ENABLING OUTSTANDING FLEET LEADERSHIP

FleetNews iQ

Quarter 2 • 2026

Leah Lindsey, MWH Treatment

SHOWING 'KINDNESS AND UNDERSTANDING' DOES NOT MEAN LOWERING STANDARDS

Power of persuasion
How to secure cross business buy-in for new initiatives

West vs East
Who wins when tradition meets disruption in the global EV race?

Richard Jones, Zenith
Award-winner puts customers at the heart of its strategy

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Welcome

In this edition of *Fleet News iQ*, we put the spotlight on arguably the most attention-grabbing topic in fleet – nay, in any business: salaries.

How much do you earn; how much should you earn; what are your peers earnings; what should your teams be earning?

Who doesn't want to know the answers?

Fleet News sought to find out. And not just for the watercooler tittle-tattle. The role of the fleet decision-maker has evolved dramatically; responsibilities have multiplied with a clear shift from operational to strategic.

But salaries have not kept pace, according to conversations we've had with fleets. And many people are at the point of burnout.

We partially tackled this when we looked at fleet team sizes in the 2025 Fleet200 Strategy Network report (our data coincided with an AFP survey which broadly echoed our findings), arming fleets with the proof they needed to make the case for additional resource based on their responsibilities, fleet size and asset types.

Now we add the financial insight, and not just salaries – included within our survey were details about benefits packages.

Not surprisingly, this has become our most popular survey, answered by more fleet professionals than any other.

We have results pertaining to fleet directors, heads of fleet, fleet managers, transport managers, fleet coordinators and fleet administrators.

In this edition, we have focused on headline figures and drilled into the fleet manager results.

However, if you would like to find out more – we can explore further by industry segment, gender, asset type and myriad other ways – drop me a line. I've already done this for one person hoping to secure a head of fleet position.

I hope you find the survey useful, as well as the rest of this edition of *Fleet News iQ*. Feedback, as always, welcomed, including ideas for more surveys and features.

Stephen Briers, group editor, *Fleet News*

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Contents

Privacy concerns leave Government wary of using tech to calculate new EV tax

Treasury urged to ensure fleet and leasing sector has telematics choice. *Gareth Roberts* reports

The Government is being encouraged to allow telematics to be used to calculate a new pence-per-mile tax on electric vehicles (EVs) from its launch.

Ministers have at present opted for the use of odometer readings, provided through annual estimates and manual checks, rather than technology to collect the new tax.

While being prepared to grasp the thorny issue of road pricing, which has been repeatedly dodged by previous administrations, the Government wants to avoid any 'big brother' label through the use of tracking, which, it says, invades the privacy of drivers.

However, Max Sugarman, chief executive at Intelligent Transport Systems UK, says the method of using manual odometer readings will present several challenges.

He believes it will be open to fraud, with the possibility of drivers or fleet operators falsifying odometer readings. He also says it is unfair to drivers covering mileage outside the UK, where they will still, effectively, incur the charge.

Furthermore, he has concerns about how it will impact the fleet and leasing sector.

Appearing at a policy briefing at the House of Commons, organised by the Campaign for Better Transport, Sugarman said: "An opt-in (telematics) option, where they can have better clarity of how many miles they've done, will be so much more helpful, particularly for taxi companies and businesses that drive a huge amount.

"Technology is, in my view, an absolute must... we should be making sure it is part of the scheme from the very beginning."

The new pay-per-mile tax for EVs, including plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs), was announced in the Autumn Budget.

TELEMATICS OPTION WANTED FROM DAY ONE

Zero-emission cars will attract a new charge of 3 pence per mile (ppm) in addition to existing road taxes from April 2028, with PHEVs being charged at 1.5ppm. Both ppm rates will then increase annually linked to the consumer price index (CPI).

Other vehicle types, such as vans, buses, motorcycles, coaches and HGVs, will be out of scope of the tax – electric vehicle excise duty (eVED) – at the point of introduction, but haven't been ruled out of subsequent updates.

Sugarman says that if you are a business that "doesn't want to do that estimate every year and get whacked with a big bill if you get it wrong", having an option, which is there for you to be able to calculate your mileage live, is "going to be pretty essential".

"I'm all for having different solutions for different people that they can choose, but I would say having that technology option from day one... can't be seen as a 'nice to have'."

Appearing alongside Sugarman, Tim Wray, sales director at Kapsch (UK and Ireland), told the policy briefing it was essential telematics technology is an option to calculate the amount of eVED to be paid.

Kapsch provides the back-office technology for London's congestion zone and ultra-low emission zone (ULEZ), as well as England's smart motorway system.

Wray explained: "The technology is established... this is all about building an understanding and acceptance across the general public, which will then give the politicians confidence to proceed."

PROTECTING MOTORISTS' PRIVACY A PRIORITY

While recognising that the large majority of EVs and PHEVs have in-built telematics, which monitor driving activities and are viewable by drivers, manufacturers and, in some cases, third-party providers, the Government says it will not mandate the use of telematics for administering eVED.

However, in its consultation on the implementation of the new tax, which closed in March, the Treasury said it welcomed views on how various types of technologies "could be used on an opt-in basis in future" to simplify the system, and reduce administrative burdens on motorists and businesses.

"Protecting motorists' privacy as part of eVED is a priority for the Government, so any potential technology-based solutions considered in future will only ever be optional," it added.

It also acknowledged that fleets and leasing companies may require special arrangements.

> "I would say having that technology option from day one... can't be seen as a 'nice to have'"
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DVLA, it said, is considering options to "minimise the administrative burdens of mileage estimation and payments" for these businesses, similar to under VED where bulk licensing options are available. It intends to engage with fleets and leasing companies on the design of these "special arrangements".

WRONG TAX AT THE WRONG TIME

The fleet and leasing sector has criticised eVED both in terms of timing and cost. In March, Toby Poston, chief executive of the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA), told the Transport Committee the pence-per-mile tax was being introduced in the "wrong way at the wrong time" and it would "damage the transition" to electric when the fleet sector is trying to accelerate it.

"If you are operating thousands of vehicles, these vehicles are typically less than three years old, so they never get an MOT," he told MPs.

"You lease them or rent them out, you do not see them, but you then have to go and get hold of the estimated mileages, reconcile them and get those mileages verified."

The BVRLA estimates that eVED could cost the UK fleet sector £260 million a year if introduced in 2028. The cost, based on BVRLA member data, includes £75m in direct administration costs and £185m in lost productivity from vehicles taken off the road for mileage checks.

It equates to approximately 10% of total revenues expected to be raised by the scheme, with some BVRLA members estimating that operational impacts will inflate the true cost to 40p-45p for every £1 collected.

The estimates exclude one-off implementation costs, the cost of mileage readings at approved centres and the tax itself.

Poston said: "Based on current fleet data, eVED would have cost rental, leasing and fleet operators around £185m in 2025 through a combination of administration and vehicle downtime. That rises to roughly £0.25 billion by 2028 as fleets grow.

"In return, the Treasury is expected to collect around £595m in eVED from the sector.

"This is not a marginal cost. It is a significant operational burden that ultimately feeds through to businesses and consumers who rely on these vehicles every day.

"It is an inefficient policy that adds unnecessary friction into a sector that is already investing heavily in decarbonisation."

Noting "constructive discussions" with the Treasury around the issues facing the sector, Poston told MPs: "You need to use technology."

DELAY TAX BY TWO YEARS

The Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP) is also concerned about Treasury plans for the new tax. It is calling on the Government to delay its introduction by two years, until 2030, to coincide with the UK ban on the sale of new internal combustion engined (ICE) cars.

Paul Hollick, chair at the AFP, said: "We strongly believe the Government should look at ways of delaying and simplifying this proposal while reducing the burden on fleet operators.

"The electric car market is still stabilising, and fleets remain negatively affected by residual value issues, zero emissions mandate volumes and charging difficulties."

He added: "We believe moving its implementation to 2030 better aligns with fleet cycles and avoids destabilising both the new and used markets."

> "Fleet operators want to see a simpler system less likely to impact on electric car adoption"
>
> **DALE EYNON, AFP**

He also cited a wide range of "largely unnecessary complexities" in the current proposals likely to generate huge amounts of administration work.

"They place a burden on drivers, fleet teams and leasing companies which seems disproportionate," he added.

The AFP's Government affairs and policy lead, Dale Eynon, says the Treasury's proposals require "rethinking at a fundamental level".

"Fleet operators want to see a simpler system less likely to impact on electric car adoption."

Adoption rates have increased for EVs, with figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) showing that the two millionth battery electric car was registered in April, following bumper growth of 59.1% compared with last year.

As a result, battery electric vehicles (BEVs) reached a 26.2% share of registrations in the month.

Year-to-date, BEVs comprise 23.1% of the overall new car market, significantly shy of the 33% required by the Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Mandate, despite billions in manufacturer discounts and the introduction of the electric car grant last year.

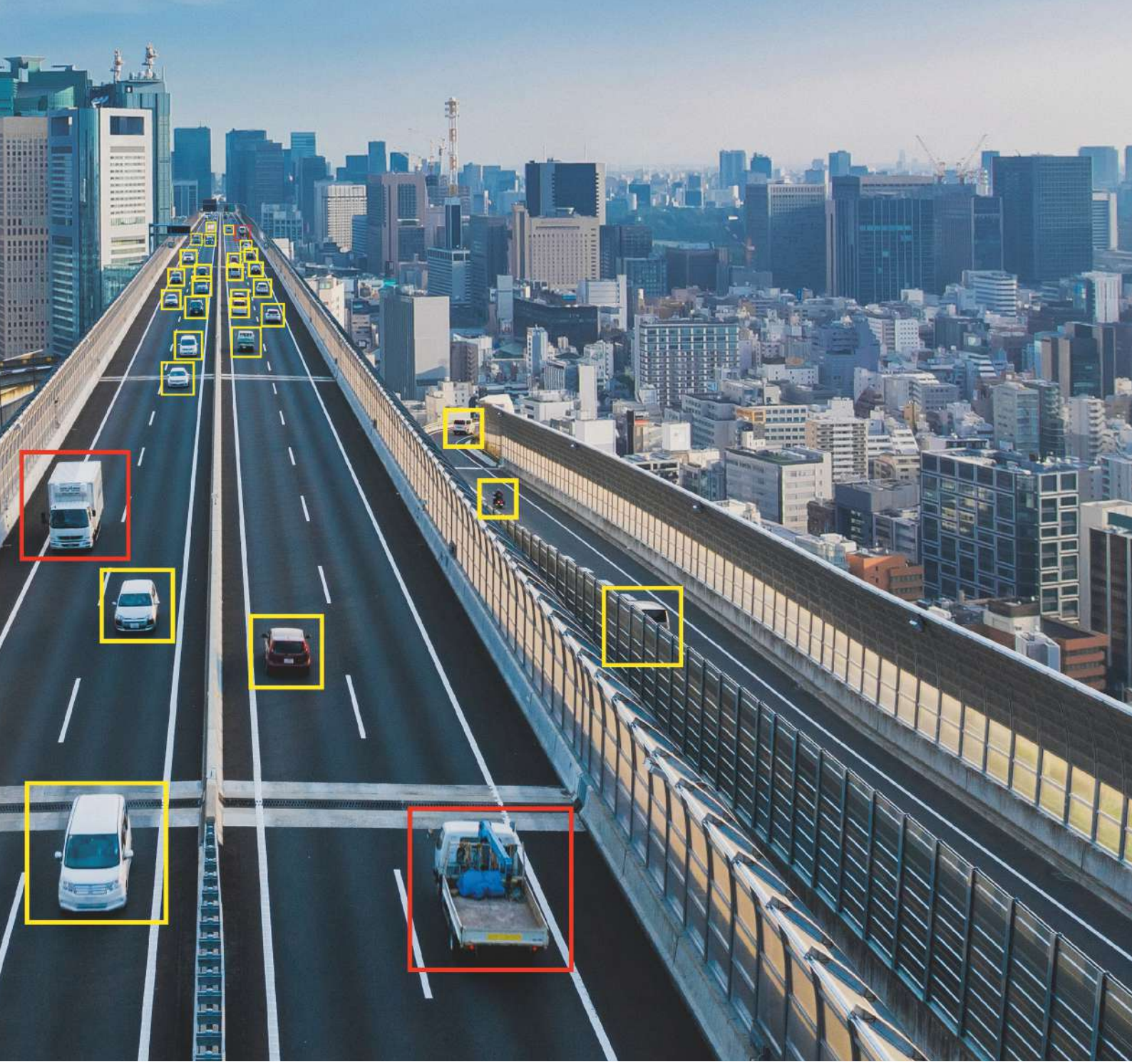
Matthew Walters, head of consultancy services at Ayvens, said: "A pay-per-mile levy introduces an additional layer of uncertainty at a point where the market is still finely balanced.

"It's not just the direct cost impact – although that is meaningful at scale – but the challenge it creates for long-term planning and budgeting.

"If that confidence is weakened, the risk isn't simply slower EV uptake, but delayed replacement cycles across the board, as fleet operators hold onto vehicles for longer.

"At a time when the market is still tracking below mandated targets, that feels like the wrong policy at the wrong time."

Richard Evans, sales director at Jaama, is concerned that at a point when fleets are still managing the cost and complexity of transition, any additional charge inevitably adds further pressure



to already stretched budgets. He explained: "Cost remains one of the key factors in EV decision-making, especially for operators still deciding how quickly they can switch."

Measures such as eVED may appear relatively modest in isolation, according to Evans, but they form part of a broader picture in which fleets are trying to plan with confidence over the long term and keep getting new challenges to contend with.

"There is also a practical concern around how future road taxation may evolve," he said. "Even if per-mile charging is introduced and increases over time, the wider tax gap is likely to remain significant, which raises understandable questions for fleets about whether further taxes or charges could follow. That kind of uncertainty can make planning very complicated.

"If the Government wants fleets to maintain momentum on EV adoption, the priority should be a clear, stable and supportive framework that gives operators confidence to keep investing."

FALLING FUEL REVENUES AND FUEL DUTY DILEMMA

Although the cash receipts remain relatively steady, fuel duty revenue as a percentage of GDP has been steadily decreasing due to both long-term freezes in duty rates and the transition to electric and hybrid vehicles.

The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) expects fuel duty receipts to remain relatively flat in 2025/26 and 2026/27, raising around £24 billion.

Receipts are then expected to increase by £2.2bn to £26.2bn in 2027/28, assuming the full reversal of the 5p cut and RPI uprating of the duty rate.

The Treasury estimates that fuel duty revenues are expected to be around £12bn per year by the 2030s, with around one-in-five car drivers paying no fuel duty at all, while other motorists will continue to contribute an average of £480 a year.

At the start of the previous decade (2010/11), the Treasury received £27.2bn in fuel duty receipts.

For each litre of petrol or diesel sold, the Government receives a standard flat rate of 52.95p, which has been frozen since 2011/12. It includes the temporary 5p cut originally introduced in 2022.

The Chancellor, Rachel Reeves, announced in the Autumn Budget that fuel duty would be frozen at its current rate until September 2026. It would then increase by 1p from September 1, 2026, 2p from December 1, 2026, and 2p from March 1, 2027.

However, with fleets and motorists facing record prices at the pumps because of the conflict in Iran, the Government announced in May that it would delay the planned increases again this year.

Further details are expected to be announced in the autumn.

The OBR recently calculated that freezing fuel duty rates, between 2011 and October 2024, has cost the Government around £120bn.

The fleet and leasing sector will have to wait for the Government's response to the eVED consultation to find out when and how the new tax will be implemented.

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Why fleet managers should embrace AI right now

By James Pestell, board director at the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP)

Interest among fleet managers in artificial intelligence (AI) is very high, but many are unsure about how to take the first steps in trying the technology. I've been using the type of everyday, generative AI widely available online for the past year or so within my job, and it has proven highly effective in creating new efficiencies.

For fleet managers who want to begin embracing its possibilities today, it offers significant potential.

How? These are some key areas where I have found it most effective and which newcomers to AI could try right now.

Cost reduction: AI allows to you explore possibilities much more rapidly and effectively than traditional methods. For example, upload a rate book and it can produce whole-life costs and calculations across a wide range of areas in a manner many steps on from a static spreadsheet. Much can result from simply asking questions and running through different scenarios. This makes research much easier – if you need a van with a particular payload or car with a minimum range, it can list the possibilities alongside their likely costs.

Identifying which vehicles need replacing: Working out which cars and vans that are over-contract or over-mileage to replace first is always difficult for fleet managers. Again, AI can help here. Simply upload your data – in this case, spreadsheets covering areas such as maintenance and repairs – and ask the AI a range of questions to guide you through the decision-making process.

Hire damage: Provide the AI with the data surrounding a hire recharge from your rental supplier alongside all the relevant policies and contracts, and ask whether the charge is reasonable and if there are grounds for rejection. It can prove surprisingly effective.

Driver communications: Yes, the AI writing style is arguably becoming too pervasive, but if you need to respond to an e-mail from a driver who is having back trouble in their car outlining potential solutions, it can produce good results and prove a highly effective time-saver.

Preventative maintenance: Fleet managers have complained for years that telematics generates more data than anyone has time to interrogate. Now, interfacing your telematics feed directly into AI has become an option, helping to bring about genuinely effective preventative maintenance.

> The (artificial intelligence) technology works better when you drill down into its responses

Of course, there are pitfalls to AI that need careful consideration. Some employ any data you upload to 'train' their models and this can be a minefield, especially if any of the information is potentially sensitive.

Ideally, you'll have access to a closed company AI but, at the very least, you should ensure you understand how your data may be used in the future.

Secondly, this is not a perfect technology, and you should sense check the results.

A good way to start is by asking limited questions and ensuring the output stands up to scrutiny.

For example, query which are the five vehicles on your fleet presenting the biggest cost problems now, then work through the responses to ensure you agree.

Lastly, you should rarely accept AI's first answer. The technology works better when you drill down into its responses.

Over time, you'll develop an understanding of how it works and this will enable you to better understand its potential.

Hopefully, this has given you a flavour for what can be achieved, but my advice is to start playing with an available AI and see how it responds when asked to help with some of the challenges you currently face.

Three types of AI relevant to fleet

- **Intelligent automation completes repetitive tasks and workflows using rules, triggers and, sometimes, AI-assisted decisioning.**
- **Predictive AI uses historical and real-time data to identify patterns, forecast outcomes and flag up risks before issues occur.**
- **Generative AI uses language, documents and data to summarise, draft, explain, search and recommend.**

Company Car & Van. Fleet Manufacturer of the Year Award 2026.
*WLTP Electric range (combined) 304 miles. This WLTP figure is shown for comparability purposes. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load.

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SHOWING 'KINDNESS AND UNDERSTANDING' DOES NOT MEAN LOWERING STANDARDS

Award-winning Leah Lindsay explains her fleet philosophy. *Stephen Briers* reports

Fleet starts with people. They are fundamental to a successful operation. That's the view of newly-crowned Fleet Manager of the Year Leah Lindsay, whose employer, MWH Treatment, was also named Fleet of the Year: 251-1,000 vehicles at this year's Fleet News Awards.

"Vehicles, policies and data are essential, but they only work when the people using them feel supported, listened to and respected," Lindsay tells me from across the table in the impressive boardroom of funding partner Holman (she keeps good company – Holman won Leasing Company of the Year up to 20,000 vehicles).

She adds: "Managing fleet with kindness and understanding does not mean lowering standards; it means creating an environment where drivers feel confident to engage, be honest and take responsibility."

This philosophy has underpinned a 20-year vocation in fleet management, one which only came about after Lindsay had a "complete wobble" about her original career aspirations.

"I left school to do sports therapy. And I hated it," she explains. "I was about to go into my third year, and I just had a complete wobble and thought, 'can't do this anymore. Don't like it. I need to find a new path'."

Instead, she took a part-time summer job processing orders for a company that supplied branded accessories to vehicle manufacturers and large fleets. It awakened a passion for cars which she'd harboured since a young age.

"I really thrived and I ended up being there for almost six years. And I became the top performing sales manager in the UK and Ireland," Lindsay says.

Working closely with clients who were managing major fleets opened her eyes to a new career opportunity, one which didn't go unnoticed by one attentive customer, water quality testing firm Hach UK.

"I got approached by one of my clients who was looking for a fleet manager for their small fleet of around 100 vehicles," she says.

"They were taking a leap of faith with me, but it was the chance to move away from the sales side into fleet management."

VANS OFFERED A NEW CHALLENGE

After nine successful years, during which her enthusiasm for fleet management grew ever stronger, Lindsay was ready for the next challenge. It arrived courtesy of another approach by a company in the water industry, this time MWH Treatment which was seeking a commercial fleet administrator.

Vans were a new experience. Lindsay reached into her contacts book for the fleet managers who were previously customers during her time in sales to help fast-track her initial education.

At the time, the fleet consisted of 100 vans and 250 company cars; it now stands at 180 vans and 520 cars, with the number of employees more than doubling from 800 to 1,700.

By 2030, the employee base is expected to double again, which will likely see the car fleet also double in size.

When Lindsay joined MWH Treatment, the fleet was managed by the admin team; it gave her the time and space to shape the van policy, leaning on her supply chain for support, supplemented by learnings she gained from fleet management training.

BRINGING OPERATIONS TOGETHER

After three years, she submitted a proposal to bring the car and van operations together under one fleet manager, a more senior leader than the existing car and LCV admin structure with greater autonomy to make key decisions. The role was duly signed off, and Lindsay was appointed in 2018.

> Dyslexia is not a weakness; it's simply something that shapes the way I think and work

One of her first moves was to recruit a senior fleet coordinator.

Four years later, her position expanded to incorporate employee benefits. In addition to pensions and private medical schemes, Lindsay also oversees the salary sacrifice scheme, supported by a member of the HR team.

Within two years of launch, it has grown to 60 cars including, most recently, a few used electric vehicles (EVs).

It has been far from plain sailing to get to this point in her career. Lindsay's biggest challenge has been coming to terms with her dyslexia.

For a long time, she didn't speak openly about it, too embarrassed and too affected by the stigma that followed her from primary school days when she was mocked and labelled 'thick'. Many people with dyslexia have suffered similar ordeals.

"Early on, this really affected my confidence, particularly environments where written communication, data accuracy and technical documentation played such a large part of the role," Lindsay says.

"I overcame it by learning that dyslexia is not a weakness; it's simply something that shapes the way I think and work. It has strengthened my problem-solving skills, attention to detail, resilience and determination.

"I've got a good organisational brain. I come up with great solutions, but I find it difficult to sit down and write a process.

"So, I developed practical strategies to manage tasks effectively, focusing on delivery and outcomes rather than perfection on paper."

Her senior fleet coordinator, Paul Hatfield, plays a crucial role: "Paul's brilliant at the data. He's brilliant at putting things together and doing processes.

"So, we laugh, 'I have the good ideas, you go and implement them'."

She adds: "This certainly isn't a 'woe me' story; it's about empowering other people. At first, I hid it, now I want people to be proud and learn from their skills not their perceived weaknesses."

Lindsay expresses her own pride, as well as promoting awareness, with an email signature that includes the eye-catching line: '#MadeByDyslexia Expect tiny typos & big ideas'.

"It's for people who read an email and think, 'this woman can't spell'. They read that and say, 'oh, I understand, she's just got dyslexia'," she says. "I've had many people message me and say, 'that's brilliant, can I use it?'."

EMPATHY AND PATIENCE

Lindsay's experiences have amplified her empathy and patience shaping the people-first leadership style which today underpins how she manages the fleet and supports colleagues across the business.

She explains: "My focus has always been on ensuring the fleet is safe, efficient, sustainable and ready to support both our operational demands and our people.

"A great fleet manager must balance operational efficiency, safety and cost control with empathy and clear communication.

"Fleet decisions directly impact employees' daily working lives, often in demanding and high-risk environments. Understanding these pressures allows us to make decisions that support both compliance and wellbeing."

In Lindsay's experience, treating drivers fairly and with compassion greatly increases their buy-in to safety initiatives, policy compliance and cultural change. It's management with empathy and kindness, not a big stick.

She adds: "To be effective, we must be visible, approachable and credible, able to explain the 'why' behind decisions while being open to feedback. This improves operational outcomes and strengthens engagement and accountability."

During her time at MWH, this approach has helped to smooth the way when policy change was inevitable.

Six years ago, for example, MWH moved its cars from contract hire to finance lease, in the process becoming the first UK fleet to sign up to Holman's newly-launched funding proposition.

It was, Lindsay acknowledges, a big step for the business, which had historically relied on the certainty of fixed monthly expenditure on a 'with maintenance' leasing agreement.

For her, though, the all-inclusive package was "frustrating", mainly because it didn't give the lifecycle control she desired.

"We were also paying for maintenance without visibility of what those costs were," she adds.

TRANSPARENCY AND FLEXIBILITY

Finance lease offered transparency and flexibility, avoiding excess mileage, damage recharges and early termination penalties, while retaining control over costs.

Contracts are written over four years, but are routinely extended to protect residual values (RVs) and ensure operational continuity.

Decisions are driven by data and market conditions using Holman's retain/replace tool.

With 78% of the car fleet full electric and another 20% plug-in hybrid, a sizeable proportion are, unsurprisingly, being extended by up to a year, with Holman's tool forecasting a future uplift in RVs.

Most drivers have been happy to extend, with Lindsay providing clear reasoning behind the decisions. An added bonus to retaining the car for another year is MWH's 25% trade-up policy, which expires after four years.

Consequently, the employee gets to keep their car, but no longer pays the additional monthly trade-up sum in that fifth year.

The transition to electric has occurred at pace over the past four years. Drivers receive regular communications about the taxation burden of petrol versus electric, and the imminent rise for PHEVs, to keep them fully informed about future costs.

Lindsay set up driver-led fireside chats, where existing EV owners speak about their real-world experiences to those yet to make the switch, as well as providing access to demonstrators from manufacturer partners.

Through persuasion and encouragement rather than mandating, MWH is rapidly approaching the complete decarbonisation of its car fleet. The deadline set by the board is net carbon zero by 2030 for both cars and vans.

Since moving to finance lease, MWH has been able to reinvest back into the business from sales profits as well as savings made by refunding assets with reduced mileage or extended months.

Concurrently, streamlined maintenance workflows and vehicle reallocations have reduced average off-road time from 4.7 to 0.9 days, adding 2,280 extra vehicle days per year and saving MWH more than £1 million.

Although the residuals downturn is having an impact on total cost of ownership (TCO), the finance leased policy is still cost-positive, thanks to strong returns on plug-in hybrid cars.

"We do a monthly RV report with Holman, and we can see their forecasts from 12 months ago to today – they are very accurate," Lindsay says.

"They also manage the de-fleet process through auction for a set management fee per vehicle. Essentially, we get the same service (as full maintenance lease) but paid for differently.

"It's a vital relationship, because we are a small internal fleet team."

Other savings came from switching to pay-as-you-go maintenance, which instantly reduced TCO by 20%. Six years on, MWH continues to use 'with maintenance' leasing as a benchmark comparison on its finance lease TCO calculations to monitor the difference.

