovation. Vehicle development and production cycles often take years, meaning systems fitted at manufacture may already be outdated by the time vehicles enter service.

This was clearly demonstrated during Direct Vision Standard (DVS) Phase 2, where factory-fitted GSR-compliant systems permitted detection gaps of up to 0.9 metres along the vehicle side and 0.8 metres at the front; areas large enough to obscure vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists.

By contrast, Brigade's aftermarket solutions, including Radar Predict and Front Radar, provide full perimeter detection with no blind spots, offering enhanced safety performance and adaptability as technology evolves.

In light of this, Brigade supports the adoption of GSR 2 into UK legislation but strongly advocates that compliance should be required at the point of vehicle registration, rather than at initial manufacture. This would ensure that the most advanced safety technologies available at the time of deployment can be fitted, delivering the best possible outcomes for road safety.

"Mandating fitment at the factory level risks locking in older technologies and limiting the effectiveness of safety systems on UK roads," **said Emily Hardy, International Marketing and Regulations Manager, Brigade Electronics.**

Additionally, a registration-based approach would provide UK-based multi-stage vehicle builders and vehicle converters with type approval the opportunity to compete fairly in supplying and installing safety technologies. Mandating factory fitment risks shifting significant volumes of business to original equipment manufacturers based in Europe, impacting the UK economy and reducing competition and innovation among domestic component suppliers.

With the government consultation currently open, Brigade Electronics is urging policymakers to adopt a pragmatic, safety-led approach that encourages innovation, protects the UK's global leadership in vehicle safety, and supports a competitive domestic supply chain.●

Find out more visit: **https://brigade-electronics.com**

NRG Riverside Marks **30 Years** with **Focus on Growth** and **Innovation**

NRG Riverside is celebrating 30 years in business, marking a significant milestone in its evolution as a leading specialist fleet hire and fleet management provider in the UK.

The company, which now operates 17 depots nationwide, has continued to expand its footprint through strategic acquisitions, including TruckCare and Commercial Motors (Wales) Ltd. Today, it supports customers across complex, operationally demanding sectors with a growing national network and one of the largest specialist municipal fleets in the UK.

In 2025, NRG Riverside was named Contract Hire and Leasing Provider of the Year at the Motor Transport Awards, recognising the strength of its customer partnerships and operational performance.

CEO Darren Powell said the anniversary is not just a moment to reflect, but a platform for future growth.

"Reaching 30 years is an important milestone for the business," he said. *"What matters most is the strength of the platform we have built and the opportunity that lies ahead.*

"We are focused on scaling responsibly, continuing to innovate and supporting the essential services our customers deliver across the UK."

Backed by strong financial foundations, the business secured a £455 million refinancing in 2025, providing the capacity to continue investing in fleet, infrastructure and technology.

Chief Financial Officer Fran Reed said this positions the company for sustained long-term growth.

"Our financial resilience allows us to invest with confidence," he said. *"Over the last five years, we have invested more than £300 million in new vehicles, ensuring we continue to deliver reliability and performance for our customers while preparing for the future."*

NRG Riverside's growth strategy is closely aligned with evolving customer needs, particularly as fleet operations become more complex and increasingly shaped by regulation and sustainability requirements.

Chief Revenue Officer Amber Greenhalgh said customers are looking for more than just vehicles.

"Customers need partners who understand their operational challenges and can provide flexible, insight-led solutions," she said. *"Our investment in digital tools, telematics and data is helping customers improve efficiency, increase utilisation and plan ahead with greater confidence."*

The company currently operates a fleet of around 2,600 vehicles and has ambitions to double this over the next five years.

Long-standing customer relationships remain central to the business's success. Many partnerships span more than two decades, reflecting a consistent focus on service delivery and collaboration.

Chief Commercial Officer Russell Markstein said this approach continues to differentiate the business.