> To be effective, we must be visible, approachable and credible, able to explain the 'why' behind decisions

Even before she switched the car fleet funding model in 2020, Lindsay had moved MWH's commercial vehicles away from contract hire. Her preferred option here is flexi-rent, via Enterprise.

"It works for us from a cost perspective because of the nature of our business," Lindsay explains. "When I joined, we had vans sitting doing nothing. It also means we can get vehicles at very short notice."

She adds: "In the main, our vans have standard racking with Chapter 8 beacons and livery – they aren't complex."

NEAR FULL UTILISATION

Although flexi-rent is more expensive than contract hire, MWH saves money by operating closer to 100% utilisation, therefore requiring fewer vans.

Just two of the 180 vans are electric; one of Lindsay's big projects this year is to plot the vehicles which can most easily switch using telematics data. She also recognises the need to reconsider funding options.

While the average annual mileage of 10,000-15,000 brings much of the fleet into scope of electric, all vans are return to home overnight which presents some charging complications.

However, many of MWH's water utility clients have chargers on their sites which drivers can use. Public charging will also play its part, particularly for those without the capacity to install a home charger.

"We will need to change the mentality of drivers to plan their trips by looking for the cheapest charge points if they are travelling far."

Nowhere has Lindsay's style of people-first leadership borne greater dividends – indeed had a probable life-changing impact – than when it came to the implementation of a new risk management policy a year ago.

Built around Holman's RiskMaster programme, the initiative saw MWH introduce a new driver training programme and begin proactively feeding in risk data, incident history, telematics information (via a monthly traffic light report highlighting speeding, harsh cornering, harsh breaking, acceleration, excess idling) and licence checks to identify the high-risk drivers.

A company director was the first to undertake the on-road training, setting the example that helped to engage the rest of the workforce.

"We stressed in the comms that we were doing it for their wellbeing, not to meet company targets," Lindsay says. "They understood this and it quickly got them on board."

All high risk drivers, as well as anybody that has had a licence for less than two years and those aged under 25, do the on-road training, whether ⊃

part of the company fleet or grey fleet. All drivers are treated the same.

In addition, the eLearning training was expanded to 14 modules and tailored to the type of vehicle and powertrain being driven by the employee.

Of the 1,300 drivers on the RiskMaster portal, just 13 are high risk. Another 21 are medium risk. Essentially, 97% of MWH drivers are classed as low risk.

MWH was already heading in the right direction before the new policy; over the past four years, its incident rate has halved. This year, it was rewarded with its first ever premium reduction.

Again, the human element played a fundamental role in tackling the problem, but this time reinforced with the introduction of a 50% charge back on the excess to make the drivers more accountable.

Lindsay explains: "We started to look at the reasons why we were having those accidents: the occurrences, who was having them. We'd interview the driver to find out the causes and send them on the driver training."

Post-incident interviews are carried out by Lindsay or the line manager and enable MWH to get to the root cause, which can go beyond the business reasons and into their personal lives. The consequences can be lifesaving.

"You don't know what's going on behind closed doors. People getting behind the wheel can have so much going on in their life and being able to identify that is really important," Lindsay says. "One time, I recognised somebody who was struggling with their mental health through those interviews. They could have caused some serious harm. But, because we recognised that through a couple of small, silly mistakes they had made, we prevented it from turning into something major."

Effectively managing 700 vehicles with a team of two has its challenges, not least in limiting the amount of time Lindsay has to focus on strategy over the day-to-day operational demands of the fleet. This is where the power of strong supplier partnerships plays a vital role.

A good account manager, Lindsay says, is an essential ingredient for success – but this doesn't simply happen by chance; it's nurtured.

"When I have changes in a supplier or account manager, it's important to start building that relationship from the outset, getting them in to learn your business and your style of working," she explains.

> I don't think I've ever had a day where I've been bored in the whole of my fleet career

Weekly meetings will identify any early issues, with progress tracked and measured. When the relationship becomes more established, Lindsay moves to monthly meetings.

"We give honest feedback which goes both ways," she says. "Being able to have an open conversation is key to any supply relationship."

Two decades into her fleet career, does she ever regret the decision to leave her successful sales career behind? Lindsay's answer is an unequivocal 'no'.

"I don't think I've ever had a day where I've been bored in the whole of my fleet career," she says.

"We're constantly on the go, constantly learning new things, and I think that's exciting."

Company: MWH Treatment
Fleet & employee benefits manager: Leah Lindsay
Time in current role: 7.5 years (11 years at MWH)
Fleet size: 700 – 520 cars, 180 vans
Funding method: cars – finance lease; vans – flexi-hire
Operating cycle: Cars – four years
Key partners: Holman, Enterprise

Leah Lindsay, fleet & employee benefits manager, MWH Treatment (centre), collected the trophy from Calum James, general manager at award sponsors Farizon Auto UK. They were joined by event host comedian Katherine Ryan

Giving a voice to women in fleet

Leah Lindsay is a founding member of the Empowering Women in Fleet (eWIF) initiative, launched by *Fleet News* last year. She was also one of the first to undertake the Association of Fleet Professionals' (AFP's) Women's Voices in Fleet training.

She is particularly proud and passionate about both.

"It's a challenge to build credibility and confidence in a traditionally male-dominated industry. Early in my career, I did feel quite isolated," she says. "I also had limited visible role models and no support networks for women in fleet.

"When I saw the Women's Voices course, I was really apprehensive, but I thought to myself, 'you need to step out your comfort zone'.

"I walked in the room and said to (course tutor) Kerri (Hollick), 'just to let you know that I've got dyslexia. Please do not ask me to write'. First thing she did? 'Leah, can you just come up here!'

"Honestly, it was best thing she could've done. One of the things that she would always say was 'what's the worst that can happen? If you make a mistake, it's worse in your head than it is in anybody else's'. And she's right. Each day I went away feeling a little bit more confident."

The defining moment came towards the end of the course when everyone had to write down what they thought about each other's reading style and how they presented. "I sat in the hotel bed that night, read all the cards and cried," Lindsay says. "I thought 'why can't I see this in myself? These people aren't lying'. It was a turning point for me."

Despite her new self-assurance, she was still nervous when approached about joining the eWIF board.

"Even though I've been doing this job a long time, you never think you're as good as somebody else. You've always got that negativity in your mind," she says.

"But when we had our first meeting, I came away feeling delighted – all these women in the room, they're all in the same position as me.

"It has had a profound impact on my confidence and sense of belonging within the fleet industry.

"It is an amazing supportive platform where real experiences are shared openly and where challenges such as imposter syndrome are acknowledged rather than overlooked.

"EWIF reinforces the importance of representation, mentorship and encouraging women at all stages of their careers to step forward, speak up and believe in their value."

To join Empowering Women in Fleet, head to www.fleetnews.co.uk/empowering-women-in-fleet.

EV residual values find their footing as petrol depreciation accelerates

By Philip Nothard, insight director at Cox Automotive Europe

In our previous contribution to *Fleet News iQ* (June 2025), we expressed cautious optimism that the following 12 months might see electric vehicle (EV) residual values (RVs) begin to stabilise.

We're pleased to report that one year on, this optimism has converted to confidence, as EVs are performing much more consistently than their petrol and diesel peers.

Looking at depreciation trends over time, it is easy to become absorbed in the overall decline during the past five years.

Used values have dropped since the pandemic-era highs, which saw cars less than 12 months old selling at more than 90% of original cost new in some cases.

However, rather than a negative signal, this may point to market correction as we return to more stable depreciation rates.

Looking at the earliest data available pre-pandemic, between January and March 2020, vehicles less than a year old were selling for an average of 65% of original cost new, the same as the current average for the same period in 2026.

While many factors still exert pressure on the rate of depreciation, the speed at which values have declined has begun to slow.

Comparing year-on-year RV data for cars between one and two years old from March 2023 to March 2026, the most rapid pace of depreciation was seen between 2023 and 2024, with double-digit declines on average across all fuel types. Values then held firm between 2024 and 2025.

For cars between two and four years old, we have seen slightly less drastic drops, but petrol models have still declined by 6% year-on-year.

> The data (for EV fleets) offers a more encouraging picture than the broader narrative might suggest

Sharp petrol drops

While the overall rate of depreciation is slowing, we are still seeing some sharp drops in the nearly new petrol market, while electric values are significantly more stable by comparison.

Values for petrol vehicles less than 12 months old dropped to the lowest level seen since the start of 2022 in December, at 62% of original cost new, down 12 percentage points from the beginning of the year.

While they recovered in January and February 2026 (to 71% and 77% respectively), we have seen another sharp drop to 57% in April.

A combination of weakened demand and oversupply has driven this decline, particularly as high volumes of petrol stock from leasing and rental companies continue to enter the used market.

Electric vehicles continue to trend lower than petrol and diesel in absolute terms, sitting at 49% of original cost new in March 2026, but their performance has remained largely consistent year-on-year. EVs less than 12 months old declined by just 5% between 2025 and 2026, and 6% between this January and March.

Vehicles in the 12-to-24-month bracket have shown even greater stability, with only a 2% movement year-on-year over the same period.

The table below illustrates percentage point differences between vehicles from April to April the previous year.

This pattern has meaningful implications for RV assumptions and end-of-contract risk. The volatility in petrol values, particularly in the sub-12-month bracket, reflects the structural over-supply challenge now facing the market.

For those managing EV fleets, the data offers a more encouraging picture than the broader narrative might suggest.

Values are settling into a more predictable range, and with the most turbulent period of EV depreciation now likely behind us, the conditions for informed residual value forecasting are improving.

However, while this stability should be welcomed, it should not be taken for granted. Oversupply risk remains a live concern, particularly as growing volumes of competitively priced Chinese-manufactured EVs enter the market and push down new car pricing.

The challenge now is to build on this foundation while remaining alert to the external pressures, geopolitical, regulatory and competitive, that continue to shape the market.

	Cars less than 12 months old				Cars 12-24 months old			
	2025-6	2024-5	2023-4	2022-3	2025-6	2024-5	2023-4	2022-3
Diesel	-7%	-10%	-3%	3%	-5%	-2%	-9%	-2%
Electric	-5%	6%	-22%	-18%	-2%	-2%	-10%	-18%
Hybrid	-7%	-8%	-7%	-1%	-6%	-1%	-14%	3%
Petrol	-14%	-5%	-13%	4%	-15%	-2%	-10%	-2%

Is your salary sacrifice scheme built to last?

Sohrob Aslanbeigi of Fleet Operations explains what employers should look for in a salary sacrifice car scheme.

Is salary sacrifice still a strong proposition for fleets?

Yes, but the market has moved on. In the early days of EV adoption, very low Benefit-in-Kind rates meant the business case for salary sacrifice almost wrote itself.

With BiK now at 4% for fully electric vehicles in 2026/27, and rising incrementally to 9% by 2029/30, schemes need to work harder.

The fundamentals remain compelling – significant National Insurance savings for employers, income tax and NI relief for employees, and a powerful tool for talent attraction. The schemes that deliver real value, however, are those built on strong foundations, not just favourable incentives.

Where do fleets most commonly go wrong?

One of the most common issues is relying on a single funding source. No single leasing provider consistently offers the best price across every make and model, and cost differences between providers can be considerable.

Schemes built around one funding source can be more exposed to price creep over time, with limited leverage to keep costs competitive.

Fleet Operations' SalAd scheme takes a multi-bid approach, comparing quotes from multiple lenders so each vehicle can be priced more competitively. This can generate meaningful savings.

More competitive pricing also has a practical knock-on effect. More employees are likely to pass affordability checks, including National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage thresholds, broadening scheme access across the workforce.

How important is scheme flexibility?

Finance, HR and procurement teams are all scrutinising salary sacrifice in ways they simply were not three or four years ago. A rigid, one-size-fits-all scheme can struggle to hold up under that scrutiny.

SalAd is modular, meaning organisations can configure the scheme around their own policies, risk appetite and employee population, rather than adapting their business to fit a provider's template. That might mean adjusting eligibility rules, tailoring the vehicle choice list or controlling how cost changes are communicated.

Flexibility is no longer just a nice-to-have, it's becoming central to good scheme governance.

Does better scheme design mean more administration?

It shouldn't. One of the strongest arguments for investing in the right scheme is the ability to reduce manual intervention.

SalAd, for example, automates key processes, from eligibility checking and quote generation through to order management and payroll integration, helping to remove bottlenecks, speed up processing and reduce the risk of errors.

For fleet managers already stretched across multiple priorities, this is important. A well-designed scheme should make salary sacrifice easier to manage, not harder.

What distinguishes a scheme that works from one that doesn't?

Start by asking whether your scheme is still competitively priced, flexible enough for your business and easy to manage day to day.

If any of these questions are difficult to answer, it's worth taking a closer look. A strong scheme should align with an organisation's goals, evolve, and remain competitive and easy to manage. It should be shaped around the business, rather than forcing the business itself to adapt.

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How to win buy-in for fleet initiatives

Gaining organisation-wide support for a proposal is vital for its success, but messaging for different stakeholders needs to be tailored for maximum impact. *Andrew Ryan* reports

Getting buy-in from the stakeholders throughout an organisation is essential to the success of any new fleet initiative. Support from the boardroom is key to unlocking investment and organisational changes, line managers need to embrace it so it is implemented and enforced correctly, while drivers, ultimately, have the power over whether an initiative fails or succeeds.

However, this diverse range of stakeholders all have different priorities, indicating that the messaging needs to be tailored for each audience.

Directors, for example, may be most interested in the company's corporate strategies or its bottom line. Line managers may be focused on fulfilling operational requirements. Drivers may not be keen on anything that changes their working days or provides extra scrutiny on what they do behind the wheel.

Here, we look at how fleet decision-makers can win buy-in for initiatives by effectively getting their message across to different stakeholders within their organisation.

WINNING BOARDROOM BUY-IN

Gaining boardroom buy-in is essential to the success of any fleet initiative: if it doesn't receive the support of directors, then even a ground-breaking idea will not be introduced.

This is not only because the board will need to approve necessary funding, but their backing can promote the acceptance of the proposal throughout the organisation.

An important first step a fleet decision-maker should take before presenting a proposal to the board is to ensure the initiative aligns with their employer's corporate strategy.

"More often than not an organisation will make commitments on its website about sustainability or safety and it's a very powerful tactic to link back your argument to those statements," says Tony Greenidge, head of risk management at Fleet Operations.

"Often I will say to a board 'I recognise you've got this commitment, here's how we can help you achieve that'. Usually it puts them on the back foot a little bit because it becomes hard for them to say they didn't really mean it."

Aligning a proposal with a corporate commitment also means the fleet decision-maker can identify any key data or metrics that are really impactful to both the organisation and the proposal.

For example, these could include cost savings, efficiency improvements, safety metrics and return on investment.

While presenting the proposal, fleet decision-makers should give clear and impactful numbers on how the initiative would bring money back to the organisation. On safety initiatives, for example, it could be through reduced accident repair costs and/or lower insurance premiums.

How a proposal will impact customer satisfaction may also be relevant as many initiatives will improve the service an organisation delivers, such as more reliable appointment times.

"It's important to remember who the audience is," says Richard Guy, fleet and plant director at Amey Group.

"As fleet people, we love a bit of detail; boards don't. When we're presenting to the board they just really want to know how much, what's the risk and how's it going to help grow the business.

"So, for things like how much, don't just focus on the initial cost. Think of the longer-term benefits and how your investment is going to help shape the business for the future."

He adds he was told once that if you think training is expensive, try the cost of failure. "So it's really going in with that mindset," says Guy.

"If there is a risk, be factored on the type and extent of the risk and how that's going to affect the business.

"But importantly, how is your investment going to help make the business grow? And that's not a binary thing, that if I invest in this, I'm going to win some more business.

"It could be something like it could help with reporting on compliance or your environmental, social and governance (ESG) commitments, improving your safety record, and all of those bits are going to help position the business in a better place when you're bidding for new work.

"It's not just about that initial thing. It's thinking bigger than fleet and how your investment can help shape the future of the business."

Successful messaging can also depend on the nature of the organisation. For example, NHS England has committed to decarbonising its entire fleet and this is a driving force behind South Central Ambulance Service's (SCAS) transition to electric vehicles (EVs).

"We've got that backing behind us, but as individual trusts we have to be mindful of the financial costs," says Jonathan Guppy, head of sustainability at SCAS.

"Getting the buy-in from the director of finance has been absolutely essential and we've been able to use data that demonstrates the total cost of ownership (TCO) is less than it would be for equivalent internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles."

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The cost model involves SCAS installing its own charge points which, over time, will be much cheaper to use than relying on the public network, while other savings include reduced vehicle off-road (VOR) time.

"Another consideration which really helped bring the initiative close to home was the impact on air pollution," says Guppy.

"Because we operate quite a large fleet, we're actually a significant polluter if we operate diesel ambulances. The vehicles are at their most polluting when they're idling, so when they're parked outside the acute or emergency departments with their engines on, that is when patients are literally at their most vulnerable.

"That's a strong narrative and it makes people really pause and reflect."

How the proposal is presented to the board can also make a difference. Board members may not be fleet experts, so the proposal should be in a format which is easy to understand.

It should be factual, it should attempt to not leave any area open which can be challenged, although the fleet manager should be prepared for potential questions.

One leading fleet decision-maker put together a proposal to replace multiple telematics providers with a single supplier and sent a short video explaining the initiative to board members ahead of a meeting.

"I said they should watch the video before they went into the room," says the fleet manager. "Within 20 seconds it was approved."

Taking advantage of informal settings can also help a fleet decision-maker get their ideas across.

"One of my most key moments came completely by accident," says Sarah Wellstead, senior fleet co-ordinator at engineering consultants Hoare Lea. "I happened to be on the train opposite our CEO and we were just having a chat.

"I was able to pretty much pitch what we were working on, but in an informal setting, so he really understood it. That was great, getting buy-in right from the top."

> "We actually saved somebody's life through an interview I carried out"
>
> **LEAH LINDSAY, MWH TREATMENT**

Buy-in from the board can also drive uptake and engagement in new initiatives.

This may involve board members leading by example with, say, managing directors being among the first employees to undergo driver training as part of a new risk management programme, or having telematics fitted to their vehicles.

At United Utilities, chief operating officer Matt Hemmings has embraced its risk management strategy and makes the fleet operation a core part of his regular email newsletters to employees.

"The driver safety score forms part of his email every week to line managers and almost every employee," says Carl Doyle, fleet strategy and sustainability manager at United Utilities.

"Because the message comes from the top, people know it's core to the business and part of what is expected of you. It makes sure the message is not just a sound bite that gets put over and forgotten. It's pushed every week continually."

PERSUADING LINE MANAGERS

It is one of the characteristics of being a fleet decision-maker that, although they are responsible for the vehicles provided to employees, they are not necessarily responsible for the people who drive them.

Instead, this is usually down to line managers whose operational priorities are other than those of the fleet.

"Driving through change can often be difficult when you get to line manager level," says Greenidge.

"That level is under severe pressure to optimise the people in their team, and there's often an argument from them to say 'yeah, we believe in that, but not today because we're really busy and I can't afford to let Johnny have a slightly easier afternoon because I've got clients screaming at me saying they want this and that done'."

Because of this, it is important to highlight to those line managers how a fleet initiative will benefit them.

For example, it could be showing how tools such as telematics make their job easier, while driver training will minimise disruption to operations by reducing VOR time and improving the safety of their employees.

Leah Lindsay, fleet and employee benefits manager at MWH Treatment, used to carry out post-collision interviews with drivers to understand the reasons behind a crash, but was able to pass this responsibility on to line managers after explaining the benefits of these chats to the wider company.

"We actually saved somebody's life through an interview I carried out and that will always stick with me," says Lindsay.

"I used that experience to get the line managers on board. I asked them 'do you know how important just having this small 20-minute conversation with somebody is?'.

"It's not about sitting there telling the driver

they're in trouble. You ask if there is something wrong or if we can help with anything.

"I sold it to the line managers as being a real advantage to them. It can help them because they might have someone in their team who is not engaged because there's something underlying going on and that is why they are driving badly.

"It's an opportunity to have that conversation, and that's how I got them on board."

Another possible solution to win buy-in for fleet initiatives could be to build driver behaviour scores into their bonus structure.

"That would have a dramatic effect," says Chris Sayers, director of property and assets at property services contractors Bell Global.

DELIVERING DRIVER ACCEPTANCE

Drivers are the final piece of the jigsaw. Fleet decision-makers should engage early and transparently with them (including unions where applicable), keeping them informed before changes happen, especially with often-contentious initiatives such as installing in-cab cameras.

"Drivers need to know 'how does this impact me? What's in it for me?'," says Lesley Slater, chief commercial officer at Athlon UK.

"Sometimes it's not obvious to a driver what the benefit of new initiatives are to them. You've really got to build the story and the positioning, so they see these initiatives are not aimed at make their lives more difficult or giving them extra things to do, but they are actually going to make them safer or happier. It's about communicating that in as clear a way as possible."

For example, MJ Quinn has been able to implement cameras with no pushback after clearly explaining their benefits.

"As we onboard drivers, we communicate our use of telematics and cameras straight away and say 'it's there to support you; it's there to protect both you and the business'," says Kerry Teesdale, head of fleet at the national telecoms infrastructure specialist.

"I could be working in the office and there's a camera there watching me. It doesn't matter to me because I'm doing my job; we tell the drivers that provided they are staying legal and compliant there is nothing to worry about and it's proven to be so.

"We also quote instances of how the cameras can protect them. For example, there was an allegation that one of our drivers had hit someone up the rear, but the footage showed the third-party had reversed into us. That footage proved our driver's innocence.

"We've also had incidents where our drivers have actually been attacked and if it wasn't for the camera, we wouldn't have been able to provide that footage to the police."

> "(Advisory board) members give us ideas that we may not have thought about or otherwise considered"
>
> **CHRIS CONNORS, ISS FACILITY SERVICES**

A further way to ensure driver buy-in is to get them involved in decisions and the introduction of new initiatives.

One relatively common way to do this is to create a driver advisory board which a fleet decision-maker can use to get feedback and refine initiatives to ensure they are practical.

"We use our drivers' group as a sounding board," says Chris Connors, head of fleet and travel at ISS Facility Services.

"Whenever we introduce an initiative we always run it by them so, when we roll it out, we can tell drivers that it was developed with their help.

"That group is the best because its members give us ideas that we may not have thought about or otherwise considered.

"You also want people on the group who can articulate what any problems are rather than just saying 'no, we're not doing that'.

"You want them to say, for example, they don't want in-cab cameras because they feel that's an invasion of their privacy because at least you can then have a conversation. What you don't want is the drivers who just stonewall you."

A further way to win buy-in from drivers is by incentivising them through gamification schemes (see March issue of *Fleet News iQ*).

The theory is to use an employee's competitive instincts to improve their behaviour behind the wheel, and then reward them with prizes.

"When drivers feel involved and motivated to improve their driving, the results are far more compelling than when poor driver behaviour is addressed through criticism and retrospective training," says David Savage, chief revenue officer at fleet management solutions company Lightfoot.

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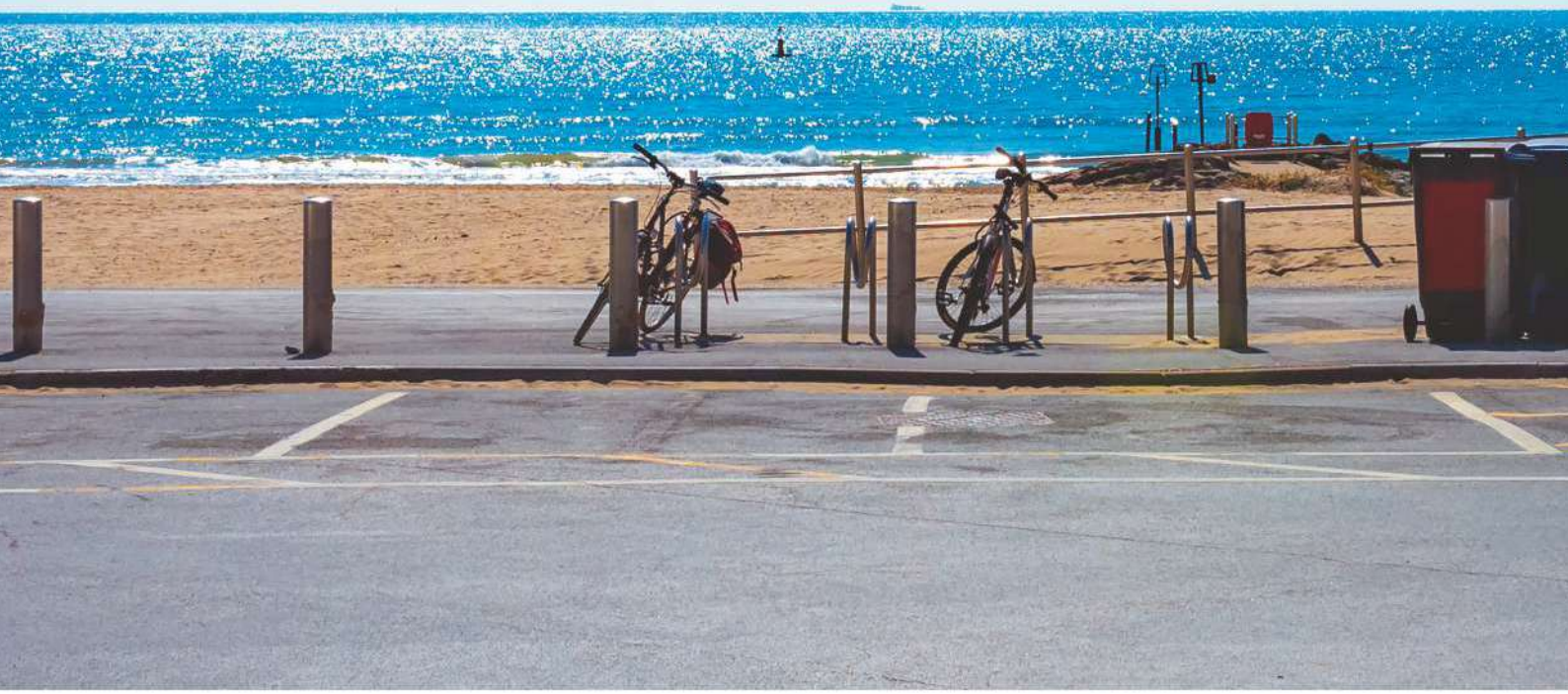

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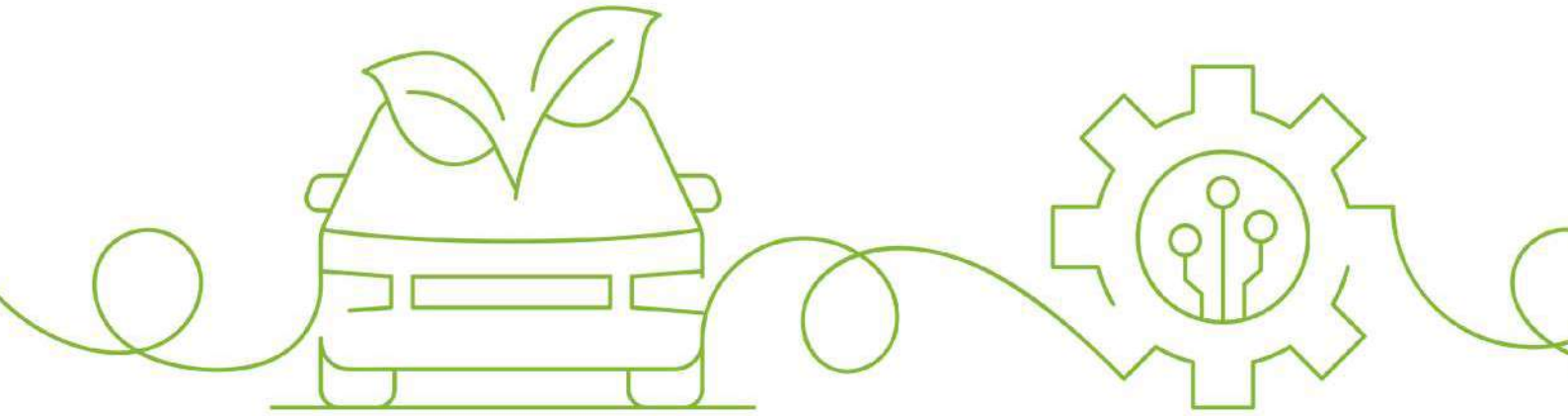

V2X rises up fleet agenda

Vehicle-to-everything allows organisations to use their electric vehicles as mobile energy storage, earning revenue and cutting power bills. *Richard Shrubb* reports

Rising fossil fuel price volatility is forcing fleets to rethink how energy is used and managed. Vehicle-to-everything (V2X) allows electric vehicles (EVs) to act not just as transport, but as mobile energy storage.

It has a range of specific forms, including vehicle-to-load (V2L) and vehicle-to-grid (V2G), and is a technology in which electricity generated by discharging the vehicle is intentionally exported to the grid, providing various forms of flexibility to electricity markets.

"V2X adds the element of bidirectional charging to an EV, providing a range of storage and flexibility benefits," says Emma Durham, product manager at e-fleet solutions provider VEV, which was one of 12 companies to participate in the Innovate UK-sponsored trial V2X USA in the United States in 2024/25.

Commercial waste collection company Veolia claims that when it has fully electrified its refuse collection vehicle (RCV) fleet, this could provide up to 200MW of flexible capacity — equivalent to a small power station, albeit for limited durations.

However, V2X hasn't yet reached maturity in terms of commercial viability. "I would say it's still at a relatively early stage," says Durham. "The technology exists and works, but it hasn't yet reached large-scale commercial adoption.

"That said, we are helping increasing numbers of fleets to dip their toe in the water with smart charging in response to price signals, so it's definitely on its way."

FROM REFUSE TRUCKS TO GRID ASSETS

"Fleets are an interesting use case, particularly those with predictable duty cycles such as refuse collection vehicles," says Graham Hodgson, technical innovation team leader at transport decarbonisation research and technology organisation Cenex. "They have the right operational profile, but it still depends on having compatible vehicles and infrastructure."

In 2024, Veolia trialled bidirectional charging using two modified ERCVs, delivering 110kW — enough to power around 110 homes for a short period;

for example, during half-time of an England football match, when millions of people put the kettle on for a mid-game cup of tea.

For grid operators, this can currently mean having gas-fired power stations online. With distributed energy storage at scale through V2X, connected vehicles can reduce reliance on those power stations at peak times.

At scale, V2X could help decarbonise the electricity system.

For the vehicle operator, it would mean that they could be paid by the grid operator to discharge energy stored within vehicle batteries to meet the electricity demand and create an additional revenue stream for their fleets.

Veolia's planned follow-up trial with Westminster Council has yet to materialise – there is still limited large-scale research into V2X for commercial vehicles or private cars.

Hodgson has been involved in a number of small-scale V2X studies over the years. Most recently, Cenex was a partner in an Innovate UK-managed research project called Papilio3 DC V2X Fast Hub.

The study hit limitations in the availability of vehicles to take part. "There are still significant challenges around vehicle availability and compatibility," says Hodgson.

The expectation at the start of the project was that more OEMs would have V2G-capable vehicles available, but that hasn't materialised yet.

"We're still relying on a very limited set of vehicles, which makes it difficult to scale or properly demonstrate the technology," he adds. Most European EVs use the CCS charging standard, which has yet to fully standardise bidirectional charging.

By contrast, the older Chademo system, used by vehicles such as the Nissan Leaf, was designed with V2X in mind.

While this offers some potential in controlled use cases such as company fleets, it remains far from a scalable solution.

SMART PACKAGES COULD CUT CHARGING COSTS BY 15%-20%

In principle, V2X could improve the total cost of ownership (TCO) of an electric commercial vehicle by enabling fleets not only to buy energy at cheaper times, but to sell energy to the grid during peak times when the cost per kWh is higher.

> "V2G has to be invisible operationally, while delivering cost savings in the background"
>
> **EMMA DURHAM, VEV**

The vehicle would serve dual purposes: transport and energy storage. Added capital costs for the charger and vehicle would theoretically be offset by selling energy to a supplier, for example.

VEV offers smart charging packages that have been proven to reduce daily charging costs at depots by 15%-20%.

As such, having a large amount of stored energy in a 100+ kWh battery in a vehicle is an opportunity for its clients, allowing energy to be shared between vehicles or power a depot's buildings overnight.

"For fleets, the priority is always that the vehicle is ready when it's needed," says Durham.

"V2G has to be invisible operationally, while delivering cost savings in the background."

This means there is no sense in having V2X unless its main transport duty cycle allows for a secondary use as a power store.

Although the technology has been around for more than a decade, it has yet to achieve commercial viability, in the eyes of Durham. "There is definitely value in V2G, and I'm a strong supporter of it," she says.

"The hardware costs are falling all the time, but, at the moment, the financial benefits don't consistently outweigh the additional capital cost."

Greg Payne is the modelling and analysis lead

at Cenex. In his experience, when he first ran into the technology, the cost of bidirectional chargers made the concept too expensive.

His views have changed as the costs have fallen. "The business case has improved compared with where it was years ago – hardware costs have come down significantly," he says. "I'm the most positive I've ever been about it in financial terms."

Durham is of the view that when the commercial viability is here, then VEV will offer it as part of its smart charging packages.

"There are revenue streams emerging, such as flexibility markets and dynamic tariffs, but I wouldn't say the business case is fully there yet," she adds.

"For fleets, TCO is critical. They're already investing significantly in vehicles and infrastructure, so they need to be confident that any additional investment in V2G will deliver a return."

A TECHNOLOGY HELD BACK BY COMPATIBILITY

Early V2X relied on the Chademo standard, while Europe moved to CCS, which initially lacked bidirectional capability.

"A big part of the issue is standardisation," says Payne. "Chademo was ahead in enabling bidirectional charging, but as the industry moved to CCS there's effectively been a pause while the standards catch up."

Durham says vehicle manufacturers have also developed bespoke systems that work only with certain chargers, or chargers that aren't compatible across different vehicles.

"That lack of interoperability means you can't achieve large-scale adoption and is something we've been working on with other sector players to address," she adds.

Hodgson agrees: "You can't necessarily take a V2G-capable vehicle and plug it into any charge point and expect it to work."

That could mean, at present, with an ERCV supply agreement, that the vehicle and the charger could be acquired together for a 10-year period.

This would achieve the dual aims of an energy store and transport unit — but unless you do something like this, it creates a real risk of stranded assets, says Payne.

"If you invest in a system today, there's no guarantee it will remain compatible with future vehicles or infrastructure," he adds.

Veolia, for instance, used Turbo Power Systems (TPS), but, due to communication issues, it might not be redeployable to a third party system.

If the system were put into operation at a different depot and the vehicles weren't perfectly aligned with it, then both vehicles and chargers might do V2X – but not together.

At its core, the problem is simple: systems still can't reliably talk to each other.

> "The business case has improved compared with where it was years ago"
>
> **GREG PAYNE, CENEX**

WHY STANDARDS MATTER MORE THAN HARDWARE

Payne explains that, while existing standards allow vehicles to communicate with chargers, "it's less about whether the technology exists and more about how different systems communicate".

He adds: "That's where the complexity lies – while they 'speak the same language', the dialect between the vehicle and the charger isn't fully standardised.

"The CCS standards do, technically, allow for V2X, but they're not prescriptive enough.

"Different vehicles and charge points interpret the standard slightly differently, which creates inter-operability challenges."

Durham says that there are standards coming out. "There are new standards coming through, such as OCPP 2.0.1 for charger-to-backend communication and ISO 15118 for vehicle-to-charger communication," she adds.

This is being worked out in part by CharIN, a 300-member international organisation focused on the electrification of transport, in which VEV plays a role as a charging software provider.

This might take some time; Cenex suggests it is a process that could take several years to resolve.

"The underlying hardware is largely there," says Hodgson.

"The real challenge now is around communication – how systems talk to each other and how

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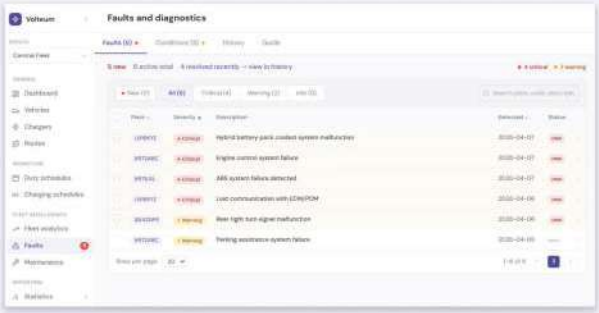

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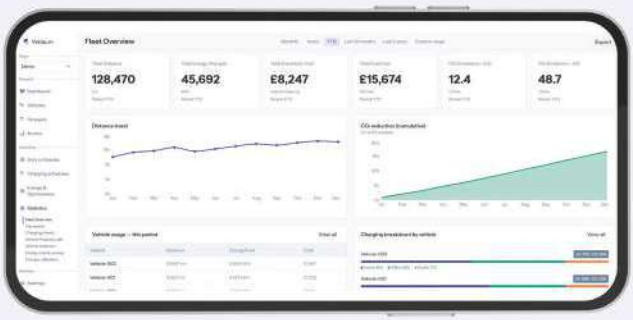

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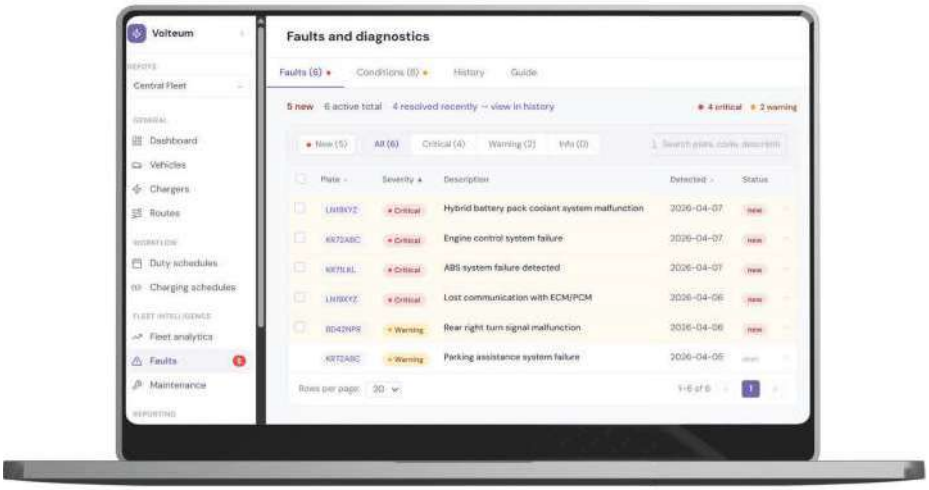
The connected fleet: how real-time data is reshaping fleet operations

Modern fleet management has evolved from simple asset procurement into a complex game of operational performance. And with the appearance of EVs, it is just getting more and more complex. Today, the focus is on maximising the utility of every vehicle while ensuring cost efficiency across diverse daily routes. Navigating these varied maintenance and usage cycles requires a high level of operational intelligence that connects local tasks with fleet-wide strategy. Volteum is helping organisations like Schneider Electric and Royal Mail bridge this gap by providing real-time visibility for electric, hybrid, diesel and petrol vehicles that turns raw vehicle data into actionable management insights.



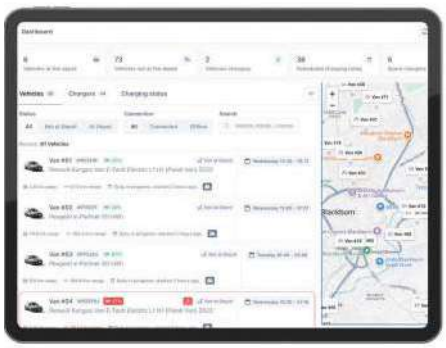
All fleet data in one place for Schneider Electric with Volteum's software

For large-scale operators like Schneider Electric, achieving true fleet visibility has often been hampered by the logistics of traditional hardware. Installing separate tracking devices across thousands of assets is a slow process that involves significant downtime and procurement costs. Schneider Electric overcame this by using Volteum's OEM live connectivity, which establishes a certified data stream directly from the vehicle manufacturer without any physical devices. By using only VIN numbers, the platform can go live in just one to two days with zero vehicle downtime. This practical setup allows the fleet team to prioritise proactive maintenance by surfacing diagnostic data. The software categorises alerts into system malfunctions, like electric traction faults, and status conditions such as low tire pressure or 12V battery warnings. This helps managers resolve minor issues before they become expensive breakdowns. The system also tracks manufacturer service intervals automatically to protect asset residual value and warranty standing. For return-to-home fleets, the platform simplifies home-charging reimbursements without any hardware needed. It estimates costs based on local electricity rates, providing accurate data for finance teams without needing charger-side billing hardware. This provides a reasonable cost picture for budgeting while maintaining strict GDPR compliance for all employees, thanks to Volteum's innovative technology.

Maximising EV fleet utilisation while minimising infrastructure needs at Royal Mail

In high-intensity environments like Royal Mail, managing vehicle readiness and energy capacity is a primary focus. With limited infrastructure - sometimes including 50% fewer chargers than vehicles - coordinating charging rotations was a complex manual task. Royal Mail addressed these bottlenecks by implementing automated charging schedules through Volteum. This software creates optimised plans that work with the current depot setup and eliminate the need for manual vehicle swapping during the night.

The platform aggregates live data on all vehicles and creates a smart charging schedule that shows when each vehicle will need charging - considering range and duty distance constraints. This ensures that every dispatch is safe and prevents unexpected downtime. The quantifiable benefits were substantial, as Royal Mail avoided unnecessary DC charger installations and planning effort was also reduced from several hours to just 10-20 minutes per shift. Similar controls are now being utilised by Dundee City Council to manage its electric fleet. The ultimate goal for any manager is to keep assets on the road at peak efficiency while lowering the total cost of ownership.



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energy requests are defined and handled consistently."

Durham says that, until these issues are ironed out, V2X can't be scaled. She adds: "These are critical because they enable secure, bidirectional control, which is what unlocks V2X."

FLEETS: OPPORTUNITY OR RISK?

Yellow US school buses are often cited as an ideal use case for V2X. They have short duty cycles and if given larger batteries than required for transport, can be charged on solar and the energy made available for evening peaks in domestic demand.

Hodgson and Durham both agree that here in the UK, ERCVs are great candidates too.

Not all fleets are ideally suited to V2X, though. Company cars, for example, could hit contractual issues with employees and long-distance HGVs likely would not be available to release power when it is needed.

"Ultimately, it's very case-by-case at the moment," says Hodgson. "Some fleet types could make it work, but it is not something that can be rolled out universally yet."

Durham adds: "The key to unlocking value is intelligent energy management. You need systems that can respond to energy prices, site demand and vehicle requirements automatically."

VEV offers smart charging that is designed to perform tasks such as 'load management' and 'cost optimisation', ensuring vehicles receive sufficient power to perform their duties, at the lowest cost, and without exceeding their grid limit – a technique that can deliver significant savings to HGV fleets operating on a 24-hour cycle.

STUCK BETWEEN PROMISE AND REALITY

V2X has consistently demonstrated technical potential and costs have fallen significantly.

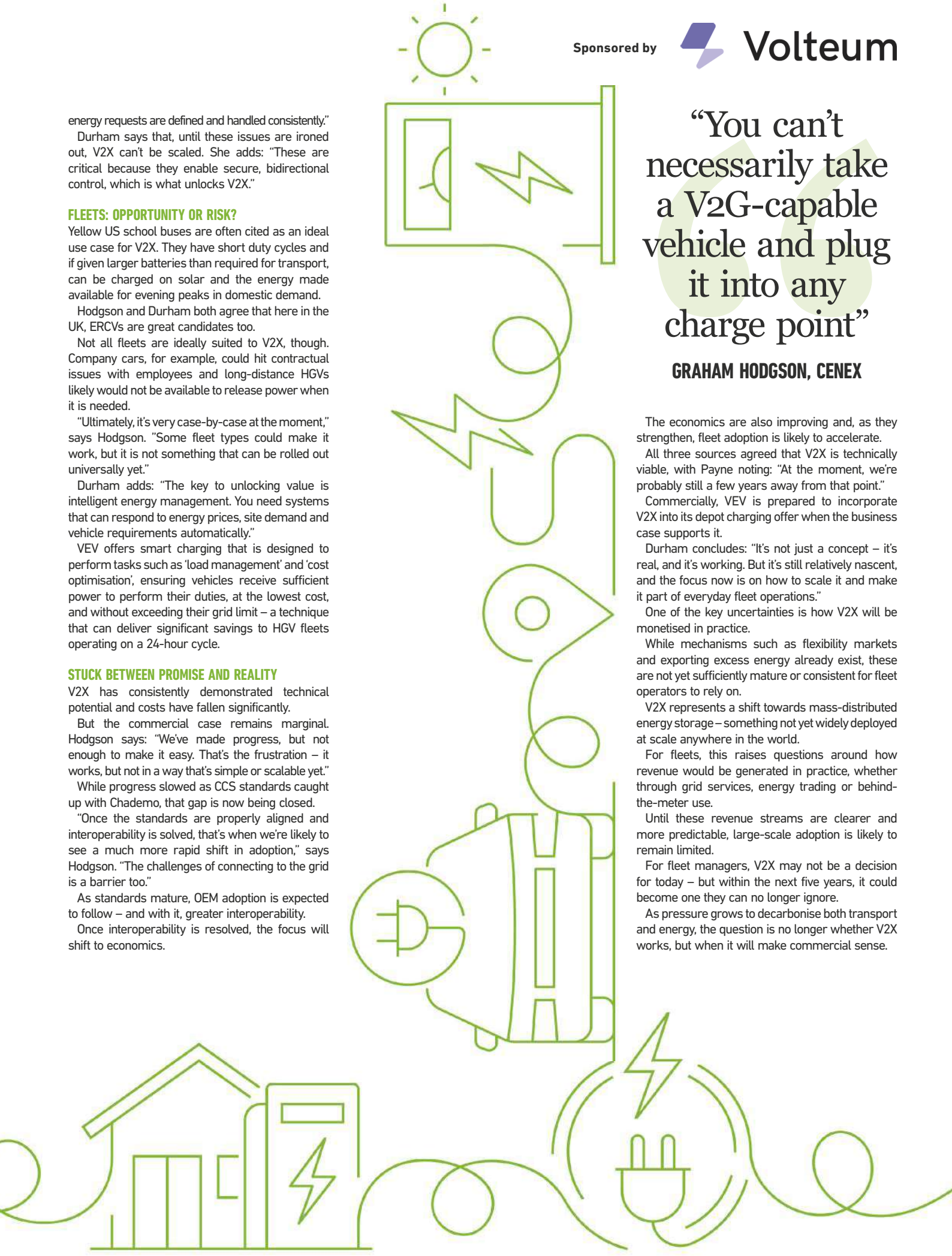
But the commercial case remains marginal. Hodgson says: "We've made progress, but not enough to make it easy. That's the frustration – it works, but not in a way that's simple or scalable yet."

While progress slowed as CCS standards caught up with Chademo, that gap is now being closed.

"Once the standards are properly aligned and interoperability is solved, that's when we're likely to see a much more rapid shift in adoption," says Hodgson. "The challenges of connecting to the grid is a barrier too."

As standards mature, OEM adoption is expected to follow – and with it, greater interoperability.

Once interoperability is resolved, the focus will shift to economics.



> "You can't necessarily take a V2G-capable vehicle and plug it into any charge point"
>
> **GRAHAM HODGSON, CENEX**

The economics are also improving and, as they strengthen, fleet adoption is likely to accelerate.

All three sources agreed that V2X is technically viable, with Payne noting: "At the moment, we're probably still a few years away from that point."

Commercially, VEV is prepared to incorporate V2X into its depot charging offer when the business case supports it.

Durham concludes: "It's not just a concept – it's real, and it's working. But it's still relatively nascent, and the focus now is on how to scale it and make it part of everyday fleet operations."

One of the key uncertainties is how V2X will be monetised in practice.

While mechanisms such as flexibility markets and exporting excess energy already exist, these are not yet sufficiently mature or consistent for fleet operators to rely on.

V2X represents a shift towards mass-distributed energy storage – something not yet widely deployed at scale anywhere in the world.

For fleets, this raises questions around how revenue would be generated in practice, whether through grid services, energy trading or behind-the-meter use.

Until these revenue streams are clearer and more predictable, large-scale adoption is likely to remain limited.

For fleet managers, V2X may not be a decision for today – but within the next five years, it could become one they can no longer ignore.

As pressure grows to decarbonise both transport and energy, the question is no longer whether V2X works, but when it will make commercial sense.

Fleet News Awards roundtable: Integrating new technology

Some of the top minds in fleet have their say on innovations affecting the industry. *Sean Keywood* reports

Attendees

1 Emma Turness, group fleet manager, Connells Group
2 Paul Stevens, fleet manager, Ricoh UK
3 Chris Rutherford, fleet modernisation officer, London Ambulance Service NHS Trust
4 Andrew Teer, transport operations manager, Smith Brothers Stores
5 Anthony Roberts, commercial director, sopp+sopp
6 Russ O'Neil, fleet control manager, Balfour Beatty
7 Lucy Stuart, head of fleet and logistics, Cadent
8 Matthew Munford, fleet manager, KCOM Group
9 Greta Domkute, business development representative, sopp+sopp
10 Mike Roberts, managing editor B2B, *Fleet News*
11 Stuart Conway, head of fleet, EMCOR UK
12 Helen Brislane, fleet director, Churchill Group
13 Sean Keywood, *Fleet News*

Fleets implementing new initiatives and technology can see strong results if they go about it the right way, a Fleet News Awards roundtable has heard.

Sponsored by sopp+sopp, the event saw a panel of fleet decision-makers who were shortlisted for this year's awards asked to discuss initiatives and innovations they had introduced to their fleets and how successful they had been.

Our panellists touched on topics such as dashcams, telematics, AI, fleet management software and driver mental health.

Fleet News: What recent experience and successes have you had with your fleets through initiatives and innovations?

Russ O'Neil, fleet control manager, Balfour Beatty: I think our dashcam experience is relatively new tech – not the sort of dashcams you go and buy from Halfords, but managed dashcam services. We've partnered with Michelin Connected Fleet who, in turn, are partnered with VisionTrack. It was one of our Scotland contracts that brought this through initially, because they wanted to manage fatigue on their winter fleet operations – they weren't having a lot of incidents, but they wanted to manage people being fit for work.

We've got the AI camera, driver-facing – we're trying to stay away from the AI tag because it's got negative connotations, so we call them smart cameras. They are looking at the driver and looking for particular behaviours. That might be non-seatbelt use, mobile phone use, smoking, which have three legal aspects. But then also fatigue, so drivers yawning, which is not against the law, but if you see people do it over and over again, then you start to identify issues – people that aren't fit for work and could do with different shift patterns.

What I've learned over the years is any telematics or dashcam company, they've all got return on investment case studies, etc. But you're buying a box and a website. It's up to you to make improvements happen. I've spoken to many telematics companies. They all sell the story about return on investment. Frankly, it's not going to be where we

> The fleet manager we worked with was quoting double-digit percentages of savings, just because, he felt, the drivers were taking more care knowing that every day the vehicle was going to get analysed and scanned

were 15 years ago. We're still making savings year-on-year, but the hockey stick (graph) is not going to be as steep as it was.

Helen Brislane, fleet director, Churchill Group: We can see that in our drivers' scoring with fuel efficiency and speeding. We had a baseline, then we turned the in-cab device on giving them feedback and we saw a 77% reduction in speeding and a 66% cut in harsh driving events, but then we've just seen it creep back up again.

FN: What results have other fleets seen with cameras and telematics?

Matthew Munford, fleet manager, KCOM Group: We've seen a really good reduction in incidents – faults down from like 90% to around 20%, overall incidents down 77%. We don't do a lot of miles. Most of our engineers work around Hull and East Riding, with very little driving, so the chances for having an incident are quite low. But most are hitting things that aren't moving, so when we put the telematics tender out it was more about understanding what incidents we were having and then tailoring the telematics system to reduce those. So, we just went for forward and rear cameras. Winning the hearts and minds of the driver was really easy because they saw it as an aid, not as a tool to manage their performance.

The buy-in was really good, but we did loads of engagement from the outset.

When we drilled down one level below, asking why they were not reporting incidents, I think the fear was that they'd lose a van for days, and it's a chore to move all their gear into a spare vehicle. So, we introduced drop-in clinics for local garages. When you do bump a vehicle, it's repaired quickly.

I think by really understanding the obstacles for the engineers, we've enjoyed a really good reduction in our numbers.

Lucy Stuart, head of fleet and logistics, Cadent: Our accident rate was going up. We went out to tender, we trialled different companies in different areas of our business. We awarded to Samsara at the end of last year, and we are in the process now of going through that install a bit at a time.

We've seen some really significant improvements, such as a 70% reduction in mobile phone usage from the baseline period.

We are cooperating very closely with the unions. We're working through who will get access to data and how that data will be used.

Data is only going to come to the fleet team, to help alleviate the fear of it going to the supervisors to use it as a stick.

We don't want it to be used as a stick.

Anthony Roberts, commercial director, sopp+sopp: We worked with a large supermarket at one of its depots, and we put in what we call Fleet Scouts. Basically, it's a gantry with some cameras, and the AI scans the lorry as it goes through.

We did this mainly with O-licenced vehicles to look at compliance, and also early identification of damage, so they could repair before it got worse and save themselves money.

But the thing that actually came out of it was that the vehicles were coming back a lot less damaged, because the drivers knew they had to drive through the gantry. And the fleet manager we worked with was quoting double-digit percentages of savings, just because, he felt, the drivers were taking more care knowing that every day the vehicle was going to get analysed and scanned, and the manager would know about damage. So, even back to its simplest form, having something watching you is going to make you behave differently.

FN: What other technology have you achieved results with?