"It's those long-term partnerships, built on trust, that allow us to support customers across the country," he said. *"By working closely with them, we have been able to grow nationally while maintaining a reliable and consistent service."*

Alongside commercial growth, NRG Riverside continues to invest heavily in its operational capabilities. Its national depot network and IRTE-accredited workshops support high standards of compliance, reliability and vehicle uptime.

Chief Operating Officer Gary Wilson said operational excellence remains critical as the business scales.

"Our customers rely on us to keep essential services running," he said. *"Maintaining consistently high standards across every part of our operation is fundamental to what we do."*

The company's growth is underpinned by its people, with more than 350 colleagues across the UK.

Many employees have built long-term careers within the business, including seven who recently reached 25 years of service. The company also recognised one colleague who achieved an exceptional 50 years of service.

NRG Riverside has also been recognised as a Great Place to Work and, for the second consecutive year, ranked among the UK's top 100 large organisations.

As the fleet sector continues to evolve, the business remains focused on innovation, sustainability and long-term partnerships. Darren Powell added:

"We have built a strong business with the people, relationships and financial strength to continue investing in the future.

"While we are proud of what we have achieved over the past 30 years, our focus is firmly on what comes next."●

Find out more visit: **https://nrgriverside.com**

LKQ Euro Car Parts Partners with **SIXT Van & Truck** for New **UK-Wide Supply Agreement**

LKQ Euro Car Parts, the UK's leading distributor of automotive parts and consumables to the independent aftermarket, has signed a new multi-year partnership with SIXT van & truck to support the maintenance and uptime of its growing UK fleet.

SIXT van & truck provides light commercial vehicle rental solutions to businesses across the UK, with a focus on flexibility and exceptional service

Under the agreement, which runs until 2027, LKQ Euro Car Parts will supply the business' UK network with its full parts requirement for fleet servicing, maintenance and repair.

The partnership follows close collaboration between the two businesses throughout 2025, during which LKQ Euro Car Parts worked with SIXT van & truck teams to review key vehicle profiles and agree a fixed parts portfolio in partnership with leading brands including MANN+HUMMEL and Pagid, supporting consistent and efficient ordering across the network.

As part of the partnership, LKQ Euro Car Parts will also supply consumables and has worked with MPM to complete a full oil requirement review for SIXT van & truck's fleet, helping ensure the correct specifications are used across the vehicle parc.

LKQ Euro Car Parts will further support SIXT van & truck through its LKQ Academy training network, providing access to Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI)-accredited courses for technicians and managers, alongside tailored on-site training where required.

Kevan Wooden, CEO at LKQ UK & Ireland, said: *"This agreement is about keeping vehicles moving. By combining our UK-wide availability with a consistent parts portfolio and training support through LKQ Academy, we're helping SIXT van & truck drive reliability, reduce downtime and maintain high standards and excellent service across its network.*

"We share a focus on keeping customers on the road and delivering a consistent, exceptional experience. For us, this means ensuring the right parts are delivered faster and providing proactive support when it matters most, so that their teams can turn vehicles around quickly and their customers can get on with the job."

Jim Williams, Head of Operations at SIXT van and truck, said: *"LKQ Euro Car Parts has taken the time to understand how we operate and what 'good' looks like for our network. This partnership gives our teams confidence in the parts and support behind every job and helps us keep vehicles on the road and maintain the same high standards.*

"We're excited to build on what we've started with LKQ Euro Car Parts and explore opportunities with LKQ's specialist bodyshop and HGV businesses, and keep working together as our network and fleet continues to grow."●

FOR EV to Offer **Vehicle Salary Sacrifice Scheme**

FOR EV, a nationwide specialist in end-to-end fleet EV charging solutions, has partnered with fleet management provider Gofor to offer EV salary sacrifice schemes.

The partnership will enable FOR EV to offer salary sacrifice to its roster of fleet customers.

The announcement marks another milestone in the growth of the Edinburgh-headquartered companies. FOR EV was recently appointed to the UK Government's Crown Commercial Service (CCS) framework for Transport Technology, which helps UK public sector organisations find transport solutions, as part of the Government's commitment to helping decarbonise fleets.