Stuart Conway, head of fleet, EMCOR UK: I've been at Emcor for three-and-a-half years now. When I joined everything was done on spreadsheets. Vehicles, grey fleet, licence checks, everything. So, the first thing we did was implement Key2 management software meaning all of the data that used to be on spreadsheets now goes into Key2. But the efficiencies of that is not just all the data being in one place. For example, I need to send a report every month on insurance. That used to be a manual task. Key2 just sends that automatically, along with a lot of other reports.

We've also taken SMR in-house. My background is as a mechanic, then moving into maintenance control. Emcor outright purchase our vehicles. So, I was in quite a lucky position that, when I started, we owned the assets. We were paying a leaseco to maintain the vehicles for us, and I was looking at how they were doing it and saying 'this is really not particularly good at all'. Luckily, I report to the CFO, who had trust in me and said 'ok, if you think you can do it better and cheaper in-house, do it'.

I went to Epyx. We've put in place ServicePoint, so we can trade with all the garages we were trading with before through ServicePoint. We've got a relationship now with The AA, with Kwik Fit and with National Windscreens.

Over the two years we monitored for our Fleet News Awards submission we saved £300,000 on SMR. But we also reduced our vehicle off-road (VOR) time 48%. On the back of that, we reduced our hire dependency 47%, saving a further £147,000.

FN: Is driver health becoming a bigger factor in fleet management?

Russ O'Neil: I think mental health and driving is going to be the next big topic for us all. I know the DVLA can tell us about medication, what we should do around driving, but the people who have got mental health conditions, perhaps undiagnosed, they're not prescribed. I'm seeing cases of that increase. People use it as an excuse not to drive or certainly not to drive with a dashcam, because of anxiety. That's becoming more and more prevalent.

Lucy Stuart: We had some of that with in-cab driver coaching lightbars. Some of the drivers were saying that once the lightbar had flashed red, that was it, that their driving score was ruined for the day, it put them in a bad mental state for the rest of the day. So, one of the things we were looking at with a replacement was that it had no flashing lights so it didn't affect their mental state.

Anthony Roberts: We come from the angle of managing accidents, or supporting customers in reducing their accident frequency, and there's an element of driver awareness and training – we understand that a lot of that sits with fleet managers. We had a seminar with a doctor speaking on driver health, how many people are driving or just living undiagnosed with situations and issues. And I do think a lot of what is said around 'are we checking out what Dave's up to, Dave's had two accidents', I do think that health element is probably an area that needs to be far more explored with what is driving these drivers.

Russ O'Neil: I think we need the DVLA to intervene. Any action you want to take about people with potentially ADHD and anxiety could be seen as discriminatory, so you need guidelines and authority.

WHY EVERYONE WHO MANAGES A FLEET BELONGS AT THE AFP

> **“Joining the AFP was invaluable when I was asked to create a new fleet policy for our 18-vehicle operation. The resources and support – especially the WhatsApp group where members openly share their expertise – made the process far easier. I’d recommend AFP membership to anyone with fleet responsibilities, regardless of fleet size.”**
>
> **Pal Dehal, Operations Support Manager at ITS Technology Group.**

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BEYOND THE INCIDENT

WHY ACCIDENT MANAGEMENT HAS BECOME A STRATEGIC FLEET CAPABILITY

When I joined FMG 11 years ago, I believed I understood accident management. From the outside, its value appeared clear: a necessary operational function, a commercial safeguard, a service that keeps fleets moving. Like many in the industry, I saw it as an essential, but largely reactive, component of fleet management.

What I had not fully grasped was its true magnitude.

A DISCIPLINE DEFINED BY MAGNITUDE

It is only from within that you begin to appreciate the depth of expertise, care and coordination required to deliver accident management well. I had not fully understood the critical role it plays, not just in resolving incidents, but in protecting drivers, safeguarding businesses and keeping the wheels of commerce turning every single day.

Because today, accident management is no longer just a service. It's a discipline built on expertise, empathy, data intelligence and an unwavering commitment to doing the right thing when it matters most.

A FLEET LANDSCAPE UNDER PRESSURE

UK fleets are as diverse as the economy they power. From overnight trunking operations delivering essential goods, to engineers maintaining critical infrastructure, to company car drivers covering millions of business miles annually, each operates under distinct pressures and risk profiles. Yet they share a common imperative: keep drivers safe, vehicles mobile and operations running. That challenge is intensifying.

Early starts, long distances, high mileage and increasing operational demands are now the norm. Fatigue alone is estimated to contribute to up to 20% of UK road incidents, making it one of the most significant risks facing fleets today. Critically, drivers are up to 20 times more likely to fall asleep at the wheel at 6am than at 10pm, highlighting the vulnerability of early-shift and long-distance drivers. Supporting these individuals requires far more than process. It requires genuine understanding of the environments in which they operate.

SCALE BRINGS RESPONSIBILITY... AND INSIGHT

FMG supports over one million vehicles and manages more than 350,000 incidents annually across logistics, utilities, corporate fleets and a rapidly growing electric vehicle parc. With that scale comes responsibility - but also insight.

Each year, our teams handle over 325,000 driver calls, many from individuals facing stress, uncertainty and, in some cases, trauma. In these moments, the human element becomes paramount. Accident management is not about vehicles, it's about people.

Behind every incident sits a highly coordinated response: first notification of loss specialists offering reassurance, engineers assessing damage, mobility experts restoring movement, repair partners delivering quality outcomes, and claims and client teams ensuring continuity.

What appears externally as a single event is, in reality, a carefully orchestrated operation requiring experience, judgement and precision.

FROM RESPONSE TO RISK INTELLIGENCE

Perhaps the most significant evolution in accident management is the shift from reactive service to proactive intelligence.

Managing over 350,000 incidents a year generates a powerful dataset, one that reveals clear patterns in driver behaviour, operational risk and cost drivers. By way of an example, 17% of incidents occur between 19:00 and 07:00, with incident frequency peaking at around 06:00 and a relatively small proportion of drivers often account for a disproportionate number of incidents.

These insights enable targeted interventions - whether that's supporting high-risk drivers, reviewing shift patterns, or addressing specific route or vehicle risks. This is where accident management becomes something far more valuable. It becomes risk intelligence.

THE EV FACTOR: A NEW LAYER OF COMPLEXITY

The transition to electric vehicles is adding further complexity to the landscape.

FMG now supports around 55,000 EV-related incidents annually, with volumes growing rapidly; 15% of total incidents in January 2025 to 20% by December.
EV incidents bring distinct challenges: specialist repair requirements, different cost dynamics, extended repair times and evolving supply chains. Navigating this shift requires new expertise, new partnerships and continuous adaptation.

Accident management is no longer static - it is evolving into a highly specialised discipline.

FMG
THINKING AHEAD

THE HUMAN FACTOR AT THE CORE

Despite advances in data and technology, one thing remains constant: the importance of people.

Throughout my time at FMG, I've always taken great delight in the pride and professionalism across every part of the business. Every team understands the significance of their role. Every individual recognises that behind every call is a driver who needs support. This collective commitment is what enables consistent delivery at scale, without ever losing sight of the individual.

A CHANGED PERSPECTIVE

A decade on, my perspective has fundamentally shifted.

Accident management is no longer, in my view, an operational necessity sitting in the background of fleet management. It is a critical capability, one that protects drivers, supports business continuity, controls cost and, increasingly, helps prevent incidents before they occur.

Ultimately, accident management is not defined by the incidents themselves. It is defined by how you respond to them. And in an environment where risk is rising, fleets are evolving and expectations are higher than ever, that response has never mattered more.

Andrew Chandler - Managing Director, FMG

Nine steps to an effective driver safety communications strategy

Getting the road safety message across to drivers is not a one-off event and requires a well-thought-out plan myriad communication methods. *Sarah Tooze* reports

1

UNDERSTAND THE ROAD SAFETY RISKS

Before attempting to begin any formal communications with drivers, fleet managers themselves need to better appreciate the risks their drivers are facing on the road.

Department for Transport (DfT) statistics give an indication of the size of the problem. According to the latest estimates, there were 23,770 reported collisions involving at least one motorist driving for work in 2024. This represents about a quarter (24%) of all police-reported collisions that year.

A total of 6,679 people were killed or seriously injured (KSI) in these collisions, representing 23% of all KSI casualties.

But the headline statistics don't tell the whole story.

"Don't assume that you understand what all the risks are – ask your drivers," says Simon Turner, engagement manager of the National Highways Driving for Better Business (DfBB) programme, which aims to help employers reduce work-related road risk.

"If you're a fleet manager at a small company, with perhaps 20 drivers, you can probably speak to all of them about the risks and how they think those risks can be reduced. If you're at a larger company, invite representatives from each area of the business or each geographic location to share their views."

2

CREATE A 'DRIVING FOR WORK' POLICY

Armed with the feedback from drivers you can then create a driving for work policy that clearly identifies all the risks, the standards you expect of your drivers, and the consequences of not following it, DfBB's Turner recommends.

"Your driving for work policy needs to start with a 'policy statement' that explains why driver safety is so important to the company. This needs to be signed by the MD/CEO so drivers can point to this and not be scared to speak up if they feel a manager somewhere in the middle is being unreasonably demanding and putting them at risk," he says.

He suggests that because drivers have been involved in developing the policy they are more likely to "buy into it" and comply.

But, it's no good simply giving them a 20-page document to read.

"Effective communication has got to be short and punchy and interactive," Turner adds.

One technique is to get all drivers to complete an e-learning course, based on the driving for work policy, at the induction stage, with existing drivers, and as an annual refresher.

Another method is to meet with drivers in small groups at different locations to talk them through the key points or to show them a video of some of the things they need to do to stay safe on the road, such as performing a vehicle safety check.

3

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Senior managers and company directors need to lead by example so it's clear to drivers that what is in the driving for work policy is adhered to by everyone.

For example, if your company has banned the use of hands-free mobile phones, it's important that drivers don't see managers making calls while driving.

"Road safety is a shared responsibility," Turner says.

"It's not all on the drivers and it's not all on the managers. You need to upskill managers – be they company directors, health and safety managers or the MD – and give them the tools to be able to communicate effectively with drivers."

Aaron Powell, fleet and logistics director at tool hire provider Speedy Hire, agrees.

"You've got to involve everyone," he says. "Our MD started his career at Speedy as a driver so he understands the importance of road safety."

4

COMMUNICATE REGULARLY

Once everyone has seen and understood the driving for work policy you can drill down into individual road safety topics on a monthly basis. For example, one month you could focus on distractions and another month you could cover speeding.

"This helps create the right culture and gradually builds up the drivers' knowledge of different areas," Turner says.

Speedy Hire has a regular programme of communications including issuing transport bulletins on a variety of topics such as seat belt use or adverse weather.

"We use Microsoft's Viva Engage system, which makes sure it is sent to every device a driver has," says Gareth Jones, group fleet compliance manager at Speedy Hire.

Fleet also has a dedicated section on Speedy Hire's intranet and the team can monitor how many people have read the road safety content. At individual depots, messages are also shown on an iboard (essentially an information screen) and drivers are required to sign to say they have read key information.

5

CHOOSE THE RIGHT COMMUNICATION METHOD

Not all communication methods work well at all organisations.

For example, driving instructors at Bill Plant Driving School have no need to call into the head office so a poster campaign there would have little impact.

Instead, it holds regular webinars, which are each attended, on average, by about 200 of its driving instructors.

"We've just done one around helping people with learning difficulties such as dyspraxia, dyslexia and autism, and we subtly added in some safety messages," says fleet director Matt Thomas.

He tends to favour "subliminal" road safety messages as the nature of their work means they already have a good understanding of road safety.

"We do sometimes do extremely targeted messaging but we try to make them few and far between so that they stand out more when we need them to," Thomas says.

"We like webinars because they're more interactive and we can gauge understanding with quick polls as well as a feedback form afterwards."

Speedy Hire sometimes takes a different approach with its company car drivers compared with its van drivers. For example, to encourage company car drivers to use forward-facing cameras it offered them at the company's expo where fleet had a dedicated stand, whereas cameras are mandatory on its commercial vehicle fleet.

Its other driver communication methods include e-learning, classroom-based training, on-the-road training using a buddy system, and toolbox talks.

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6

MAKE USE OF FREE RESOURCES

DfBB has a number of Fleet News Award-winning free resources on its website, including templates to create a new driving for work policy, car and van driver toolkits, and management awareness videos.

"We have produced a series of driver information cards and if you send them out as a monthly update to your drivers you'll have a free three-year communication programme," Turner says.

"We're constantly developing resources and we'll be launching more in the next couple of months."

DfBB also has a raft of case studies, which show the business benefits of managing road risk, including lower fuel spend, reduced insurance premiums and maintenance costs, and improved sustainability and fleet utilisation.

Videos from UK Government-funded safety campaigns such as the DfT's Think! or Australia's Transport Accident Commission Victoria, can also be useful.

7

RUN DEDICATED CAMPAIGNS

It can be beneficial to develop an in-house road safety campaign, if time and resource allow. This may be needed when your accident rate has reached a plateau or you've identified a particular problem area such as low speed manoeuvring incidents, as Altrad did (see case study overleaf).

Speedy Hire recently launched a series of driver safety videos aimed at company car, grey fleet, van and HGV drivers, showing them how to perform vehicle checks, what to do in the event of a collision, and the implications of being involved in a serious road incident.

It features interviews with a police officer, paramedic and transport lawyer, as well as a Speedy driver who was cleared of wrongdoing in an incident thanks to video footage captured by his vehicle.

The videos have been shared with drivers as an e-learning module through Speedy's training system and there are questions which they have to answer based on what they've watched.

Gareth Jones says it could be up to 12 months before the fleet team can see what impact the training has had on the fleet's incident rate, but it has already prompted drivers to ask for bump cards and tyre gauges, and led to greater appreciation about how cameras can protect them from prosecution.

Bill Plant Driving School is repackaging all of the modules in its learning management system under the banner 'the road to success'.

"We have about 50 modules and our driving instructors have to complete the whole suite and have an in-car assessment before they can start teaching," Thomas says.

"There's a theme called 'think like a driving instructor', which is about encouraging them to remain 'in role' even when they're driving in their personal time." This is all part of building the right safety culture.

Bill Plant Driving School banned hands-free mobile phone use at the wheel about 18 months ago and has also introduced intervention training, which teaches instructors how to act when a pupil might put themselves or other road users at risk, but also raises the instructor's own risk awareness.

Over the past two years its accident rate has halved despite the fleet expanding significantly during that time to 1,200 vehicles.

8

DON'T WORK IN ISOLATION

Matt Thomas urges other fleet managers to be prepared to try new things to get the road safety message across. "Instead of thinking 'I haven't got the technical skills to do a video', find the people within your organisation or outside of it who have," he says.

Both Speedy Hire and Altrad used external video production companies, and got colleagues or other contacts to appear in their videos.

Collaboration extends to speaking to other fleet managers about how they get the safety message across to drivers.

"It's invaluable to talk to someone else and find out what they do," Thomas says.

"*Fleet News* events and webinars or the AFP (Association of Fleet Professionals) are really helpful for that. You can also learn from a good supplier."

9

GET DRIVER FEEDBACK

Drivers need to feel they are listened to – and not just when you develop a driving for work policy. Whether you've shown them a video or they've attended a webinar or training course, it's important to know whether they found it useful.

"You have to empower drivers to put their ideas forward as well," says Jones.

Speedy Hire introduced an additional camera to its commercial vehicles as a result of driver feedback, for example, and has driver representatives present when the fleet team meets with HR to discuss the fleet.

A post-accident interview is another communication opportunity to find out the cause of incidents and introduce changes.

"Don't assume an incident is always their fault," Turner says. "It might be that they just need a bit of extra coaching. You've got to support them because you've invested in them through recruitment and training. But, equally, there needs to be consequences if they've done something like been caught drink-driving."

He adds: "Communication on its own won't work. You've got to have effective and competent management of all aspects (of road safety). At-work driving is the most dangerous thing many people do and it's got to be treated as such."

CASE STUDY: ALTRAD SAFETY CAMPAIGN LEADS TO 34% DROP IN INCIDENTS

Altrad's low-speed manoeuvring incidents reduced by 34% in the six months following the launch of a dedicated campaign for its commercial vehicle fleet of close to 1,000 vehicles.

The campaign encouraged drivers not to be dismissive of such incidents and instead of thinking they'd 'only' hit a bollard they had to consider that they could have hit a child.

This message was illustrated through a video, dash sticker and a poster campaign.

"The risk in any business is that you send out a lot of information to drivers and things get 'lost' in the 'noise'," says Matt Hammond, head of fleet and plant at Altrad.

"So we wanted to do something a bit more hard-hitting to make the message stick."

> "The risk in any business is that you send out a lot of information to drivers and things get 'lost' in the 'noise"
>
> **MATT HAMMOND, HEAD OF FLEET AND PLANT, ALTRAD**

Some drivers found the video "inappropriate" and "uncomfortable" but Hammond believes that meant "it hit a nerve".

"The campaign resulted in a lot more conversations with drivers about why they were having low-speed manoeuvring incidents and how they could be prevented because people don't crash on purpose," he says.

"On the back of that we made sure all of our CVs have reversing cameras and sensors, and we stopped supplying a certain vehicle because the drivers were struggling with the blind spot."

Altrad has "inevitably" seen its low-speed manoeuvring incident rate creep back up since the campaign's initial impact and Hammond will be reinvigorating it to reduce numbers again.

From monitoring to motivating: Why fleets are rethinking driver engagement

Improving safety outcomes isn't just a data challenge, it's a behaviour and communication challenge.

For fleet operators, safety is about more than monitoring risk, it's about reducing it. Despite advances in telematics and data visibility, many fleets are still asking the same question: why doesn't better data consistently lead to safer driving?

Fleets can now see more driving data than ever before. Speeding, harsh braking, acceleration patterns and risk events are all captured in detail. But visibility alone doesn't change what happens behind the wheel.

To truly reduce risk, the industry is shifting its focus from retrospective tracking to active, reward-led influence.

Communication is the missing link in fleet safety

The most effective safety interventions happen in the moment.

When drivers receive immediate, clear feedback on their driving, they are far more likely to adjust their behaviour before a risk becomes an incident. However, constant correction without recognition often leads to driver fatigue and disengagement.

This is where reward-led behavioural change transforms the dynamic. By moving away from purely punitive monitoring, Lightfoot uses communication as a live safety tool, turning the cab into a proactive coaching environment.

Rewarding safer driving changes behaviour at the source

Lightfoot's approach is built around a simple principle: when safer driving is recognised and rewarded, it happens more often.

By combining real-time in-cab feedback with positive reinforcement, drivers are encouraged to adopt smoother, safer driving styles as part of their everyday routine creating lasting behaviour change. Instead of focusing solely on mistakes, the system highlights and rewards good driving decisions as they happen.

"From the early days… we recognised the huge benefit that real time driver feedback has to play in changing driving styles for the better. It's a world apart from retrospective telematics." — Chris Georgiou, Head of Compliance, Currys

A safer driving culture

Fleets using Lightfoot report measurable reductions in at-fault incidents. Improved anticipation and speed management contribute to fewer collisions, but the real victory is in the culture change.

When drivers are rewarded for safer driving, whether through performance scoring, league tables, or tangible rewards, they are more likely to repeat those behaviours. This reinforces positive habits rather than simply correcting negative ones.

For fleets, this creates a powerful dual effect:

- Drivers are more engaged in their own safety performance
- Risk is reduced across the entire operation

Lightfoot is a proven risk-reduction tool, and is endorsed by 80% of the UK's major insurers and brokers.

From data to safer outcomes

Telematics has given fleets the ability to understand risk in unprecedented detail. The next step is turning that understanding into consistent behaviour change.

This is where the shift is taking place – from monitoring drivers to mentoring and motivating them.

When safer driving is consistently recognised and rewarded, the benefits extend across the entire fleet: fewer collisions, reduced downtime, lower costs, and most importantly, drivers who are more aware, more engaged, and safer on every journey.

Discover how Lightfoot can transform your fleet safety through driver rewards. Visit Lightfoot.co.uk

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Rewarding better drivers

Five ways to cut fuel costs

With prices soaring as a result of the Iran war, the need for fleets to control or reduce their fuel spend continues to be a high priority. *Ben Rooth* reports

There has rarely been a greater need for fleets to control and reduce fuel spend.

UK petrol and diesel prices have been rising as a direct result of the Middle East conflict and this has prompted endless speculation about fuel shortages and what the future might hold.

This is obviously bad news for fleets as fuel remains one of the highest operating costs for most transport-dependent businesses. Even small shifts in pump prices can add significant pressure to already stretched budgets.

"For UK fleets, the key issue is not just whether pump prices rise, but how volatile they may become," says Paul Holland, managing director of UK/ANZ Fleet at Corpay, which includes UK brand Allstar.

"The next step for many businesses is practical. Monitor fuel data closely, review purchasing behaviour and make sure policies are doing the job.

"In periods like this, the organisations that stay closest to their fuel data are usually the ones that manage the cost shock best."

Simon Staton, client management director for Venson Automotive Solutions, adds: "This is the big one for all fleets, and rightly so. However, fuel bills can be tackled with a variety of tactics.

"First and foremost is ensuring the vehicles themselves are properly maintained with regular servicing and tyre pressure checks which – alone – can add 5%-to-10% to a fuel bill if not correct.

"Utilising telematics can help in achieving lower fuel costs by educating drivers to take the shortest route possible, avoiding congestion, and not making excessive journeys. Many telematics providers suggest 10% savings can be guaranteed.

"However, managing fuel costs will depend on the fleet mix and the role the vehicle plays – although some of the fundamentals in reducing fuel costs are relevant to both car and van fleets."

So, just how can you best control – and reduce – your fleet's fuel spend? We look at five key areas.

1

STEER DRIVERS TOWARDS LOWER-COST PUMPS

Consider your fuel procurement In a volatile pricing environment because one of the biggest levers fleets can pull is where drivers refuel and how it is paid for.

"It may sound simple, but this is where significant savings are won or lost," says Holland.

"Our latest AllCosts data, which monitors fuel pump prices across fuel stations throughout the UK, consistently shows significant regional price variation for diesel.

"The gap between the cheapest and most expensive forecourts can be substantial, making where your drivers fill up one of the most controllable levers a fleet has on its fuel bill."

Motorway services remain among the most expensive options, while supermarket forecourts tend to offer better value – and that gap widens when pump prices are under pressure from global events.

Consequently, fleet managers should actively guide drivers towards lower-cost locations.

Holland continues: "A good fuel card enables this by restricting usage to approved sites and providing clear direction on where to refuel. Discount networks can deliver additional savings.

"Focusing on these procurement decisions is one of the fastest ways to reduce costs without changing fleet operations."

Joshua Hooper, head of products and specialist sales at Northgate Vehicle Hire, asserts that fuel procurement is about more than "just the price per litre".

"You need strong national coverage," he explains.

"For example, while we work with a fuel card supplier that offers discounts through Esso, drivers still have access to a range of other major brands.

"It's also important that this links with telematics too.

"When you can link fuel card data with vehicle data, you gain much better visibility over spend and usage, which, ultimately, helps reduce overall fuel costs."

2

IMPROVE DRIVER BEHAVIOUR

Driver behaviour has a direct impact on fuel efficiency and the current petrol pump price volatility has brought this simple fact into sharp focus once again.

In short, drivers must anticipate both the road – and road users – as far ahead as possible to ensure smooth driving and help avoid unnecessary acceleration and braking.

"Harsh acceleration is particularly bad for fuel consumption and also impacts on wear and tear of the engine and tyres," says Venson's Staton.

"It can also be linked to heavy braking, which adds unnecessary wear and tear to brakes. Driver training and driver risk management can help with addressing poor driving behaviours."

For example, the RoSPA Level 1 Award in Driving Theory includes a focus on eco driving, which details how to drive more efficiently to lower fuel consumption by up to 10%.

"Driver training can also help correct bad habits, while reinforcing best practices," Staton continues.

"Monitoring driver behaviour and reporting on more 'at risk drivers' enables businesses to identify and address issues before they become a serious problem for the company.

"A planned programme of refresher training can help prevent drivers from reverting to poor driving behaviours."

Hooper adds that telematics also has a huge role to play here.

"Fleets now have access to driver behaviour dashboards that highlight things such as idling, harsh acceleration and inefficient driving styles," he says.

"Idling, in particular, is a big one, reducing that alone can have a noticeable impact on fuel consumption.

"The real benefit comes when you use that data to engage drivers and encourage more efficient habits."

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3

STAMP OUT FUEL FRAUD

Fleets should consider tightening security around fuel in response to the recent pump price increases.

Common issues currently being reported include mileage inflation, fuelling non-company vehicles and misuse of fuel cards.

It's widely believed that these issues have become more common than many fleets realise as they often go under-reported.

Barrie Wilson, strategic relationship manager at fleet software company FleetCheck, suggests robust controls should be implemented swiftly if they are not already in place.

"There are a number of ways fleets can be affected by fuel crime, but, essentially, the risks fall into two categories – forms of fraud committed by employees and theft from parked company vehicles," he says.

"These require very different solutions, but both can be expected to potentially increase following the quite dramatic price rises we have seen recently."

Driver fraud, in particular, is an area where the careful monitoring of fuel records and mileage is essential.

"The danger here is that employees either purchase additional fuel or syphon it from their company vehicles," adds Wilson.

"To detect this, it is essential that distances covered and miles per gallon are accurately recorded and assessed – something that can be done easily using fleet software.

"Any sudden drop in fuel economy can be a cause for suspicion.

"Effective deterrence can be as simple as letting drivers know that you are scrutinising fuel expenditure and mileage and any significant fuel theft will result in not just dismissal but also notification to the police."

Theft from cars and commercial vehicles is also an increased risk even where locked caps are fitted.

"It's rare in 2026 that fleets operate vehicles where theft is as simple as unscrewing the cap and syphoning fuel," continues Wilson.

"However, the damage caused by thieves, such as forcing the flap or cap, is often much more expensive to rectify than the actual fuel loss.

"There are no easy answers here, but a good idea is to issue guidance to drivers asking them to take care when parking vehicles, especially overnight."

Holland adds that fuel cards should also have limits on transaction value and volume, with alerts set to identify unusual activity.

He explains: "Where possible, cards should be assigned to vehicles rather than drivers, and PIN protection should be used.

"Access to real-time transaction data allows fleets to identify suspicious activity quickly. Cross-checking fuel data against mileage records is a simple, but effective measure. Ultimately, establishing a culture of accountability is also critical as visible controls act as a strong deterrent."

4

REDUCE YOUR FLEET'S MILEAGE

Efficient routing reduces unnecessary mileage, time spent in traffic and overall fuel consumption.

Even relatively small improvements can add up to significant savings across a fleet.

Route optimisation software uses algorithms to analyse thousands of variables such as traffic, delivery windows and vehicle capacity.

This technology, which is often integrated with GPS telematics, enables real-time adjustments to routes and has the potential to reduce fuel consumption by up to 20% by minimising unnecessary mileage.

Route optimisation software can reduce fuel consumption by up to

20%

Holland says fleet decision-makers should ask themselves two fundamental questions concerning their ability to reduce mileage.

"First, can better routing reduce the amount of fuel used? Second, can more efficient utilisation of vehicles reduce the amount of fuel used?

"Underutilised vehicles still incur costs, while overloading or using unsuitable vehicles increases fuel consumption.

"Regular utilisation reviews can highlight opportunities to consolidate journeys and share vehicles. A smaller, well-utilised fleet is typically more cost-effective than a larger, underused one."

Staton agrees that planning remains key to success.

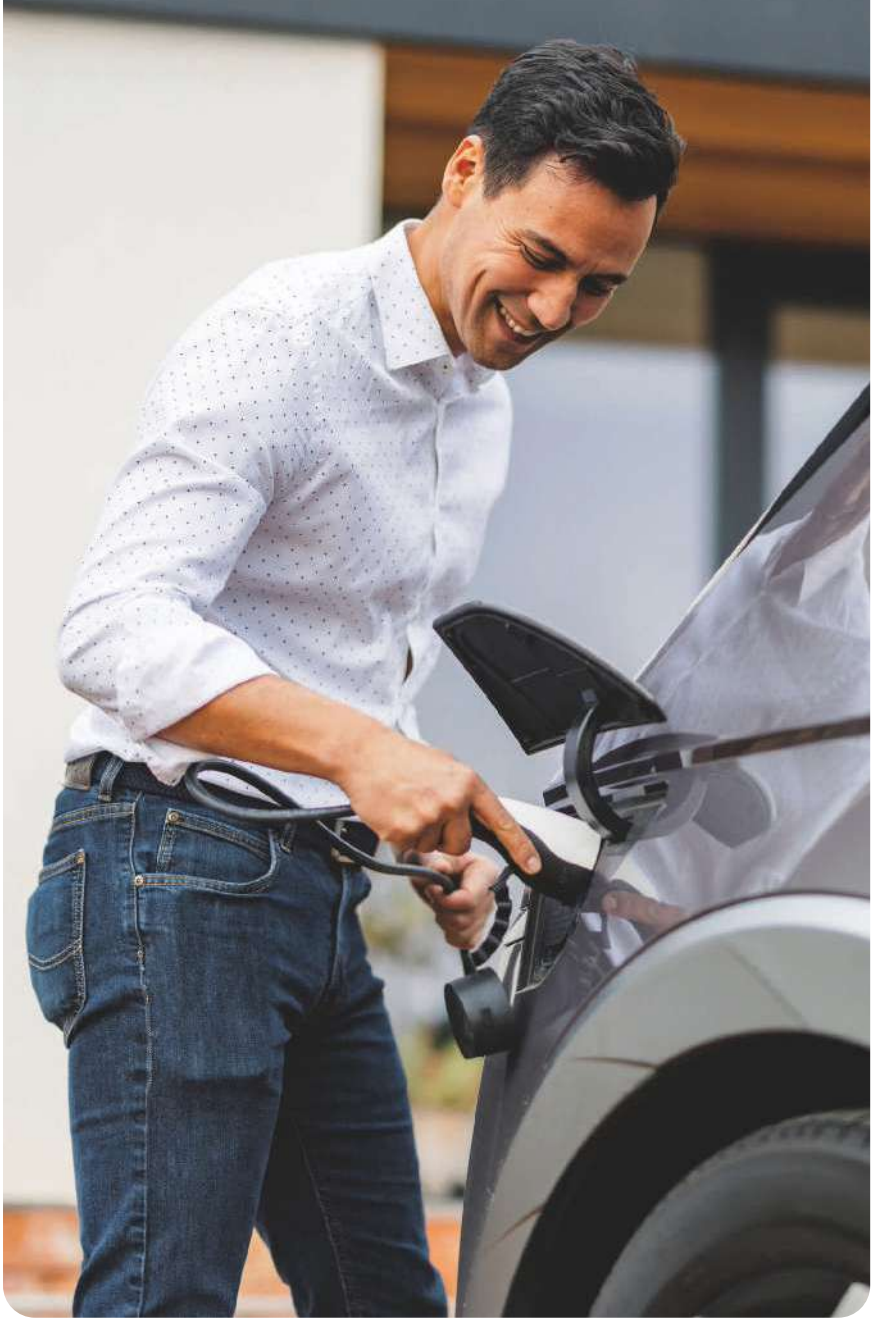
"Combine journeys, if possible," he says. "For example, for drivers attending meetings could car sharing be practicable? And could more than one meeting be planned either in the same area or on the way to or from their first meeting?

"For van drivers who work on sites as tradespeople, can materials be delivered to those sites rather than doing multiple trips to different depots?

"This all helps reduce unnecessary trips and downtime for the driver and reduces the laden weight of the vehicle."

5

> Fuel prices are likely to remain high for a long time to come and this, inevitably, changes whole-life cost calculations



CHOOSE EFFICIENT VEHICLES – AND EVs

Newer vehicles can be more fuel-efficient and cheaper to run per mile than older models.

"When combined with reduced maintenance and downtime, the total cost of ownership (TCO) often favours replacement," says Holland.

"While upfront costs can be higher, fleets that analyse whole-life costs often find that newer vehicles deliver meaningful savings over time."

But does choosing an electric vehicle (EV) over internal combustion engine (ICE) models reduce fuel bills?

FleetCheck founder and CEO Peter Go says that rising petrol and diesel prices caused by the Iran conflict could change the inflection point where electrification becomes attractive to more fleets – although the calculations will be different for each company.

"Fuel prices are likely to remain high for a long time to come and this, inevitably, changes whole-life cost calculations around EV adoption," he adds.

"While electricity prices are likely to rise as well as petrol and diesel, the cost of recharging an electric car or van is likely to remain much, much lower on a pence per mile basis than fuelling an ICE equivalent.

"The more miles each vehicle covers, the greater the difference and, for some fleets, this will be enough to make now the moment when electrification starts to make financial sense.

"It's possible to even conceive of cases where EV fuel cost advantages outweigh some of the operational reasons electric cars and vans haven't been adopted."

Tom Middleditch, head of B2B marketing and sustainability spokesperson at Europcar, also urges fleets to consider renting electric vehicles to tackle the price hikes across both cars and vans.

"For businesses that are feeling the pain of the fuel increases, renting some electric cars or vans could provide an immediate solution – without having to make a long-term commitment to new vehicles," he says.

"We have created a number of tools and resources to help new EV drivers get to grips with the technology.

"Renting electric will also provide organisations with an ideal route to testing the new drivetrain."

Safety a key priority to avoid unnecessary van downtime

Vehicle downtime poses a significant cost and operational challenge for commercial vehicle fleets. Consequently, driver training and risk management have seen notable increases in demand in recent years, as businesses look to minimise time off road.

According to Grosvenor, commercial vehicle operators are investing in targeted initiatives that will deliver a return on investment through improved vehicle uptime and availability.

"Even the smallest incident, such as driver hitting a fixed object or damaging a wing mirror can result in a van being off road for extended periods of time," said Lee Brown, Grosvenor's managing director.

"By improving driving standards through risk assessments and training programmes, we can keep vehicles where they belong – on the road and earning their keep.

"Regular online driver risk assessments will identify potential areas of concern and tailor training accordingly. This may involve online modules focusing on areas such as hazard perception, safe following distances, and manoeuvring safely.

"In-vehicle, on-road defensive driver training can further enhance these skills, equipping drivers with the knowledge and techniques to anticipate and avoid potential hazards."

As a leading commercial vehicle contract hire and fleet management specialist, Grosvenor funds and manages a diverse range of light commercial fleets across many different sectors.

Grosvenor advises that it's not just unsafe driver behaviour behind the wheel that is resulting in vehicles being damaged and unavailable, there are other key factors too.

"Loads that are not properly secured can shift during transit, affecting the vehicle's handling, potentially leading to rollovers or loss of control," continues Lee. "Whilst, of course being illegal and attracting significant fines, overloading a vehicle also puts undue stress on the tyres, brakes, and suspension, increasing the risk of mechanical failure. Drivers should be trained in safe loading practices, including weight limits, load distribution, and the correct use of securing equipment such as straps and nets.

"The number of electric vans being delivered is also on the rise, and we are seeing many drivers being given an EV having never driven one before. In fact, some have never even driven an automatic, and its vital to give them full training to avoid any incidents."

A proactive approach to vehicle safety and compliance is also essential, and this includes regular and timely maintenance.

Grosvenor's pioneering Advanced Remote Connectivity (ARC) solution has revolutionised time off road. Activated remotely, with no device installation, Grosvenor connects each vehicle's on board computer to its OSCAR fleet management system. This gives its maintenance team full visibility of all engine warning lights and service countdowns to ensure the swift resolution of issues and adherence to service schedules. It also reports on driving style which is essential for ongoing training and improved driving standards. This proactivity not only improves vehicle safety and compliance but can lead to a further 20% reduction in time off road.

"A comprehensive risk management solution will pay dividends in the long run," said Lee." It's for this reason why we are seeing such a marked increase in schemes being implemented as businesses do everything in their power to keep their van fleets moving."

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Manufacturer Spotlight

PORSCHE OPENS FOR BUSINESS

Fleet sales are becoming an increasingly important part of Porsche's strategy, prompting a major refocus on how it sells cars to corporate customers. *Matt de Prez* reports

Porsche might not be the first brand that comes to mind when you're thinking about fleet, but its growth in recent years – thanks, in part, to a new line-up of electric cars – has put the historic performance brand firmly on the radar of many businesses.

With its rich history, Posche is best known for its halo sports car, the 911, which was the first model to be sold in the UK, back in 1951.

Over the past 75 years it has predominantly been a retail market car, aside from the odd merchant banker. It wasn't until the mid-00s when Porsche extended its model range beyond just two-door vehicles and introduced the Cayenne and Panamera.

Diesel and plug-in hybrids drew in a small amount of fleet business, but the launch of the electric Taycan, in 2020, completely realigned the company's sales profile. The Taycan became the must-have car for business leaders and executives, offering Porsche's pedigree performance, impressive charging times and usable real-world ranges.

Now, with the Macan Electric and soon-to-launch Cayenne Electric in the stable, Porsche is building a fleet strategy that reflects both the realities of today's market and the unique positioning of the brand.

The move is a result of Rob East joining Porsche as sales director in late 2025. East has vast experience in fleet, having picked up Fleet Manufacturer of the Year trophies at the Fleet News Awards during his time leading the corporate sales divisions of both BMW and Mercedes-Benz.

"My message is really clear," says East. "From a fleet and corporate perspective, Porsche is open for business."

Leading the fleet and business sales initiative, alongside East, is Andy Fowler, corporate & fleet development manager. With 30 years' experience

in the leasing industry, he is poised to build relationships, manage residuals and support Porsche's transition from a predominantly retail-led business to one with a more balanced fleet mix.

Fowler says: "I've got relationships with all the big leasing companies and having come from that side of the fence, I fully understand the challenges they and their customers face."

Where the UK market once maintained a relatively even split between retail and fleet, the fleet and business channels now dominate – particularly in electric vehicles (EVs). Around 64% of EVs are now sold into fleet, underlining just how central the channel has become.

For Porsche, this is a marked departure from its historical position. As recently as 2020, the brand was overwhelmingly retail-driven, with only a small proportion of sales coming from business and fleet customers.

Today, that mix has evolved significantly, with close to a third of UK sales now flowing through fleet and business channels.

East is clear that this isn't a trend Porsche can afford to sit out. "We can't ignore the market," he says, pointing to both the growth of fleet and the accelerating transition to electrification as key drivers behind the shift.

Electrification has not only aligned Porsche with company car tax incentives, but has also broadened its appeal. Porsche is no longer just a sports car brand. Its expanding range, combined with competitive entry points for electric models, is making the marque more accessible to business users who may not previously have considered it. Despite this shift, Porsche is not pursuing fleet volume for its own sake. The strategy is deliberately measured and aligned with the brand's premium positioning.

There are clear boundaries. Sectors such as daily rental and Motability are not part of the plan, and there is no appetite for chasing large volumes at the expense of brand equity.

> "We're focusing on the volume that's already being transacted"

Instead, the focus is on ensuring that any growth in fleet is achieved in a way that remains "Porsche appropriate". That means maintaining strong residual values, preserving exclusivity and, crucially, delivering a consistent customer experience.

East explains: "This isn't about explosive growth. Undoubtedly, there is incremental volume, but we're focusing on the volume that's already being transacted.

"I think we just need to understand that more. We need to understand where that business is being transacted and make sure that the fleet customer experience is absolutely the same as that of a retail customer. I'm not convinced that it is at the moment. If there is a single theme running through Porsche's fleet strategy, it is the importance of customer experience."

Regardless of how a vehicle is funded – whether outright purchase, lease or broker – the expectation is that every customer should receive the full Porsche buying journey. That includes visiting a Porsche Centre, engaging in the brand's highly curated specification process and, ultimately, attending a free driver training session at the Porsche Experience Centre Silverstone.

This represents a significant shift from traditional fleet models, where

customers often transact at arm's length via leasing companies or brokers. East believes this approach risks diluting the brand.

The challenge, therefore, is to reconnect those customers with the manufacturer. East acknowledges many fleet buyers currently miss out on key touchpoints, from vehicle handover to the initial specification experience. Addressing that gap is a priority.

SME FOCUS DRIVES EARLY MOMENTUM

In the short term, Porsche is building its fleet strategy around small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), with "relatively flexible fleet policies".

There are around five million SME businesses in the UK, so this segment offers significant opportunity for Porsche and its retail network. East says these customers are more open to premium brands, making them an ideal starting point.

To support this, Porsche has launched a "Porsche for Business" internal training programme designed to equip its retail network to engage effectively with fleet and business customers. It provides a framework for how the brand wants to approach the sector.

This strategy leverages Porsche's existing retail footprint, rather than creating a separate fleet sales structure.

East says: "We have a very focused partnership model with our Porsche Centres. Training is critical. We can't expect them to know about the fleet market overnight or just by sending them a few slides, we need to take them on that journey as well."

More than 500 Porsche retail staff have already undergone training to build confidence in handling fleet and business customers. The programme covers both the technical aspects of fleet finance – such as benefit-in-kind (BIK) taxation and capital allowances – and the skills required to manage the fleet sales process.

The aim is to ensure that any customer walking into a Porsche Centre, regardless of when they visit, can have an informed discussion about funding a vehicle through their business.

Fowler adds: "This was a programme all about getting the foundations absolutely right, so everybody was on at least the same level, and then we'll build them up as we go down this road."

As fleet activity grows, Porsche may introduce more specialised roles, such as local business development managers. For now, however, the priority is to build a broad base of capability across the network.

STRENGTHENING TIES WITH LEASING COMPANIES

Alongside its SME push, Porsche is working to deepen relationships with the UK's major leasing companies.

Historically, much of Porsche's fleet business has been transacted indirectly, with limited visibility of the end customer. The new approach seeks to change that.

By engaging directly with the top 10-15 leasing providers, Porsche is aiming to better understand their processes, identify friction points and ensure that its own systems are aligned.

This collaboration is also about opening dialogue.

Fowler explains that building these relationships takes time, but is essential to creating a more seamless experience for customers.

He says: "It's a long journey. It's not going to be fixed overnight. We've already looked at some of our processes and the feedback has been fantastic, that it's exactly what we need, and we're able to open that dialogue and get rid of the challenges."

Importantly, Porsche is not looking to disrupt the existing funding ecosystem. Instead, it wants to complement it by adding value at the brand level – particularly around customer engagement and vehicle delivery.

While brokers remain an integral part of the fleet landscape, particularly for SME customers, East and Fowler are keen to ensure that broker-led transactions do not come at the expense of the customer experience.

The concern is that vehicles ordered through brokers can sometimes be delivered without any meaningful interaction with the brand.

East sees this as a missed opportunity.

His approach, therefore, is to work alongside brokers and leasing companies to ensure that end users are still offered the chance to engage with a Porsche Centre, to configure their vehicle in the optimum way and receive a proper handover.

Rob East. sales director, Porsche

Key fleet models

TAYCAN
Following a 2024 facelift, the Taycan is now more capable than ever. It provides a range of up to 421 miles, ultra-fast 320kW charging and rides on adaptive air suspension. There's a selection of bodystyles, including saloon and estate, along with multiple powertrain options ranging from the 425PS single motor all the way up to a range-topping version with 1,034PS.

MACAN ELECTRIC
The Macan is Porsche's best-selling car and competes in the crucial mid-size SUV segment. As the most affordable electric Porsche, it carries plenty of fleet appeal. The entry-level car has 360PS and a range of almost 400 miles, while the five model line-up offers increasing level of performance.

CAYENNE ELECTRIC
Arriving this summer, the Cayenne Electric will boost Porsche's fleet presence further with an offering in the large SUV space. Featuring the brand's latest technology, advanced infotainment and the option of wireless charging, the Cayenne will set a new benchmark in the segment. The core version provides 399 miles of driving and a 442PS power output.

ZENITH PUTS CUSTOMERS AT THE HEART OF ITS STRATEGY

Management restructure and refocused vision gives staff greater clarity and understanding about the business goals, according to CEO Richard Jones. *Stephen Briers* reports

The last time *Fleet News* sat down with Richard Jones, he had just assumed responsibility for Lex Autolease, an expansion of his role as managing director at Lloyds sister subsidiary Black Horse.

It was the first time the banking giant's corporate and retail finance divisions had been united under one leader.

That was in late 2018. Over the subsequent four-year period, Jones sought to utilise the "common agendas" between the two businesses, while prioritising "better understanding and deeper relationships with customers".

Following a 24-month hiatus (2023-2025) as managing director at retail finance provider MotoNovo Finance, he returned to high-level corporate leasing in March 2025 at Zenith, replacing recently retired long-standing CEO and Fleet News Hall of Famer Tim Buchan.

Jones describes the past 12 months as "the most challenging and enjoyable year of my career", pointing to the role that leasing companies are playing in spearheading the UK's drive to electrification, as well as the pain they are enduring due to the well-documented collapse in residual values (RVs).

In Zenith, he joins the only leasing company to challenge Novuna Vehicle Solutions's recent dominance at the Fleet News Awards. A run of six wins from 2019 to 2025 was only interrupted by Zenith victories in 2023 and again this year when it was crowned Leasing Company of the year – more than 20,000 vehicles.

Not a bad return for his first year in the job.

Zenith was already a business he knew well from his time at Lex, frequently butting heads during tender proposals. "We always found it hard to win against them," Jones concedes.

So, he knew what to expect when he walked through the door at the Kirkstall Forge head office in Leeds. Nevertheless, he admits to still being taken aback by the intensity of the "customer ethos".

He explains: "There's a DNA in Zenith that I haven't seen anywhere else which flows through the whole organisation from top to bottom. A focus on solving problems for customers and being there for them."

> "We're here to solve things for customers"

'MORE FOCUSED' SENIOR MANAGERS

After an initial few months holding 'listening' sessions with colleagues asking them why they work there, why they stay, what they love and – crucially – what the Zenith strategy means to them, Jones started his business evolution, including restructuring the senior management to be "more focused".

Corporate and consumer CEO Ian Hughes departed when his role was split into two, with Andy Wolff promoted to corporate MD and Tom Brewer becoming MD of the consumer and rental division.

Then there was the clarification of the strategy, underpinned by a core vision of decarbonisation.

"That's important, but it shouldn't be our mission, especially with cars, vans and commercial vehicles on different transition pathways," Jones says.

"We're here to solve things for customers. We're here to give them full-service solutions. We're here to support them over their full cycle and deal with their priorities – that's what made Zenith successful.

"So, we refocused the vision to put customers at the heart of our strategy."

THREE BUSINESS OPERATIONS

The strategy runs across Zenith's three distinct business operations: corporate, the traditional heartland, accounting for the bulk of the vehicle fleet; consumer, including white label partnerships, around 3,000 units; and commercial, the high intensity fleet management division consisting of complex vans and HGVs, with c75 major customers across supermarkets, parcel logistics, builders and merchants.

Each is run as a separate business unit, with integration where it makes sense, such as operating platforms, people rewards, values and behaviours, and, of course, the overarching strategy.

The corporate and commercial divisions have enjoyed several buoyant years, with notable blue-chip wins, including Coca-Cola and Amazon; consequently, fleet size in the 2025 FN50 was up 16%, reported as 52,632 cars, 14,500 vans and 13,888 trucks (the latter accounting for a little more than half the FN50 total).

Jones is confident there is ample opportunity for further growth.

"Both markets are growing and we see leasing winning in automotive funding, especially with electrification," he says.

The business models are centred on 'in-source to outsource' for commercial, where Zenith manages the fleet on behalf of the customer, and full-service leasing solutions for corporate.

"A lot of people with high intensity fleets, historically manage them for themselves. Our proposition – and it's proven – says, 'let us manage it for you'," Jones says.

Typically, Zenith's vehicle touchpoints in commercial are anywhere between 10 and 50 times more frequent than for a corporate fleet, particularly on the service and maintenance side.

It operates its own third party approved aftersales network, supported by 175 mobile technicians, with scheduled and unscheduled maintenance managed via its award-winning software platform.

"If you're running a fleet of 5,000 trucks and trailers, and we improve your vehicle off-road (VOR) times by 5%, you can reduce your fleet by 5% with huge capital savings, as well as making the unit cost of each repair cheaper," Jones says.

"The key to VOR is maintenance and we understand scheduling and how a customer might want to vary that based on its routes and usage, which can vary even within a single fleet.

COMPANY: Zenith
HEAD OFFICE: Leeds
CEO: Richard Jones
TIME IN ROLE: 15 months
FLEET SIZE (FN50 2025): 81,022 (cars – 52,634; vans – 14,500; trucks – 13,888)
BUSINESS/RETAIL SPLIT (CARS): 90/10
VEHICLES UNDER FLEET MANAGEMENT: 168,270

"We designed a business model to provide a full-service solution"

"As a consequence, vehicle uptime gets better and better. It saves a huge amount of money, but it also increases fleet reliability. And that's not just mission critical to the fleet team, it's mission critical to the entire business."

Jones adds: "It also gives us earnings diversity because, while we do funded fleet as well as managed, more of the revenue comes from the managed side in the commercial business, whereas in the corporate business, more of the revenue is from the funding. It gives us a nice blend."

The bonus ingredient is added by the consumer business, including a white label proposition which Jones describes as "unique".

He explains: "I see more and more financial services companies wanting to get access to leasing, but they don't have the infrastructure to do it. We can provide that. But it's a service model, so it's not got the full margin. Don't get me wrong, consumers are important, but the real growth engines are going to be corporate and commercial."

The full-service strategy means Zenith deliberately avoids some sectors. And while it's not averse to multi-supply, those deals are seen as "opportunistic" rather than strategic.

As a result, 91% of its car and van contracts are sole supply, by far and away the higher proportion of any FN50 company.

"We designed a business model to provide a full-service solution," Jones says. "We remain focused on mid and large corporate companies who want a full-service solution for car and van, and, of course, salary sacrifice, wrapped with lots of value-added consultancy services and added dynamics on things such as using our data to manage their fleet."

However, while all this might sound like Zenith is nullifying the need for customers to have an in-house fleet manager, Jones insists nothing could be further from the truth.

"There's no death to the fleet manager; they are still a valuable asset," he says. "If you're straight into procurement, the danger is there isn't enough internal knowledge on the other side. It's still a specialist area, right? And in today's market, even more so.

"I'm a big advocate for internal fleet expertise."

For a leasing company which puts decarbonisation at the core of its business aspirations, it comes as no surprise that Zenith has the highest proportion of full-electric cars of any FN50 company's reported figures.

Almost 62% of its funded fleet cars are full-electric, with another 22% plug-in hybrid. That drops substantially for vans, to around 10%, while trucks are negligible with a handful of trials taking place.

The real challenge, as everyone in fleet knows, is the second-hand market. With demand incentives squarely targeted at the new car buyer, RVs for electric cars have plummeted, affecting leasing profits and driving up leasing rates.

'ACHIEVABLE' PATH TO DECARBONISATION

Jones describes the Government position as "one foot on the accelerator and one foot on the brake", acknowledging the policy complexities but also highlighting the need for a decarbonisation pathway "that is achievable".

"I think 2030 and 2035 are noble aims. But I don't think we have all the policy actions that are needed to meet the goals as they're set today," he says. "The key thing that's missing is how do we get more stimulation into the used market.

"There are eight times the number of used transactions than new, and the used buyer has not had any kind of real support or incentive to make the leap. That's still our fundamental challenge."

Zenith has taken its own measures to stimulate interest by expanding its successful salary sacrifice offer – which accounts for more than a third of its car fleet – into the used market, with the launch last October of a second-life proposition.

"The most successful part of electrification has been salary sacrifice. It's been the powerhouse. And, of course, you can use that in the used sector, so we now have our used salary sacrifice proposition live," Jones says.

"What's been incredibly encouraging is how employers have seen this as a genuine new benefit for their employees. A lot of employees don't see new car salary sacrifice as relevant to them because they've never bought a new car.

"Now they can buy a used electric car with all the wraparound support. It's opening up the opportunity to lots more employees."

Zenith has already taken a "significant" number of orders and is now unlocking access to more of its de-fleet stock. It is also onboarding more franchised dealers who, claims Jones, could be accused of not previously taking electric vehicles (EVs) "really seriously". As sales rise, and the volume of cars returning for service increases, Zenith is prioritising relationships with those dealers who have grasped the nettle, are investing in the journey, and can help to educate customers.

However, Zenith recognised that more could be done to help fleets alleviate RV risks, which led to the introduction of Project Volt, a lease extension programme for EVs.

CONTRACT EXTENSIONS

With around a third of eligible contracts formally extended since launch in 2024, Volt has generated around £17m in savings and safeguarded profit share for customers while ensuring drivers avoided unexpected cost hikes and retained familiar vehicles.

Initiatives such as used salary sacrifice and Project Volt are moving Zenith towards a multicycle leasing model. This creates more resilience, as well as opportunities to serve a new customer base.

For now, the proposition will remain limited to second life leasing, according to Jones.

"We need to prove that second cycle works, certainly for the next few years," he says. "And then we'll be open-minded beyond that."

The EV transition scorecard for cars, then, reads 'huge progress made, some challenges remain, but they are being resolved by new solutions'.

The situation for vans is rather more intransigent. There are clear use cases – indeed Jones can point to plenty of customers who "went early" with electrification. However, there are bigger economic considerations: the starting price is higher than internal combustion engines (ICEs) and the end price is lower, because there is no demand for used electric vans.

"You've got to absorb a much bigger depreciation curve," Jones says.

"I look at vans as cars minus four or five years. It's going to face the same challenges. But, if we can accelerate what we've learned on cars into vans, then maybe we can speed up the adoption. But it's a much more challenging timeline."

As for HGVs, there are barely off the starting blocks. A host of additional obstacles litter the way ahead, including battery location (up front affects axle thresholds putting some bridges off limits; placing them in the trailer affects capacity) and the need for specialist charging hubs.

And that's even before considering the actual price, which can be twice as much as a diesel truck, and limited service, maintenance and repair (SMR) propositions.

"In HGV, it's about finding clients who want to pursue a use case and partnering because we're learning as well," Jones says.

"What are the demands of servicing and maintenance? How are they different? How do we have to change our own service and maintenance proposition?"

The car/van/truck decarbonisation challenge provides a clear illustration of Zenith's strategic aspirations of solving customer issues by offering full-service solutions, including consultancy.