Meanwhile, Gofor delivered strong 2025 results with a 27% uplift in new business acquisition, allied to a strategic expansion which saw it open its first England-based office.

Lindsay Yeoman, Head of Sales at FOR EV, said: *"Collaboration lies at the heart of good business, and at FOR EV we work closely with a variety of specialist partners to deliver bespoke EV charging solutions for public and private sector clients across the UK. By teaming up with our colleagues at Gofor, we can extend that service offering to our clients' employees, assisting UK drivers to adopt low- and zero-emission vehicles."*

Graham Lesslie, CEO at Gofor, added: *"We're delighted to partner with FOR EV to deliver meaningful employee benefits to its customers. Salary sacrifice is a major growth area and providing our expertise hand-in-hand with FOR EV will deliver its benefits to a wider audience."*

Electric vehicle salary sacrifice enables businesses to boost EV adoption beyond company car drivers and provides financial and employee retention and attraction benefits for both the company and its employees. It can also help companies meet their Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) objectives.●

AFP Targets **Small Fleet Managers**

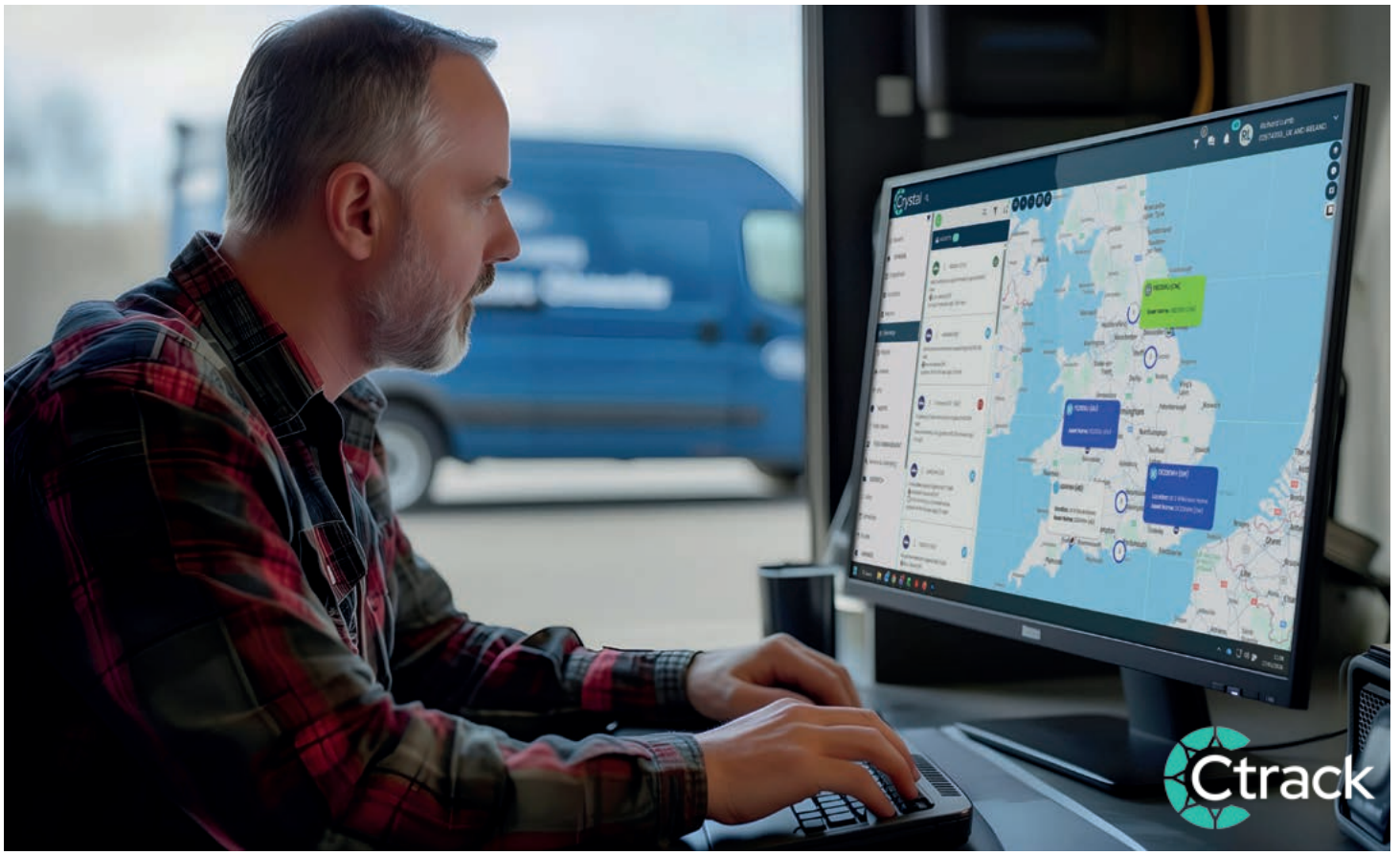
The Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP) has launched a recruitment drive to support managers of small fleets, especially those with fewer than 50 vehicles. It says its training and advice can have the greatest impact on these operators.

Many small fleets are managed by staff with limited experience, such as office or facilities managers. AFP chair Paul Hollick said the organisation provides vital support to improve safety, compliance, and costs.

The AFP struggles to reach these individuals, as they often don't identify as fleet professionals or engage with industry channels. It is urging others in the sector to spread awareness.

Membership starts at £99, with the AFP emphasising it is open to anyone managing a fleet, regardless of experience.●

More information can be found at: ***https://www.theafp.co.uk/membership***



Ctrack Brings **AI-Enhanced Software** Platform to the UK for **Intelligent Fleet** and **Asset Management**

Ctrack has launched its next-generation management platform, Crystal, in the UK as part of a global roll-out following the acquisition of Inseego's international telematics business last year.

The software brings together advanced telematics, artificial intelligence and predictive analytics into a single, modular solution, empowering fleet and asset operators with greater visibility, control and efficiency.

"Crystal transforms data into foresight, giving our customers the tools needed to act with confidence and precision," **explains Steve Thomas, Managing Director of Ctrack UK**. *"The platform delivers real-time insights across vehicles, equipment and people, helping businesses to improve safety, compliance and performance through an adaptable plug-in architecture."*

The platform's modular design allows businesses to scale their capabilities by adding plug-ins for advanced functionality including analytics, workflow automation, driver behaviour monitoring, operational planning and electronic proof of delivery. This flexibility ensures that Crystal is suitable for businesses of all sizes and can meet the needs of diverse industries including fleet, logistics, mining, agriculture, construction and public sector.

Crystal will also include a communication app designed to bridge the gap between the fleet manager and the driver, with advanced features that promise to deliver road safety, efficiency and productivity improvements. The multi-functional tool will provide a significant upgrade on Ctrack's previous mobile solution with a comprehensive range of configurable performance, compliance and operational functionality.

Hein Jordt, Chief Executive Officer of Ctrack commented: *"Crystal is the result of extensive product development and international collaboration across our operations in Africa, Europe, the Middle East and Australia. It is designed to give customers the power to predict and represents everything we have learnt over the past 40 years, providing a truly unified system where data, automation and intelligence come together to simplify fleet and asset management. The international roll-out marks a major step in our evolution as a global telematics leader."*

Ctrack was established in 1985 to develop tachograph technology and has grown into a global provider of intelligent mobility solutions. The launch of Crystal marks the next stage in this journey, positioning the company at the forefront of predictive data intelligence for fleet and asset management. As part of its global roll-out, Ctrack is also expanding infrastructure, partnerships and regional support networks to ensure consistent service quality and data security across markets.●

Find out more visit: **https://ctrack.com/**

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