THE HUMAN ELEMENT AND AI

At the heart of the model is human interaction; yet, concurrently, the company is assessing how to integrate artificial intelligence (AI) to support its teams by simplifying processes and removing laborious administrative tasks, while responding to customer queries more promptly.

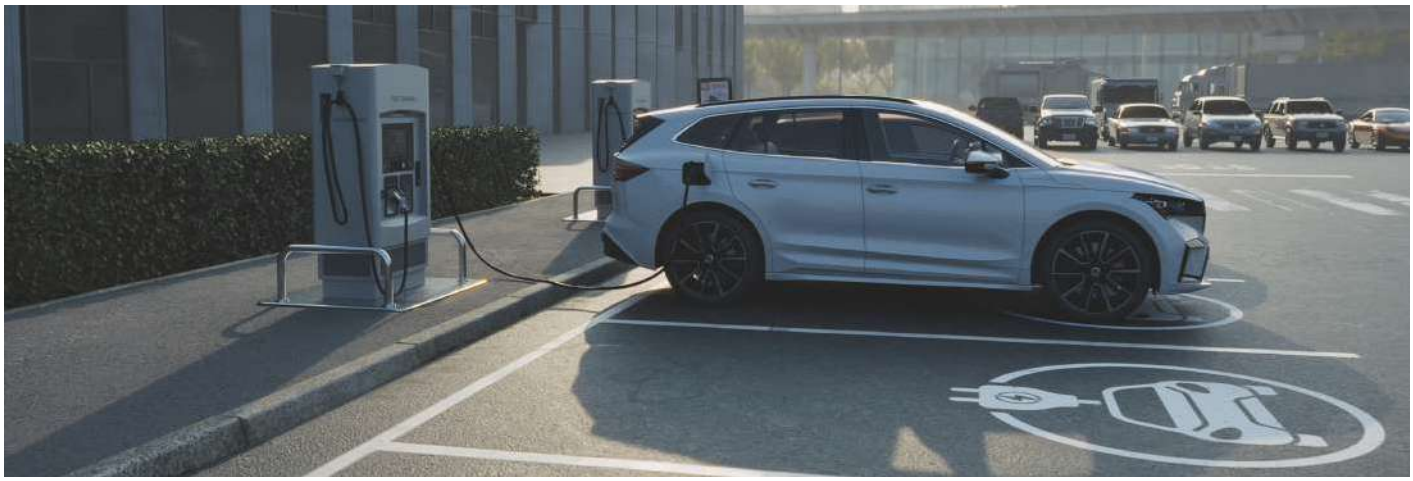
"You've got the slightly less intelligent end, where you take out wasted processes and create slicker customer journeys. And you have agentic, or super intelligent AI, which is slightly more conceptual, and I don't know how that's going to evolve," Jones says.

But he warns: "Clunky AI is worse than having no AI in your processes or your engagement models. So, we are staying very focused on person-to-person interaction, using AI to augment the effectiveness of our teams."

It's evidently paying off, as demonstrated by the shiny new Fleet News Awards trophy adorning the well-stocked cabinet back at the Leeds HQ.

"Our customer service performances have improved; our employee retention has improved; our employee engagement has improved," Jones says. "I think the clarity we've now got as a business in what we're trying to do and what we're not doing is there and understood by our people."

Powering Progress: How the depot charging scheme is helping fleets electrify



The Government's Depot Charging Scheme, announced in the summer of 2025, opened the door for fleets to accelerate their transition to cleaner transport. Businesses and local authorities looking to install charging infrastructure needed for zero-emission vehicles can now access further funding. The scheme currently offers up to 70% off eligible infrastructure and civils costs, capped at £1 million.

But time is of the essence. Applications close 30 June 2026, and installations must be completed by 31 March 2027.

The scheme exists to remove one of the biggest barriers to fleet electrification: the upfront cost of installing depot charging. By reducing this barrier, the Government aims to help more organisations make meaningful progress, faster.

Fleets can also benefit from an expert partner who can guide them through the process, understand their operations, and design a solution that works from day one.

How Camden moved quickly to capture the opportunity

The London Borough of Camden acted quickly during last summer's initial funding round. The borough's committed to reducing the environmental impact of its essential services fleet, and its Holmes Road depot was a priority location for electrification.

The funding rules stipulated that support covered installation only and not major power upgrades. Drax began by conducting a detailed assessment of the depot's power availability, usage patterns, and day-to-day fleet activity. Understanding how vehicles moved, stopped, charged, and returned was essential. The aim was simple: deliver the best solution without the cost or disruption of electrical upgrades.

Camden submitted the proposal to the Government's administrator, Cenex and funding was approved.

Delivering a smart, future-ready depot

The solution combined fast charging for daytime operations with expanded overnight charging. To increase rapid charging capacity, Drax recommended two additional 50kW dual-socket DC chargers – bringing the on-site total to five and enabling quick turnarounds for Camden's electric vans between jobs.

Overnight capacity was boosted with six new 22kW AC dual-socket chargers. Because Drax is hardware agnostic, these were integrated seamlessly alongside Camden's existing AC infrastructure, maximising the value of existing equipment.

All AC chargers were then connected through a smart charging network that intelligently balances power: allowing for the DC chargers to be prioritised during the day, while all 18 AC sockets charge at full capacity overnight. This ensures Camden can charge vehicles without increasing demand on the grid.

The project included civil works, installation of all new chargers, adoption of existing hardware, deployment of smart charging controls and a five-year service and maintenance package.

A new funding window, and a new opportunity for fleets

With a further £140 million now committed to the scheme, fleets have a further chance to cut costs and reduce emissions.

The right partner can help turn ambition into action. Drax Electric Vehicles is ready to support businesses at every stage – from surveying the site and understanding electrical capacity to designing a tailored solution and supporting the funding application.

For fleets looking to energise their future, now's the right time to begin.

For more information visit: energy.drax.com/ev

drax | Electric Vehicles

Last-mile deliveries provide micro electric vehicle opportunity

MicroVolt hopes to plug gap between bikes and vans. *Tom Seymour* reports

Fleet News speaks with Nathalie Hayes, director at MicroVolt on why micro electric vehicles are emerging as a viable solution for UK fleets tackling last-mile delivery, rising costs and urban restrictions.

***Fleet News:* What problem in the UK fleet market made you decide there was a gap for a dedicated micro electric vehicle specialist?**

Nathalie Hayes: The honest answer is that nobody else was doing it. There are plenty of EV distributors, but no one focused purely on micro electric vehicles for last-mile delivery and urban business use.

The sector has defaulted to Transit-sized vans, even where that is clearly not the right tool. At the same time, fleets are dealing with rising fuel costs, expanding Clean Air Zones (CAZs), congestion and increasing pressure to decarbonise.

What we saw was a gap for a specialist approach. Micro electric vehicles are smaller, more efficient and better suited to dense urban environments. We built MicroVolt around that category, rather than treating it as an add-on.

FN: Where do micro electric vehicles fit within a typical fleet operation?

NH: They are not a replacement for vans, they are a complement. They work best on high-frequency, short-route urban work where vans are inefficient and expensive to run.

They sit between cargo bikes and vans. That includes parcel delivery, food logistics and retailer distribution where payloads are moderate, but delivery density is high.

They are also well suited to closed-site environments such as hospitals, campuses and large estates. The key point for fleet managers is that they reduce reliance on full-size vans, which directly lowers operating costs.

FN: Which duty cycles are most suited to these vehicles, and where do they not work?

Nathalie Hayes: It comes down to using the right vehicle for the job

NH: They perform best on short, dense urban routes, typically less than 50-to-60 miles per shift, where stop-start delivery is constant.

That includes parcel delivery, food delivery, pharmaceutical distribution and CAZ operations. They are also a strong replacement for petrol mopeds in urban delivery fleets.

They are not designed for motorway or intercity work, or for applications that require high payloads.

Fleets still need larger vans for those roles. We are very clear about that.

FN: How does total cost of ownership compare with a diesel van?

NH: The strongest case comes when you look beyond the purchase price. Energy costs are significantly lower. Charging costs a fraction of petrol or diesel and is less exposed to volatility.

Maintenance is also reduced due to simpler drivetrains.

Regulatory costs are another key factor. Zero-emission vehicles avoid CAZ charges and future emissions-related costs, which are only going in one direction for diesel fleets. There are also workforce benefits. Some vehicles can be operated with lower licensing requirements, which helps widen the driver pool and reduce recruitment pressure.

We always recommend fleets model this on their own duty cycles and run trials to see the impact in practice.

FN: Charging infrastructure is a major barrier for fleets. Do these vehicles change that equation?

NH: One of the biggest barriers to EV adoption is the cost and complexity of charging infrastructure.

Most of our vehicles can charge from a standard wall socket, which removes the need for dedicated infrastructure or large upfront investment.

Some models use removable batteries that can be charged indoors, while others offer battery swapping to minimise downtime.

That means fleets can begin electrifying without waiting for major infrastructure upgrades.

FN: How do you respond to concerns around payload and productivity?

NH: It comes down to using the right vehicle for the job. On high-density urban routes, manoeuvrability and access often matter more than maximum payload. Smaller vehicles can complete deliveries faster by parking closer and navigating tight streets.

Payloads are sufficient for most last-mile work, and typical UK delivery routes fall well within the available range.

Running trials on real routes is key, as that data quickly addresses those concerns.

FN: What support do fleets need when trialling a new vehicle category like this?

NH: It is about more than just supplying vehicles. We support fleets with vehicle selection, route-matching and configuration, followed by demonstrations and structured trials to generate real operational data.

There is also a regulatory aspect, as these vehicles fall into different licence categories, so we guide fleets through that.

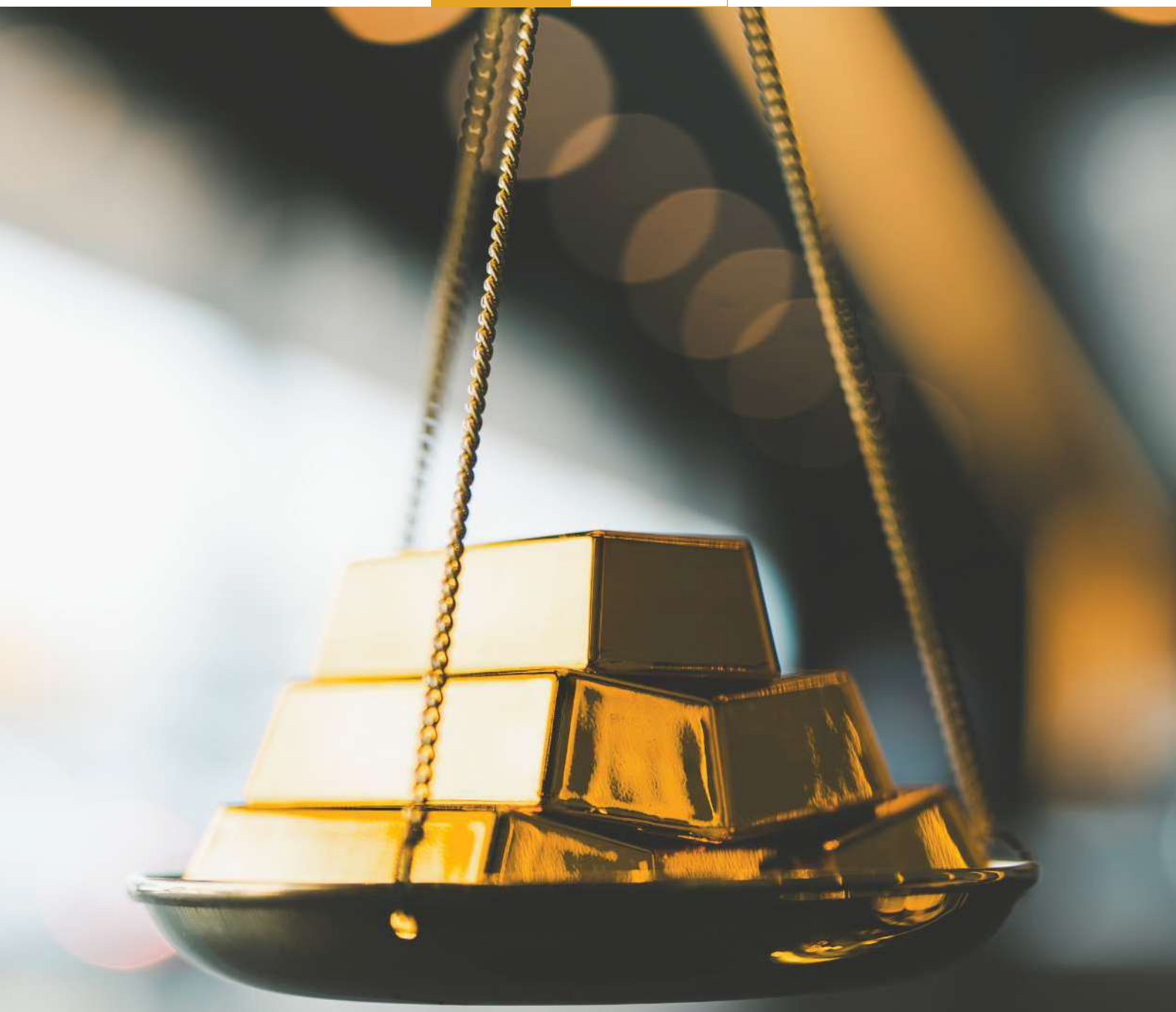
Training, servicing and ongoing operational support are all part of the process. The aim is to support the full transition, not just the deployment.

FN: What are your priorities for the next 12 months?

NH: We launched in March and are focusing on sectors including logistics, food delivery, public sector fleets and campus operations.

There is strong interest from operators looking to fill the gap between bikes and vans, particularly in parcel and food delivery.

Our priority is to build a track record of UK deployments that demonstrate the operational and financial case for micro electric vehicles, while expanding our aftersales support as adoption grows.



Worth your weight in gold?

How fleet size, vehicle assets, qualifications and gender influence the salaries and benefits of fleet managers and their teams. *Stephen Briers* investigates

Average salary by job role – all job categories

Salary	Fleet director	Head of fleet	Fleet manager	Transport manager	Fleet coordinator	Fleet admin
Up to £30,000	-	2%	1%	-	26%	33%
£30,001 - £40,000	-	2%	11%	17%	42%	42%
£40,001 - £50,000	7%	8%	29%	34%	23%	25%
£50,001 - £60,000	-	6%	29%	24%	7%	-
£60,001 - £70,000	-	17%	16%	17%	3%	-
£70,001 - £80,000	-	19%	6%	7%	-	-
£80,001 - £90,000	33%	13%	5%	-	-	-
£90,001 - £100,000	20%	21%	1%	-	-	-
More than £100,000	40%	13%	1%	-	-	-
Average salary:	**£92,333**	**£77,642**	**£54,533**	**£51,207**	**£36,935**	**£34,167**

Fleet manager salaries: men versus women

Salary	Male fleet managers	Female fleet managers
Up to £30,000	2%	0%
£30,001 - £40,000	7%	22%
£40,001 - £50,000	30%	28%
£50,001 - £60,000	29%	30%
£60,001 - £70,000	18%	13%
£70,001 - £80,000	8%	2%
£80,001 - £90,000	5%	4%
£90,001 - £100,000	1%	0%
More than £100,000	1%	0%
Average salary	**£55,680**	**£50,870**

What are you worth? No, it's not a philosophical question. What are you actually earning and how does that figure compare with your peers in similar jobs?

The role of the fleet decision-maker is becoming ever more complex. Today's fleet leaders are expected to manage wellbeing, navigate hydrogen and electrification, understand energy management, oversee risk and health & safety, turn reams of data into insight, deliver business continuity and report on sustainability.

Consequently, an increasing number of companies are appointing fleet managers for the first time, while others are elevating the status of their fleet leaders to director-level, or acknowledging their position of strategic and governance importance to business success by granting them a voice at board meetings.

In addition, fleets teams are becoming more prevalent, no longer the preserve of the fortunate few running the UK's biggest Fleet200-level operations.

As Lorna McAtear, vice-chair at the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP) and head of fleet at National Grid, points out, the job has shifted from transactional tasks – "buying a vehicle, handing it over" – to a strategic, multi-disciplinary function.

Fleet leaders are increasingly involved in procurement, tax and wider stakeholder management, often "picking up responsibilities elsewhere" across the organisation, she adds. "That's the modern fleet manager."

This expanded brief has turned them into strategic players, but have pay, headcount and recognition kept pace?

McAtear warns that fleet decision-makers and their teams face burnout from all the added responsibilities being thrust in their direction. She calls for greater salary transparency, benchmarking and additional resources.

So, again, what are you worth? Working in conjunction with the AFP, *Fleet News* sought to provide the answers by establishing the salaries and benefits of fleet employees, from fleet directors to fleet admin.

Our in-depth survey was completed by more than 300 fleet personnel, providing the sector's first ever view of salary expectations and comparisons.

How do the salaries of women fare against men? Are there any differences between public sector and private sector? What impact does fleet size have on salary? All these, and much more, are answered by the *Fleet News* salary survey, in partnership with the AFP.

First, some holistic headlines.

The bigger the fleet, the higher the salary. We'd expect that. However, asset type has a negligible impact on earnings with those managing large car fleets typically on as much money as those with large van or truck operations (note: many are running mixed asset fleets, which can serve to blur the lines).

Similarly, fleet staff with responsibilities which extend beyond the UK border and those with recognised qualifications, notably from AFP or Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT), typically earn more. Good news for these organisations, which are seeking to professionalise fleet.

EARNINGS BY JOB TITLE

Anyone looking to entice the next generation of school and university leavers into a career in fleet – as opposed to, say, becoming a Tik Tok sensation or YouTube influencer – has only to point to the earnings potential.

On average, fleet directors are paid £92,333. Aside from one respondent earning between £40,001-50,000, every other fleet director is on more than £80,000, with four-out-of-10 earning six figures.

Heads of fleet, meanwhile, are earning £77,642 on average, across a much wider spread of salaries. That said, 83% are still earning more than £60,000 with 13% exceeding £100,000.

This position is viewed as a step up from fleet manager, which is reflected in the salary levels: fleet managers earn considerably less on average, at £54,533.

Almost three-quarters of fleet managers (74%) earn between £40,001 and £70,000, while two respondents are sitting on six-figure salaries.

Experience in this role pays, too, with those whose careers span more than a decade earning on average 13% more than those with less than five years under their belt (£56,771 versus £50,217).

Transport managers, typically more operational and less strategic than fleet managers, nevertheless earn almost as much on average, at £51,207.

That's likely because they are usually O-Licence holders, requiring a Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC); three-quarters of transport managers hold a full licence, by far the most of any fleet position, with another 7% holding a restricted licence.

However, they have a much smaller spread of salaries than fleet managers – all are clustered between £30,001 and £80,000 with 58% earning £40,001-£60,000.

Fleet coordinators and fleet admin positions also have similar average salaries, at £36,935 and £34,167 respectively. In a few companies, running moderate-sized fleets, the fleet coordinator is essentially a fleet manager in all but name, which likely explains the 10% who are earning between £50,001 and £70,000.

In contrast, all fleet admins are earning less than £50,001 with a third earning up to £30,000. Just 26% of coordinators are earning up to £30,000.

GENDER INEQUALITY LOOMS LARGE

What is influencing salary? Fleet size and responsibilities, certainly (more later). Disappointingly, gender also appears to be a significant factor.

Pooling all job roles for comparison, men earn substantially more than women – 25% more, in fact; however, men are also more likely to work in a senior role pushing up the average salary (28% of male respondents are in head of fleet or fleet director positions, compared with just 10% of women).

One issue, then, is caused by a disparity in the level of seniority. That's reinforced by a cursory

Fleet manager salaries – private versus public

Salary	Private sector	Public sector
Up to £30,000	2%	0%
£30,001 - £40,000	12%	9%
£40,001 - £50,000	31%	26%
£50,001 - £60,000	28%	33%
£60,001 - £70,000	15%	19%
£70,001 - £80,000	5%	9%
£80,001 - £90,000	6%	2%
£90,001 - £100,000	0%	2%
More than £100,000	2%	0%
Average salary	**£53,972**	**£55,930**

Fleet manager salaries by fleet size

Salary	Up to 500 vehicles	501-1,000 vehicles	More than 1,000 vehicles
Up to £30,000	0%	4%	0%
£30,001 - £40,000	13%	13%	7%
£40,001 - £50,000	46%	28%	18%
£50,001 - £60,000	23%	26%	38%
£60,001 - £70,000	13%	17%	18%
£70,001 - £80,000	3%	4%	11%
£80,001 - £90,000	0%	7%	4%
£90,001 - £100,000	3%	0%	0%
More than £100,001	0%	0%	4%
Average salary	**£50,641**	**£52,826**	**£58,636**

Salaries by qualifications – all fleet roles

Salary	AFP/ICFM	CILT	None
Up to £30,000	6%	-	5%
£30,001 - £40,000	11%	3%	20%
£40,001 - £50,000	24%	27%	24%
£50,001 - £60,000	20%	18%	20%
£60,001 - £70,000	12%	18%	12%
£70,001 - £80,000	10%	15%	3%
£80,001 - £90,000	8%	6%	4%
£90,001 - £100,000	3%	6%	3%
More than £100,000	6%	6%	9%
Average salary	**£58,333**	**£63,788**	**£55,940**

glance at the Fleet200 which reveals that just three of the UK's biggest 25 fleets are run by women – Judy O'Keefe at Openreach, Lorna McAtear at National Grid and Lucy Stuart at Cadent.

However, focusing the spotlight on fleet managers, who account for the largest proportion of survey respondents, shows that seniority is not the only element at play.

Male fleet managers earn on average £55,680. Female fleet managers earn £50,870 – or 9.5% less. This is slightly worse than the Office for National Statistics figures for full-time employees, which show that women across all occupations earn on average 6.9% less than men.

Both spend a similar proportion of their time on fleet activities, with more than 60% spending all their time on fleet and around 85% spending at least three-quarters of their time.

McAtear provides one explanation for the inequality: "Women have imposter syndrome more than men, so don't ask for a salary increase."

Incongruously, female fleet managers tend to be responsible for larger fleets; half are running operations with more than 1,000 vehicles, compared with just 30% of men in the sample.

And both are equally qualified, with around a third holding Association of Fleet Professionals or ICFM certificates, although men are more likely to have attained CILT qualifications.

Similarly, men are twice as likely to be O-Licence holders – 35% have full licences with CPC qualifications and 10% restricted, compared with 17% and 6% respectively for women – suggesting their responsibilities are more likely to extend to trucks. Could this be a factor in their higher salaries?

Perhaps, says McAtear.

"CILT is coming through the more technical route, that is why you're likely to earn more," she explains.

"If you've come in via HR and reward, then it's been perceived as a lighter touch. It hasn't got the technical knowledge. And, historically, more women have come through the HR route than technical."

GET QUALIFIED AND EARN MORE

Looking more closely at qualifications across all the fleet roles reveals the positive impact they have on salaries, which is good news for both AFP and CILT.

The training/education split between respondents was almost 50:50, with 51% having some form of fleet-recognised qualification.

Those with an AFP/ICFM certificate have a wage average of £58,333, (£56,569 for fleet managers), while CILT achievers have a slightly higher wage average of £63,788.

This compares with £55,940 for those without any fleet-related qualifications, or £51,515 for fleet managers.

It's worth noting that those with CILT qualifications are concentrated in director or heads of positions (hence the absence of comparison for fleet managers) as well as transport manager.

In contrast, AFP/ICFM holders are spread across heads of, fleet manager, coordinator and admin roles, highlighting the breadth of courses available to fleet personnel at all levels of their career.

The other difference in uptake of qualifications is the fact that those with cars and vans veer towards AFP, while those with trucks and plant favour CILT.

AFP chair Paul Hollick frames the association's training as fundamentally about raising standards and professionalism.

He explains: "The reason we do the training is for elevating standards in the industry, improving vocational competence, making sure that the industry is viewed as gold standard."

Training, he adds, opens fleet managers' eyes to how fleet operations work in various segments, which then means "their skills are transferable".

Hollick supports the survey findings that qualifications are directly linked to employability and pay.

He says: "A lot of employers now look for an AFP qualification when they're hiring fleet managers. Fundamentally, it raises standards and raises the bar, and that will, in the long term, raise salaries and packages."

74%
of fleet managers earn between £40,001 and £70,000

McAtear agrees, but also believes that the role has changed to such an extent that it needs mandatory professional qualifications, similar to the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply in the procurement world and an O-Licence and CPC for HGV operators.

"We know this has been recognised because Government has put on the pathway a fleet management course for the apprenticeships," she says. "It's not there yet, but even they've now acknowledged the role has changed that much that this is needed."

PUBLIC VERSUS PRIVATE SECTOR

Average earnings in the public and private sectors are broadly similar across all fleet roles, at £58,480 for private and £57,593 for public.

However, the private sector does offer greater potential for higher earnings at the top of the pay scale, with a fifth (20%) earning more than £80,000 (and 7% more than £100k), compared with just 11% in the public sector (just 2% are on more than £100k).

Perhaps surprisingly, the picture is slightly different when spotlighting fleet managers, with those working in the public sector earning marginally higher salaries than their private sector counterparts – £55,930 versus £53,972 – although they do also tend to run larger fleets with a higher proportion of vans and complex assets.

The figures may also reflect qualifications, as public sector fleet managers are more likely to have undertaken AFP training – 47% of respondents are qualified compared with 30% of private sector fleet managers.

An added factor to consider is that public sector fleet roles tend to be more rigidly structured on pay bands, while the private sector offers greater scope for individual negotiation, as McAtear notes.

"Public sector pay is much more on bandings; in the private sector, you'll have much more in personal contracts where you get a chance to negotiate," she says.

And McAtear stresses that total reward matters as much as pay: "In the fleet world, we understand that it's not just about your salary, it's about the benefits that you get. It's the pensions, it's all the other bits and pieces."

This is supported by the *Fleet News* salary survey. Private sector companies are deploying an arsenal

"Historically, more women have come through the HR route than technical"

LORNA McATEAR, NATIONAL GRID

of incentives; they are much more likely to reward their fleet staff through a range of benefits, elevating their employees' total package above those in the public sector.

Just 15% are not offered any additional benefits compared with 58% of workers in the public sector.

The most popular is a bonus scheme, offered to 62% of private sector fleet employees compared with 12% in the public sector, followed by private medical insurance (49% versus 10% in the public sector) and a company car (45% versus 10%).

A small proportion – 16% – have the option of a cash allowance, which is offered to just 4% in the public sector.

BENEFITS ARE A USEFUL RETENTION TOOL

Benefits are offered to staff at all levels within the fleet team, although they are more commonplace in larger fleets, particularly cash allowances (more than a fifth – 22% – of those working with fleets of 1,000-plus vehicles can take cash, while on smaller fleets it's less than 10%), and private medical insurance (offered to 45% with more than 1,000 vehicles versus 28% for fleets up to 500 vehicles).

Cut a different way, companies which have a car salary sacrifice scheme are generally more positively aligned to benefits, with 76% of employees in such organisations on a bonus scheme, 37% offered a cash alternative, 45% a company car and 68% with private medical insurance.

However, employees whose fleet profile is more heavily biased towards truck and plant tend to have less access to additional benefits.

Across all roles, benefits appear to aid retention, within the sector if not necessarily the same company. Staff with more than 10 years' fleet experience have accrued the most benefits, particularly company car (40%) and private medical insurance (44%).

Indeed, less than a quarter (24%) receive no additional benefits, compared with half of employees with less than two years' fleet experience, where only a quarter are offered PMI or a company car.

DOES SIZE MATTER?

Fleet size does, of course, have a significant influence on the salaries of staff at all levels.

Employees in fleets of more than 1,000 vehicles earn the highest wage on average, at £65,455, while those with fleets of 101-500 earn £49,776.

The anomaly is for staff on fleets of up to 100 vehicles who average the second highest salary, at £55,690. However, on these smaller fleets, the decision-maker is often a senior manager or director in HR or finance, spending a smaller proportion of their time running the vehicles.

Evidencing this, a third of those where fleet accounts for less than 25% of their workload earn more than £100,000, highlighting that it's their non-fleet work which has elevated their salary.

Singling out fleet managers rebalances the figures. Those running the biggest fleets earn on average £58,636, which equates to 16% more than fleet managers responsible for fewer than 500 vehicles.

Size doesn't just refer to fleet size; it's also team size – although the two have obvious correlations.

Zooming in on fleet managers, 63% have direct reports (central fleet teams), 37% do not.

The majority (33%) have one-two direct reports, 16% have three-to-four and 14% have at least five direct reports.

The more reports, the higher the salary, which also reflects fleet size and fleet complexity: van-heavy fleets tend to employ more people than car fleets, for example, as do operations where the assets are outright purchased rather than leased.

15%
of fleet staff in private sector receive no additional benefits

This was also a conclusion when *Fleet News* and the AFP published their respective analyses on fleet team headcounts, which found that for mega fleets with more than 1,000 vehicles, the average number of full-time employees was 5.25 for external funding and 12.25 for outright purchase.

At the opposite end of the scale, for small fleets of 100 vehicles or fewer, the average number of full-time employees was 0.83 for external funding and one for outright purchase.

HOME AND AWAY

A third of fleet decision-makers responding to the salary survey run fleets in other countries, although 65% of those extend only as far as Ireland.

Those running fleets in the UK and Ireland are on pretty much the same average wage as those with just UK responsibilities, at c£57,000.

For the 11% who are managing fleets elsewhere, including Europe, EMEA and global, salaries are notably higher, averaging £64,714.

The higher pay isn't necessarily related to fleet size (a fifth of those with overseas roles are responsible for fewer than 100 vehicles); it's more a reflection of the complexities presented by cross-border fleet management, with different tax regimes, regulations, funding methods and locally-influenced fleet policies and priorities.

NEW ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

While fleet managers spend the majority of their time managing their fleets (85% spend at least three-quarters, while 64% spend all their time on fleet), many have absorbed additional responsibilities, highlighting the growing breadth of the role and the need to embrace new skills.

In fact, 36% of fleet managers responding to the survey said they performed other tasks "outside of their fleet responsibilities" within their organisations, and they frequently referred to multiple extra duties.

These duties, in the main, have parallels or overlaps with fleet, such as procurement and risk management, although some are roles that a few years ago would not have existed, such as environmental, social and governance (ESG).

Most common, stated by just over half (52%) of those with extra obligations, was procurement followed by safety and compliance (42%), HR/personnel and risk management (both 37%), ESG and technology/IT (both 31%), facilities (29%) and business continuity planning (23%).

A further 17% stated other tasks, including travel insurance, accounts/expenses, accessible community transport, security clearance and logistics.

However, McAtear believes pay has not kept pace with the changing role of the fleet decision-maker.

"The job we did five years ago is not the job we're doing now, and fleet managers are not being paid to do all this strategic work," she says.

DECISION-MAKING REPORTING LINES

While having less of a direct impact on salary levels, the survey asked fleets to state which business functions they reported into.

For fleet managers, the two most popular responses from those providing details were operations (35%) and group or board level (27%). A further 15% reported into finance, while just 10% reported to HR or procurement and 3% into logistics.

The latter tended to be on the lowest salary (£47,500), although the sample size was small, while the other functions were broadly the same, with procurement narrowly coming out on top with an average salary of £58,571.

IN-HOUSE REPAIRS PAY DIVIDENDS

For decision-makers running fleets which operate their own internal workshops, often in the public sector (bluelight services, some local authorities) or those with business-critical vans and trucks (logistics and deliveries), salaries tend to be higher to recognise the extended responsibility.

Slightly more than a quarter (26%) of those who responded to the question run workshops. On average, they are earning £57,500, almost 6% more than those running fleets without workshops.

Interestingly, 47% of public sector fleet managers also run workshops, compared with just 18% of

Reporting function – all fleet roles

Function	Fleet director	Head of fleet	Fleet manager	Transport manager	Fleet coordinator	Fleet admin
Group/board	53%	53%	24%	34%	7%	8%
Procurement	7%	15%	9%	-	16%	25%
Operations	7%	15%	32%	48%	42%	33%
HR	7%	2%	9%	3%	7%	-
Finance	13%	6%	13%	3%	7%	17%
Logistics	-	4%	3%	3%	7%	-

private sector fleet managers. They are most common in fleets with larger volumes of trucks and plant and least prevalent with car-dominated fleets.

So, a different question: are you being paid what you are worth? Benchmarking your own salary against those of your peers working in similar fleets was one of the objectives of our salary survey.

It can also be used when recruiting for admin roles, offering insight into the pay grades for fleets operating in different sectors.

But the final word to McAtear: "We want to attract more people. We need to show right from school age that this is a career path – and it's a genuine career path – with a lot of reward and benefit to it.

"Fleet can be great fun. We have to get that excitement through to that next generation of people."

■ Additional insight from the survey – including analysis on individual job functions – will be published on the *Fleet News* website in the coming weeks, as well as a full list of the questions we asked. If there is additional insight you would like to see, please email *Fleet News* group editor Stephen Briers: **stephen.briers@bauermedia.co.uk**

Fleet manager salaries by geographic responsibility

Salary	UK only	UK & Ireland	Other – UK & Europe, EMEA, Global
Up to £30,000	3%	9%	11%
£30,001 - £40,000	14%	18%	3%
£40,001 - £50,000	24%	18%	23%
£50,001 - £60,000	22%	14%	14%
£60,001 - £70,000	14%	14%	6%
£70,001 - £80,000	9%	3%	11%
£80,001 - £90,000	4%	8%	11%
£90,001 - £100,000	4%	9%	3%
More than £100,000	4%	6%	17%
Average salary	**£57,195**	**£57,769**	**£64,714**

Salaries by asset management type (more than 500 of each vehicle category)

Salary	Cars	Vans	Trucks
Up to £30,000	3%	4%	-
£30,001 - £40,000	13%	11%	15%
£40,001 - £50,000	10%	15%	20%
£50,001 - £60,000	16%	17%	15%
£60,001 - £70,000	13%	16%	5%
£70,001 - £80,000	10%	9%	5%
£80,001 - £90,000	11%	6%	-
£90,001 - £100,000	11%	13%	25%
More than £100,000	13%	9%	15%
Average salary	**£68,286**	**£65,000**	**£69,000**

Do you receive any additional benefits? (all fleet roles)

Benefit type	Fleet director	Head of fleet	Fleet manager	Transport manager	Fleet coordinator	Fleet admin
Bonus scheme	73%	55%	48%	45%	39%	25%
Cash allowance	33%	28%	10%	10%	-	-
Company car	47%	43%	36%	28%	19%	8%
Private medical insurance	67%	49%	37%	21%	42%	8%
Other	20%	21%	8%	7%	3%	17%
No other benefits	7%	21%	26%	34%	35%	50%

The AFP approach to work experience

Work experience is a mutually beneficial way of raising the fleet industry's profile and providing young people with an engaging placement

"Fleet managers don't tend to be 25-year-olds, straight out of university. So many young people don't know about fleet – what it is, or that it's a really exciting career opportunity."

That is AFP marketing manager Carly Pieslak summing up one of the industry's recruitment hurdles. The job title rarely crops up in 'what do you want to be when you grow up?' conversations, and that lack of visibility feeds directly into its ageing demographic.

However, park a snazzy-looking EV in front of some young people and talk to them about its role in a decarbonisation plan, and you get their attention, which is exactly what AFP directors, and their members, have done.

"Off their own backs, many of them have gone into schools and talked to students about fleet, taking electric cars there, to spread the word that this is actually an exciting industry. This is a career. This is a job," says AFP training manager, Ronnie Gillman.

The AFP has partnered with Futures for All, a social mobility charity that helps young people from state schools and colleges access real-world placements for free, and plans are afoot to roll out the resources further afield.

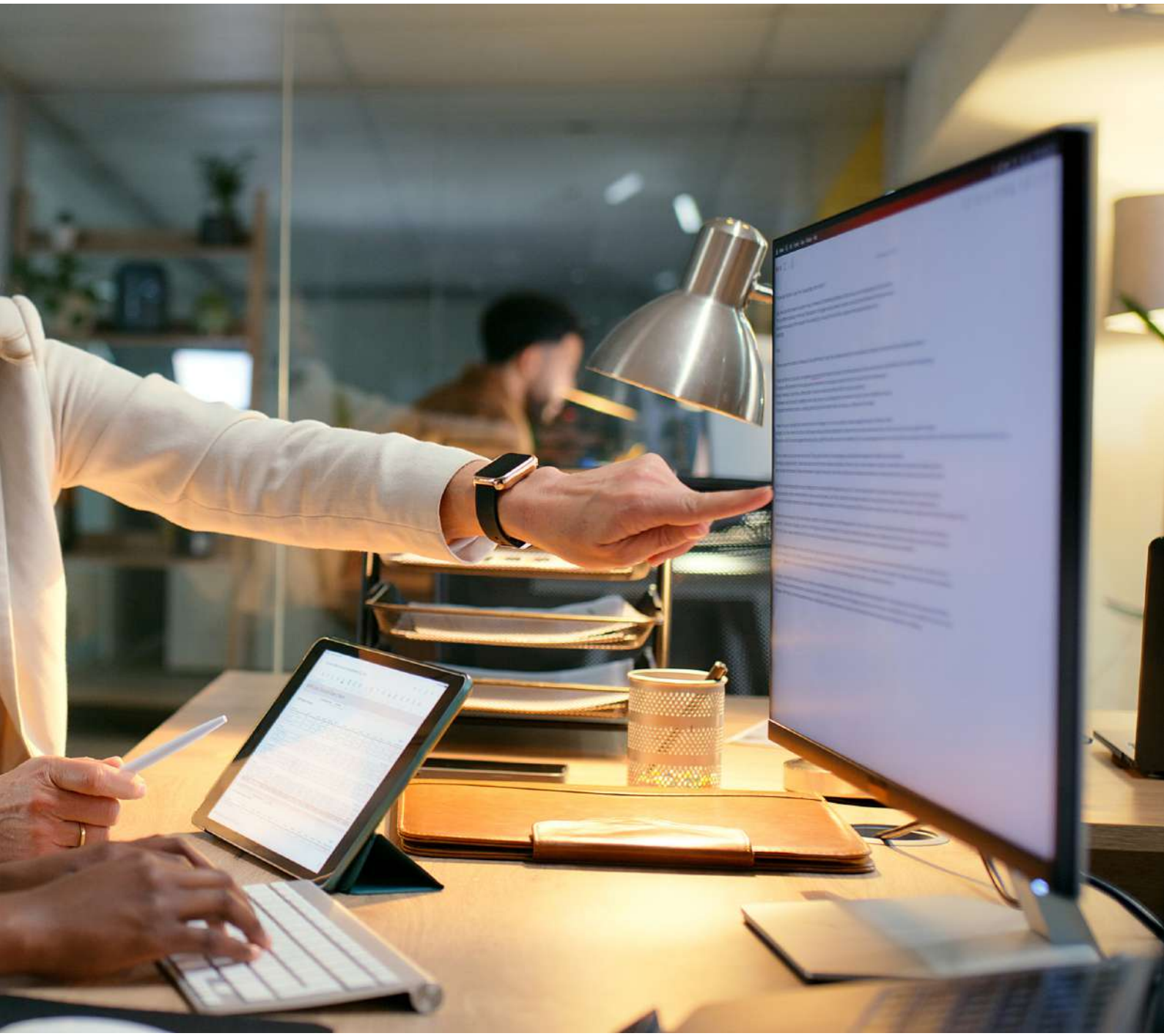
"We are currently putting together an area on our website that explains why we're passionate about work experience and why we are a social mobility partner with Futures for All," explains Gillman. "It'll have links to their website and some resources to get a company started including sample risk assessments, code of conduct and FAQs.

"We are also looking to host an AFP work experience week with five of our members – one company on Monday, another on Tuesday, and so on. What we're doing is facilitating work experience for our members and using our industry voice to help attract young people and get more weight behind it."

The move is designed to overcome what can be common barriers to work experience. Arranging placements is often bureaucratic, which is enough to deter many organisations.

As Gillman explains: "There are blockers to doing physical work experience. We've had a lot of fleets telling us that they want to get involved, but things like having the right insurance and whether your people are DBS checked can be quite a lot of red tape for some companies, particularly if they don't already take on apprentices."

Organisations that already offer either work experience programmes or apprenticeships are well placed to join in, but for those that don't, virtual work experience is a viable alternative. This came to prominence during the pandemic and facilitates



varied, bite-sized placements, which are often more directly engaging than a week-long post.

Such initiatives are mutually beneficial. From a fleet perspective, they help to raise the industry's profile and make it more visible to young people. For students, simply finding a work experience placement, let alone an interesting one, can be challenging. Competition is hot for high-profile slots, and some even charge students to attend, while submitting multiple applications only to hear nothing back can be incredibly demoralising, especially for teenagers.

"It's part of the curriculum, so there's normally a week where most schools say, 'you now have to go and find your work experience placement'," says Gillman. "We've talked about employers finding it difficult to offer, now let's put ourselves in the shoes of the student and the parent. The student comes home and says, 'mum, dad, we've got to do work experience on this week in July and they say, 'great, what are you going to do?'.

"The schools give them helpful resources, and the virtual method is becoming more popular for college students, but school students are expected to fill a week, which isn't easy – and the other aspect is the rejection. Once they get to five, six, seven applications and haven't heard from anybody, at 14 years old, that's pretty demotivating."

Pieslak adds: "It tends to be friends or relatives who work in a particular company that get access to the best placements. For companies offering work experience it can be hard to know how to approach schools to let them know that you've got a programme, and which ones to approach. Getting the word out there beyond that friends and family circle is a big part of what we want to achieve and that is what Futures for All is about."

For Gillman, there is another angle to work experience in fleet, which comes from conversations she has had with seasoned fleet managers for whom academia was a challenge.

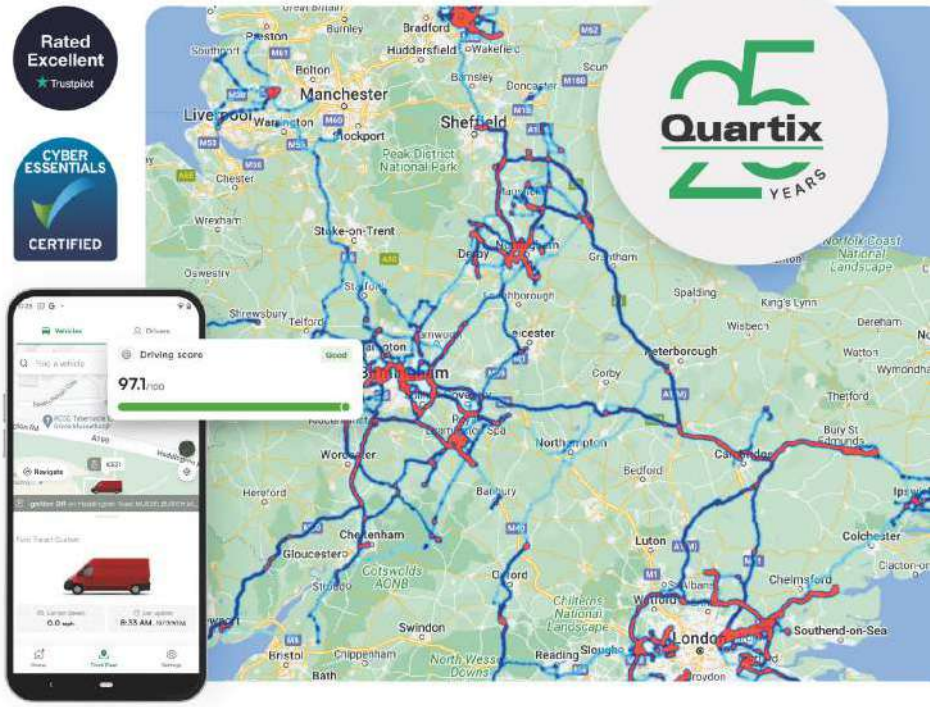
"I've had conversations with some brilliant people who work in fleet before they came on our training courses, and they say, 'I don't think I can do this training, because I didn't go to college'. I always say, you're a fleet manager for a successful company that's a household name, and you've been doing it for many years – you can do this. You have the experience to take on this course.

"The automotive industry offers openings to people who weren't necessarily considered to be academic or didn't get the right breaks. There genuinely are huge opportunities for people who might not have got the best start."

■ **AFP members keen to join its work experience programme can email administration@theafp.co.uk**

The hidden costs draining your fleet budget

Rising vehicle costs, shifting ownership models, and volatile fuel prices are challenges every fleet operator knows. What's harder to spot is the slow accumulation of small, invisible inefficiencies quietly eroding your margins every single day. But your telematics data holds the answers.



The idling problem is bigger than you think

One of the most overlooked drains on fleet budgets is engine idling. Every minute a vehicle sits with its engine running costs roughly 5.9p in fuel, that's £3.53 per hour, per vehicle, for no productive output. Across a 50-vehicle fleet where drivers idle for just 30 minutes a day, that translates to around £2,295 in wasted fuel every month.

Idling creates 'ghost mileage'. This is engine wear that accumulates without covering a single mile. Just one minute of idling equates to approximately two miles of engine wear. Multiply that across a fleet over a full year and the maintenance implications are substantial.

There are also legal considerations. Rule 123 of the Highway Code prohibits leaving an engine running unnecessarily on a public road. Councils actively enforce this, with fines starting at £20 and rising to £80 if unpaid.

Fuel, behaviour, and the data you're not using

Telematics surfaces idling behaviour, and many other ways your margin is squeezed. Unverified mileage claims, inefficient routing, harsh acceleration, and late braking all inflate costs in ways that become possible to quantify with fleet tracking data.

Using driver behaviour scores to provide objective, consistent feedback, tied to clear benchmarks, engages your team. Quartix's scoring and gamification tools have helped fleets achieve measurable, sustained improvements.

WJ is a case in point:

"Quartix driver behaviour reports have saved us £160,000. A 12% improvement in MPG and reduced CO2 emissions, plus fewer vehicle breakdowns and fewer workshop hours… Results like these are precisely why we use telematics."

Scott Logan, Transport Manager, WJ

Protect against unexpected costs

Beyond day-to-day journeys and expenses, telematics helps avoid the larger, unpredictable costs that destabilise budgets. Integrated dashcam footage and GPS data can resolve disputed insurance claims faster and more favourably. Morson Vital, for example, reduced their claims lost ratio by 50% after deploying connected camera technology alongside tracking.

Quartix's daily vehicle inspection data, fed directly into your tracking system, also helps to catch defects before they become failures, reducing unplanned downtime and its ripple effect across scheduling and operations.

Turn data into better decisions

There's also the strategic value in telematics. Your fleet utilisation data identifies underused vehicles that are still being taxed, insured, and maintained. Those assets represent wasted capital, and these insights support right-sizing decisions, grounded in real operational patterns, that can significantly lower costs.

The answers are already there. Let Quartix help you see them.

Book a demo and we'll show you exactly what your data reveals.
Visit quartix.com or call 01686 806 663

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Fleet choices

Helping you to select the best vehicles to meet your fleet requirements

Tradition meets disruption

Jeep Compass vs Škoda Enyaq vs Xpeng G6 p76

Six of the best company cars p88

New cars coming soon p74

Twin test: Nissan Micra vs Renault 5

p84

New cars coming soon

ALPINE A390

Alpine is expanding its model line-up with the introduction of the A390, a five-door fastback that's due to arrive before summer.

Described as a "racing car in a suit", the A390 is said to provide a high level of performance and driver engagement while also offering versatility.

It has similar dimensions to a Polestar 2, providing space for five occupants and a 532-litre boot.

The Alpine A390 uses a triple-motor powertrain with all-wheel drive. It will be offered in two variants: GT with 400PS and GTS with 470PS. The company claims a 0-62mph time of 4.8 seconds for the GT and 3.9 seconds for the GTS. Battery capacity is 82kWh – enough for a 345-mile range.

It uses 400v architecture, rather than the more advanced 800v found in some models. Alpine says DC fast charging can still reach 190kW, but its intelligent charging management allows it to recharge in less than 20 minutes, to recover two hours of motorway driving, and charge from 15%-to-80% in less than 25 minutes.

Prices start at £61,390.

AION V

Aion is the latest Chinese car brand to launch in the UK and the V is its debut model. The mid-size electric SUV is available to order now, priced from £36,450.

It comes with an eight-year care package that includes warranty, servicing, MOT and breakdown cover.

The Aion V is powered by a 204PS electric motor and a 75.4kWh battery, giving a range of 317 miles. The battery can be charged from 10%-80% in 24 minutes.

As standard, the Aion V includes a full-length panoramic roof, double-glazed front windows, and multi-shade ambient lighting; electrically-adjustable heated and ventilated front seats and heated reclining rear seats; wireless smartphone charging and wireless Android Auto and Apple CarPlay; a 14.6-inch touch-screen infotainment system powered by the latest ultra-fast Qualcomm Snapdragon processor, with permanent soft keys for instant access to climate, seating and volume buttons; a virtual assistant offering zonal voice control of key settings and functions; and a nine-speaker 360-watt premium audio system.

CHANGAN DEEPAL S05

Having made its brand debut in 2025, with the Deepal S07, Changan is forging ahead with its model range expansion in 2026.

The Deepal S05 is set to launch in the first half of the year and will be a rival for the Kia EV3 and Škoda Elroq, offering a range of around 300 miles from its 68kWh battery.

It was developed at the brand's design centre in Turin and features frameless windows and retractable door handles. The sleek body results in a drag coefficient of just 0.25.

Fast charging will enable a range of around 150 miles to be added in 15 minutes, at a rapid charge point.

Pricing is yet to be confirmed, but the car is expected to start at around £33,000.

The Deepal SO5 features the latest technology, including a 15-inch central infotainment touchscreen, smartphone connectivity and driver assistance aids such as adaptive cruise control.

There's a 492-litre rear boot, which can be expanded to 1,250 litres with the seats folded down, as well as a 159-litre frunk.

Changan tunes the cars at its British R&D facility and offers peace of mind with a seven-year or 100,000-mile warranty.

Key models that will be available to order in the coming months

Scan here for full details of every new vehicle launch in 2026

JAECOO 8

Jaecoo is growing its model range at rapid pace and the latest addition is its flagship seven-seat SUV.

The Jaecoo 8 is priced from £45,500 and is set to compete with the Hyundai Santa Fe and Kia Sorento.

It's available in six- and seven-seat configurations. The six-seater offers a more luxurious package with heated, ventilated and massaging captain's chairs in the first two rows, while the seven-seater is more family-friendly.

All versions are powered by a plug-in hybrid system that serves up 428PS and delivers a zero-emission range of up to 83 miles.

For added off-road capability, the Jaecoo 8 is equipped with locking differentials and an adaptive all-terrain response system. The car also has a wading depth of 600mm.

Standard kit includes electrically adjustable front seats, a suite of 19 driver assistance and safety systems, wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, cooled wireless charging pads, dual 12.3-inch displays and a Sony 14-speaker sound system.

KIA EV2

Kia will launch its most compact electric car to date this year, with the introduction of the EV2.

Available for £24,245, the new model will battle against cars such as the Ford Puma Gen-E and Renault 4, as well as new VW Group models such as the Cupra Raval.

Built on Kia's dedicated electric platform, the EV2 combines compact exterior dimensions with interior space comparable with larger segments.

A new sliding and reclining rear seat system maximises everyday usability. Rear legroom can be extended or, when the seats are fully slid forward, up to 403 litres of boot capacity is possible.

The EV2 will offer two battery options: a 42.2kWh standard-range battery and a 61kWh long-range battery. Anticipated driving ranges reach up to 197 miles for the standard-range version and up to 278 miles for the long-range (WLTP pending).

Both feature 400v architecture and deliver rapid DC fast charging. The Standard model completes the process in 29 minutes, while the Long Range takes just a minute more.

VOLVO ES90

Having updated its XC60 and XC90 models in 2025, along with introducing the EX30 Cross Country, Volvo will kick off 2026 with the launch of the ES90.

Built to replace the S90 and V90, the electric newcomer blends the styling of a saloon with the practicality of a large hatchback.

The ES90 will have three powertrain options: Single Motor Extended Range, Twin Motor and Twin Motor Performance. Prices start at £69,650.

Entry-level Single Motor cars use a 92kWh battery, with a 404-mile range. Twin Motor cars are fitted with a 106kWh battery, giving the ES90 a maximum range of 435 miles. Power outputs range from 333PS, for the Single motor, to 680PS for the Performance version. The mid-spec Twin Motor has 449PS.

The car also features 800v electrical architecture, which enables ultra-rapid charging. At a 350kW charger, the ES90 can gain 186 miles of range in 10 minutes.

The ES90 promises a large passenger compartment and "extremely generous legroom". The boot has 424 litres of space, which can be expanded when the rear seats are folded. There's also 22 litres of storage under the bonnet.

West vs East:

Tradition meets

As established brands fight to retain loyalty and emerging manufacturers challenge convention with technology-led thinking, this trio highlights how the global EV market is rapidly shifting – and why fleet buyers can no longer afford to think locally. *Matt de Prez* reports

disru ion

The Škoda Enyaq lays claim to be our front-runner in the electric mid-size SUV segment, having picked up the category title at the 2026 Fleet News Awards. It's good value, immensely practical and it delivers a useable real-world range.

But there's fierce competition in this category and new entrants are coming thick and fast.

As a product of the Czech Republic, we thought we'd see how the Škoda shapes up against cars from very different parts of the world. So, representing America, we have the new Jeep Compass Electric and from China there's the Xpeng G6.

Few products tell you more about a country than its cars. America used the automobile to sell freedom. The Czech Republic used it to prove small nations could engineer world-class machines. China is now using it to announce itself as the technological superpower of the electric age.

Three decades ago, this trio of cars would have represented three completely different worlds. America built muscle cars, the Czech Republic quietly produced sensible family transport, and China barely registered on the automotive map at all.

Now, though, the lines have become blurred.

The American car uses European engineering, the Czech one is, effectively, German underneath, and the Chinese challenger – penned by a Spaniard and founded by tech entrepreneurs – may be the most technologically ambitious of the lot.

All these cars, therefore, have something in common. None are the product of a single nation. They all seek to appeal to wide audiences and were developed using a global mindset, drawing on their brand's unique history.

> Jeep may be an American marque, but it's firmly part of the Stellantis stable

JEEP COMPASS ELECTRIC

Jeep may be an American marque, but it's firmly part of the Stellantis stable, with production of the new Compass taking place in Italy. Based on the STLA Medium platform, the Compass is the latest addition to the group's mid-size SUV stable. It's

Škoda's Enyaq has robust, yet classy, materials giving broad appeal

The G6 is the only model available in the UK (so far) from Xpeng

Only one electric powertrain is currently offered on the Jeep Compass

closely related to the Citroën C5 Aircross, Peugeot 3008 and Vauxhall Grandland.

Styling is Jeep-specific, with a chunky and iconic appearance – helped, in this case, by the bold 'Hawaii' paint colour. The Compass also has a bespoke interior, setting it apart from the other Stellantis offerings. Both inside and out, it feels durable, rugged and quintessentially 'Jeep'. This identify is important in a world where so many cars share the same platform and technology. Certainly, the Jeep is the most brand-aware model in our test.

Only one electric powertrain is currently offered on the Compass, with a single electric motor driving the front wheels. A 74kWh battery provides a range (WLTP) of up to 311 miles, while the modest 213PS power output makes the Compass the most lethargic car in our test.

The claimed 8.5-second 0-62mph time seems far fetched as the Compass is left in the dust by its competitors. The throttle feels lazy and there's no sense of urgency, which makes emerging from junctions or roundabouts a little less easy than in the other two cars.

Soft suspension gives a spongy ride, which delivers comfort in some instances, but also a choppiness in others. It's not quite got the smoothness of the Citroën, yet the Peugeot and Vauxhall feel more planted. Part of the problem is the Jeep's steering. It's light and uncommunicative: turn into a corner and you don't really get the sense that the car wants to change direction with the same eagerness you want it to.

Grip levels are high, however. The Jeep may feel a little on the wobbly side, but it doesn't get so upset that you need to worry. Take some speed off and relax into the comfy seats, life in the Compass isn't all bad.

During our test we managed 3.0mi/kWh in the Compass, which is the least impressive performance here. We're yet to realise a decent consumption rate in any Stellantis electric car, when compared with rivals. Still, it's enough for a real-world range of 221 miles – likely enough for most drivers. Charging peaks at 160kW, outperforming the Enyaq, but a less optimised charging curve means the benchmark 10%-to-80% top up takes 31 minutes.

On board tech is delivered via a 16-inch wide-screen infotainment display. While it provides an impressive aesthetic, the menu system is slow and cumbersome compared with the other cars here.

ŠKODA ENYAQ

The Enyaq is the oldest car here, having launched in 2020. It was updated fairly significantly last year and now wears a new face. Like the Jeep, it shares a platform with a range of different cars, from the Audi Q4 and VW ID4 to the Ford Explorer.

VW has honed the technology, rolling out gradual improvements during the car's lifecycle. The Škoda team has delivered a practical and family-friendly design that majors on interior space, while robust, yet classy, materials give broad appeal.

It won't turn many heads, especially in this company. The Jeep and Xpeng are more distinctive.

Tested here is the Enyaq 85, complete with an 82kWh battery and a 286PS electric motor. There's a range of options, including a smaller battery and dual motor models.

The SE L variant sits firmly in the middle of the range and is a key derivative for fleet customers.

Pricing puts it mid-table, at £41,995, although it does include a generous level of standard equipment.

The Xpeng's cabin is spacious and well-appointed, with high quality materials. The boot has a capacity of 571 litres with the seats up

The Jeep has a bespoke interior, unlike other Stellantis offerings. Boot capacity is 550 litres

The Škoda's interior space was the most generous on our test while the boot is the largest with a capacity of 585 litres

Škoda has tuned the Enyaq well for business users. It's smooth, quiet and responsive

Officially, the Enyaq has the longest range here: 359 miles. We put it through the same test as the Jeep and Xpeng, where it returned a respectable 3.6mi/kWh. Overall, that's enough for 277 miles of driving – although the Xpeng's larger battery means it's the car with the greatest capability.

Škoda has tuned the Enyaq well for business users. It's smooth, quiet and responsive with good body control, enough agility to promote confidence and decent steering.

Whether you're driving gingerly or at nine-tenths, the Enyaq has your back. It's a well resolved platform and is our favourite car to drive of the trio. It is not perfect, though. It can fidget over tricky surfaces at low speed and the brake pedal is worryingly unresponsive. We'd recommend keener drivers opt for the DCC adaptive dampers, although they're only available on higher trim levels.

Charging power is pegged at 135kW, meaning a 10%-80% charge will take 28 minutes. Cars produced from mid-2026, however, will be upgraded to 165kW.

Interior space is the most generous here. Passengers get plenty of head and legroom, while the boot is the largest with a capacity of 585 litres. Škoda offers a variety of interior options, with various fabric and leather upholstery options in a range of colours.

Most controls are found within the Enyaq's central touchscreen. While we'd prefer some physical switchgear, the execution here is user-friendly. Climate controls remain on-screen in a lower strip, while customisable shortcuts and widgets can be used on the rest of the display.

XPENG G6

While Jeep and Škoda are firmly established car makers, Xpeng is most definitely an outlier – at least in the UK.

It arrived only a year ago, with very little fanfare. Rather than chasing serious volumes, Xpeng has taken a much slower approach to British car sales than newcomers such as BYD or Chery.

The G6 is its only model, so far, moulded quite clearly on the Tesla Model Y. It comes in Standard Range, Long Range and Performance (familiar?) with prices starting at £39,990.

We've opted for the mid-range variant, costing £44,990. It's powered by an 80kWh battery, which uses advanced 800-volt architecture. The 296PS motor is the most powerful here, too.

The upshot is incredibly fast charging, with 10%-80% taking only 12 minutes, along with punchy on-road performance.

As Xpeng is a privately-owned enterprise, rather than a Chinese state-owned one, it has the flexibility to be more innovative. As such, the G6 has fresher technology and more advanced engineering than we're used to seeing from a Chinese marque.

Most notably, the Xpeng drives like a European car. The steering, suspension and throttle calibration all feels more intuitive and well balanced. While the G6 isn't the most dynamic car on a twisty road, it certainly doesn't compromise stability or agility for comfort.

The cabin is spacious and well-appointed, with high quality materials and a real premium car feel. A distinct lack of road and wind noise, at speed, enhances the on-board experience and makes the G6 ideal for long-distance driving.

Our test netted 3.5mi/kWh, almost as good as the Enyaq. With its larger battery, though, the Xpeng delivers the longest real-world range of the three cars here, at 280 miles.

While the central infotainment screen runs a slick operating system and a high-powered processor, the G6 is still a bit fiddly and over-reliant on tech inside. The doors are opened electrically, the mirrors can only be adjusted through the touch-screen and there's a huge settings menu that allows for excessive customisation. You can even choose what noise it makes when you lock it.

A distinct lack of road and wind noise, at speed, enhances the on-board experience (of the G6)

The tech enables plenty of convenience features, however. You can use your smartphone in lieu of the key, the car can park itself in a space with no driver present and there's an array of driver aids and collision prevention systems on tap. We found the adaptive cruise control system, which can link in with the lane centring to provide semi-autonomous driving, a bit over-reactive compared with the system in the Škoda.

	Jeep Compass Electric Altitude	Škoda Enyaq 85 SE L	Xpeng G6 Long Range RWD
Price (P11D)	£36,934	£41,995	£44,925
BIK %	5%	5%	5%
BIK @ 20%	£369.34	£419.95	£449.25
BIK @ 40%	£738.68	£839.90	£898.50
VED (4yrs)	£610	£610	£610
Residual (4yrs/80k)	£13,075	£13,925	£14,050
Depreciation	29.9ppm	33.3ppm	38.6ppm
SMR	5.1ppm	5.1ppm	8.1ppm
Fuel cost	5.2ppm	4.1ppm	4.8ppm
Running cost	40.1ppm	42.5ppm	51.5ppm
Battery useable	73.7kWh	77kWh	80kWh
WLTP range	311mi	359mi	326mi
WLTP efficiency	4.2mi/kWh	4.6mi/kWh	4.0mi/kWh
FN test range	221mi	277mi	280mi
FN test efficiency	3.0mi/kWh	3.6mi/kWh	3.5mi/kWh
Max charge AC	11kW	11kW	11kW
Max charge DC	160kW	135kW	451kW
Charge time 7.4kWh	11.75hrs	12.25hrs	12.75hrs
Charge time 22kWh	8hrs	8.25hrs	8.75hrs
Max DC Charge time 10%-80%	31mins	28mins	12mins
Power	213PS	286PS	296PS
Torque	344Nm	545Nm	440Nm
0-62mph	8.5secs	6.7secs	6.7secs
Max Speed	112mph	112mph	126mph
Drivetrain	FWD	RWD	RWD
Length	4,552mm	4,658mm	4,758mm
Width	1,928mm	1,879mm	1,920mm
Height	1,675mm	1,622mm	1,650mm
Weight (unladen)	2,185kg	2,141kg	2,190kg
Boot volume seats up	550l	585l	571l
Boot volume seats down	1,695l	1,710l	1,374l
Towing capacity	1,000kg	1,000kg	1,500kg
Infotainment screen	16in	13in	15.6in
Heat pump	N	opt £1,100	Y
Heated front seats	Y	Y	Y
Adaptive cruise	Y	Y	Y
Blind spot monitor	Y	Y	Y
Keyless entry	Y	Y	Y
Apple Carplay/ Android Auto	Y/Y	Y/Y	Y/Y

Verdict

It's hard to ignore the value of the Jeep in this test, coming in at £5,000 less than the Enyaq and with the lowest running costs of the group – it's clearly worthy of consideration. You do have to put up with the worst range and the slowest charging, in real-world conditions. Ride and handling are also the worst in the group.

However, from a desirability perspective, the Jeep brand still carries weight and while the white label chassis isn't the best out there, the Compass certainly brings a unique look and feel to the segment.

Then there's the Xpeng. No one had heard of it, but they probably should. It's a massive underdog in the UK and a brand that deserves more recognition. While people are blindly buying cheap Chinese cars with terrible driving dynamics, Xpeng is here showing everyone how it should be done.

We were genuinely impressed at how well the G6 drives and, coupled with its long range and impressive charging speeds, it's a very easy car to live with.

Strong depreciation and higher-than-average SMR costs do taint the picture, slightly. Also, Xpeng has yet to establish a large dealer network so fleets may find aftersales tricker to navigate.

That leaves the Škoda Enyaq. I started this article by declaring it as our reigning champion and, after completing this test, I'm still convinced it's the best of the bunch.

Sure it's not as high-tech as the Xpeng or as eye-catching as the Jeep, but it drives very well, delivers a decent range and is the easiest car to live with, overall.

The same, Nissan Micra

Two cars, one platform. The new Nissan Micra arrives in a market led by its twin sibling, the Renault 5. *Matt de Prez* evaluates which of the two is better.

Platform shares are nothing new. The likes of Volkswagen Group and Stellantis offer swathes of models all using the same underpinnings, each with their own flair to justify the fitment of a different badge.

It's no different in the Renault Nissan alliance. Numerous models exist thanks to joined up development. The Renault Scenic and Nissan Ariya, for example, are largely the same if you peel away the bodywork, but they appear to be completely different cars to the untrained eye.

This type of vehicle development allows manufacturers to save lots of money, while each brand can deliver cars that appeal to their specific audience. Cupra, for example, can quite easily transform a Volkswagen into a firmer-riding, keener handling and overall sportier package.

In the small car segment, the transformation isn't quite as easy. Small cars appeal to those who are fashion conscious. They want their car to make a statement. It needs to fit in, but also catch the eye.

Enter Renault, with the 5. I'm not sure we've ever seen such a high level of interest in a new electric car. The prototype 5 was unveiled back in 2021, as part of Renault's 'Renaulution', and the car's arrival became the most pressing matter in the car world. Even in the *Fleet News* office, the promise of a small, retro-styled Renault got everyone excited.

When the car finally did arrive, in early 2025, it proved that desirability still matters.

Renault received record numbers of pre-launch expressions of interest and, once the new model hit the road, it instantly became the best-selling car in its class.

While small cars might have fallen out of favour in the past few years, it's partly because carmakers have largely given up on producing fun, cheap and engaging models. The Vauxhall Corsa is acceptable transport, but it's not exactly drawing in crowds of fans. And, while Peugeot attempted to breathe some life into it by producing the e208, the resulting car still didn't quite cut it.

Renault, on the other hand, absolutely nailed the 5's design. It's instantly eye-catching. I remember my first time behind the wheel, in a left-hooker finished in bright yellow. We borrowed it from Renault's Rickmansworth head office in December 2023 and spent the afternoon driving around

but different

vs en u 5

some pretty unremarkable roads on a gloomy winter day. Yet, piloting the 5 was like being an A-list celeb. Everyone – and I really do mean everyone – was eyeing it up.

On the M25, passengers in other vehicles were taking pictures. In town, people were stopping in their tracks to watch it drive by. It was a phenomenon I'd never experienced in this scale before.

The fact that the 5 was fantastic to drive really made no difference. We knew, then, that it was going to be an absolute hit. A World Car of the Year trophy followed, cementing the 5's credentials.

So where does that leave Nissan? Well, the existing Micra was getting on a bit and it desperately needed to up its game in the electric car market. Utilising the 5's AmpR Small platform was clearly a no-brainer. Nissan had undoubtedly played a hand in its development, anyway.

The conundrum for Nissan, however, is how to style the new Micra. The 5, after all, is a smash hit because of its looks. Just sticking a Nissan badge on wasn't going to work, but a total re-body would cost too much given that the 5 was already proving a firm favourite.

Nissan deployed the same tactic as Renault: draw on the past. The 5 is a modern-day interpretation of its predecessor, so Nissan looked back at its most popular Micras and did the same. The bubbly appearance references those early '90s models and the round lighting signature is a nod to the early '00s variant.

Zero changes were made under the skin. So, both the 5 and the Micra use the same powertrains, the same suspension and the same steering set-up. The only technical difference is in the tyres chosen by each brand. Renault fits Continental and Nissan uses Hankook. There's also a very slight weight penalty for the Nissan.

Official statistics show the Renault 5 to be slightly faster and the Micra to have a seven-mile range advantage – but in the real world we'd say the two are about as evenly matched as it gets.

During our testing, both managed 3.6mi/kWh. That's enough for around 180 miles of real-world driving. In fairer weather, and with reduced motorway driving, it's possible to nudge 4.0mi/kWh. However, our experience, in winter, shows that nearer 150 miles should be expected.

Both the 5 and Micra come with a heat pump, but, as city cars, they really do not like travelling at higher speeds in the cold. The cars we're comparing both come with the larger 52kWh battery option, which has a WLTP range of 250 miles in the 5 and 257 miles in the Micra. A smaller 40kWh unit is offered in both, paired with a 120PS motor rather than the 150PS one used here.

Pace is decent, with 0-62mph happening in eight seconds (7.9 in the Renault). The 5 and Micra have plenty of grunt for city work but out on larger roads they feel a little restrained. It's not that the cars are slow, they just feel capable of much more.

Their agile nature, firm-but-fair suspension and light, darty steering, give major hot hatch vibes, especially in the Renault, where its sporty looks and bold colours set the scene for a thrilling ride.

Nissan's more conservative approach brings a softer palette, less glossy surfaces and more subtle upholstery and trim choices. The feel of the two cars is quite different as a result. You get the same low-slung driving position, the same Google-powered infotainment and the same cramped rear seat. Boot space is also identical, at 326 litres.

The starting price for both cars is £21,495, but subtle differences exist within the grade structures. Renault offers only one trim level with the small battery (Evolution), while Nissan has two: Engage and Advance.

Renault's mid-range offer (Techno+) is dearer than Nissan's, if you spec the larger battery, although if you want a car with heated seats and a decent stereo then it's the 5 Iconic Five + that's the cheaper pick. It's also worth noting that the 5 comes with two-tone paint as standard, where it's a £1,395 option on the equivalent Nissan.

Were it not for the branding on the steering wheel it might be difficult to tell which interior is which

	NISSAN MICRA ADVANCE EXTENDED RANGE	RENAULT 5 E-TECH ICONIC + COMFORT RANGE
Price (P11d)	£26,930	£27,630
BIK %	5	5
BIK @ 20%	£269	£276
BIK @ 40%	£539	£552
VED (4yrs)	£610	£610
Residual (4yrs/80k)	£9,250	£9,225
Depreciation	17.4ppm	18.4ppm
SMR	3.5ppm	3.5ppm
Fuel cost	4ppm	4.1ppm
Running cost	25ppm	26ppm
Battery useable	52kWh	52kWh
WLTP range	257mi	250mi
WLTP efficiency	4.9mi/kWh	4.8mi/kWh
FN test range	187mi	187mi
FN test efficency	3.6mi/kWh	3.6mi/kWh
Max charge AC	11kW	11kW
Max charge DC	101kW	101kW
Charge time 7.4kWh	8.5hrs	8.5hrs
Charge time 22kWh	5.75hrs	5.75hrs
Max DC charge time 10%-80%	30mins	30mins
Power	150PS	150PS
Torque	245Nm	245Nm
0-62mph	8.0secs	7.9secs
Max speed	93mph	93mph
Drivetrain	FWD	FWD
Length	3,974mm	3,922mm
Width	2,020mm	2,020mm
Height	1,499mm	1,498mm
Weight (unladen)	1,527kg	1,504kg
Boot volume seats up	326l	326l
Boot volume seats down	1,106l	1,106l
Towing capacity	500kg	500kg
Infotainment screen	10.1-inch	10.1-)inch
Heat pump	Y	Y
Heated front seats	N	N
Adaptive cruise	Y	Y
Blind spot monitor	Y	Y
Keyless entry	Y	Y
Apple Carplay/Android Auto	Y	Y

Verdict

We've compared the mid-spec variants – Iconic + and Advance – and the Nissan looks better on paper.

As a fresh model it has slightly more favourable residuals and that tiny range difference means fuel costs are slightly lower.

The Nissan also appeals to drivers with cheaper benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax, thanks to its lower P11D value.

But when we're talking about a difference of a few pence per month, it's how these cars appeal to the heart and eye that's going to count. For us, the Renault would be our choice.

Six of the best: Company cars of 2026

Following the Fleet News Awards in March, we've detailed the best company cars in available in six core segments. These were chosen by our expert judging panel based on a wide range of factors including total cost of ownership, reliability, driveability and driver acceptance

BEST COMPACT CAR: CUPRA BORN

The Cupra Born stands out by combining striking design, engaging driving dynamics and impressive electric efficiency.

As Cupra's first fully electric model, the Born brings the brand's sporty character into the electric vehicle (EV) era, offering a more exciting and driver-focused alternative to many conventional electric hatchbacks. Its sharp styling, premium interior materials and distinctive design help it stand out in a competitive segment.

The Born delivers a genuinely fun driving experience with responsive steering, rear-wheel drive, and strong electric power. Updates for 2026 bring sharper styling and improved range.

Also consider: Audi A3, Mercedes-Benz CLA, MG4, Renault Mégane, Volkswagen Golf.

BEST MEDIUM CAR: BMW i4

Based on the 4 Series Grand Coupé, the BMW i4 shares the same practical hatchback body and sleek styling. It's also just as engaging to drive, with the electric motor's immediate response adding an additional fun factor.

Judges were convinced that the car continues to set a benchmark, despite gaining many new rivals. It comes with no compromises when compared with conventional petrol or diesel models. It has a range of more than 300 miles and accepts fast charging.

Whether it's being used as a family car, for commuting, or for long-distance travel, the i4 is a package that's hard to beat.

Also consider: BYD Seal, Hyundai Ioniq 5, Kia EV6, Polestar 2.

BEST LARGE CAR: AUDI A6 E-TRON

The Audi A6 e-tron sets a new standard in the electric executive car segment by combining long-distance capability, advanced technology and the premium refinement expected from the brand.

One of the car's greatest strengths is its range. Dependent on the model and battery configuration, the A6 e-tron can travel more than 400 miles on a single charge, placing it among the longest-range electric cars in its class.

The A6 e-tron offers a spacious, quality interior filled with advanced digital displays, connectivity features and driver-assistance technologies that enhance safety and convenience.

Also consider: BMW 5 Series/i5, MG IM5, Polestar 4, Volkswagen ID7.

BEST MID-SIZE SUV: ŠKODA ENYAQ

The Škoda Enyaq has established itself as one of the most complete electric family SUVs available, blending impressive range, everyday practicality and excellent value, in a well-designed package.

The car was facelifted in 2025, bringing improvements in range and specification. Fleets and company car drivers now enjoy an even more rounded package. Several powertrain options are available, offering a WLTP range of up to 359 miles.

Space and practicality are crucial in this segment and the Enyaq doesn't disappoint, with a large 585-litre boot and a roomy interior with generous headroom and legroom for passengers.

Also consider: Audi Q4 e-tron, BYD Sealion 7, Cupra Tavascan, Renault Scenic, Tesla Model Y.

BEST COMPACT SUV: ŠKODA ELROQ

As a new entrant for 2026, the Škoda Elroq emerges as one of the most compelling compact electric SUVs on sale by combining strong electric range, impressive practicality and the brand's trademark value for money.

Positioned as a smaller alternative to the Enyaq, the Elroq delivers the benefits of a family-friendly SUV while remaining easy to manoeuvre in urban environments.

As with many Škoda models, the Elroq offers a spacious interior with generous legroom, clever storage solutions and plenty of luggage capacity, making it well suited to families or drivers who need everyday usability.

Also consider: BMW iX1, Cupra Formentor, Kia EV3, MG S5, Omoda 5, Volvo EX30.

BEST LARGE SUV: KIA EV9

The EV9 sits at the top end of Kia's SUV line-up, sharing the same bespoke electric vehicle platform as the EV6. It's packed with technology and features, has a bold design and a high-quality, upmarket interior.

Competing among just a handful of electric rivals, the EV9 is one of the only proper full-size SUVs with three rows of seating and a reasonable luggage space.

A WLTP range of up to 349 miles, thanks to its large battery, means the EV9 has the capability to suit the needs of many drivers, without compromising comfort or driveability.

Also consider: BMW iX, Hyundai Ioniq 9, Volvo EX90.

Mohib Iqbal

Group fleet project manager, Nurture Group

Why fleet?
Like many, I didn't grow up imagining a career in strategic fleet supply chain management. But, once I found it, it felt like the perfect fit. Fleet sits at the crossroads of operations, strategy, procurement, supply chain, sustainability, finance and people.

Every decision you make has a real measurable impact on how well the business performs. After people, fleet is one the biggest expenses/costs to any business.

I've always been drawn to roles where you're solving complex problems, improving the way things work through change and process management, making an impact and my role in Nurture Group gives that.

At Nurture, the scale and pace make fleet even more exciting. Since 2021, our fleet has grown from fewer than 700 vehicles to more than 2,300, driven by rapid acquisitions, organic growth and expansion across multiple verticals including grounds maintenance, landscaping, pest control, arboriculture and winter gritting.

Managing a fleet that has more than tripled in three years creates challenges – but also huge opportunities to improve processes, integration of systems, review technology adoption, carbon reduction through EVs and policy management.

Any type of role in fleet, whether that's operations or leading fleet-related projects, it's fast-paced, technical, people-focused and constantly evolving – exactly the kind of environment that keeps me energised.

How I got here
I joined Nurture in 2021, fresh out of university with a first-class honours degree in business management, initially starting in supply chain and fleet admin, then into project delivery

supporting system roll-outs and managing our mobile phone inventory and supporting the IT team.

I then had the opportunity to manage the fleet operations and soon after became deeply involved in acquisition integration for fleet, fleet projects, vehicle replacement programmes and managing our company car fleet.

Nurture Group is known for having completed 50 acquisitions in 17 years. I've supported 21 integrations to date, through fleet branding programmes, contract novations, audits, new contract mobilisation, new driver and fleet policies, etc.

These experiences shaped my understanding of data-driven fleet management, supplier collaboration, sustainability and operational efficiency – ultimately leading to the group fleet manager role.

Latest products, developments and achievements
The past few years have been transformative. Key developments include:

- Fleet growth and integration: The acquisition of Tivoli Group added 700+ vehicles, taking the fleet to 2,300+ vehicles. In 2024, our fleet grew by 96% through acquisitions.
- Electrification: We are actively transitioning to EVs through Northgate's Drive to Zero programme, replacing suitable small-to-medium-sized vans and deploying more than 50 EVs so far, including CDV, SWB and LWB vehicles. We have also transitioned our company car fleet to 96% EV or PHEV fleet.
- Sustainability milestones: Nurture has introduced Ford E-Transit and E-Custom vans into the Grounds Maintenance division to reduce emissions by up to 3-4.5 tonnes per year per vehicle.
- Fleet branding and consistency: As the fleet expands, all new vehicles are now branded through Mediafleet to maintain consistency across our vehicle fleet through a one-shop solution.
- Shortlisted for Fleet of the Year – more than 1,000 vehicles at the 2026 Fleet News Awards. It's a great achievement to be ranked up there with the likes of Royal Mail, The AA and Openreach.
- We've recently advanced on telematics with the roll-out of Geotab (following acquisition of Verizon Connect) which will drive behaviour improvement, cut fuel costs, lead to emissions reductions and smarter procurement strategies.

Another major achievement is embedding a more data-driven fleet culture, where decisions are based on real insights, not assumptions.

Seeing these initiatives reduce emissions, improve reliability, support operations and streamline integration is a proud achievement.

My company in three words
Ambitious • Acquisitive • Sustainable

Career influence
I've been fortunate to work under leaders who gave me trust, responsibility and the space to grow – that makes all the difference. Their approach taught me the value of clear communication, leading by example, and investing in people.

But equally, I've learned just as much from challenging environments. Difficult periods teach you resilience, discipline and how to remain calm under pressure.

Every experience shaped my leadership style and helped me understand the value of staying adaptable.

What makes a good manager/leader?
A good leader creates clarity, not confusion. They communicate well, give people confidence and set standards by their own behaviour.

The advice I would give to my 18-year-old self
Be patient. Trust the process. Focus on the long-term and things will fall into place. And don't be afraid to take opportunities that feel outside your comfort zone.

First memory associated with a car
Sitting in the passenger seat or in the back as a kid pretending to "co-drive" on long family trips turning the imaginary wheel, watching the road and thinking I was helping!

My favourite quote is
"Great things are done by a series of small things brought together."
— Vincent van Gogh

A book that I would recommend others read is
Atomic Habits by James Clear. Simple, practical and genuinely life-changing.

My hobbies and interests are
Travel, motorsports, cars, watches and spending quality time with family and friends.

My pet hate
Poor communication, especially when silence creates more problems than answers.

If I were made transport minister for the day
I'd accelerate national EV charging infrastructure and simplify fleet electrification incentives.

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