

FleetNews

Special report

QUALITY

COST

EFFICIENCY

COST AND EFFICIENCY

Expert advice to help decision-makers manage their fleets more effectively

COST ANALYSIS

Comprehensive and accurate data is key to identifying where savings can be made

MINIMISING CHARGES

How to avoid the sting in the tail of end-of-lease contract charges

FLEXIBLE LEASING

PHEV tax hike in 2028 helps generate increased interest in flexible leasing

REDUCING DOWNTIME

What fleets can do to minimise the cost and impact of vehicle-off-road time

TYRE MANAGEMENT

We suggest six key considerations for how tyres can be properly looked after

IMPACT OF GREY FLEET

Grey fleet can easily become seriously expensive if not managed properly

CUTTING FUEL COSTS

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WELCOME

Ultimately, everything a fleet decision-maker does has a significant financial implication. Run a safer fleet; save money (bent metal, human cost, reputation etc.). Decarbonise the fleet; save (or, potentially, cost) money, dependent on the strategy – electrification, mileage reduction etc. Data? Driver behaviour? Efficiency? Vehicle downtime? All offer financial benefits.

In this report, we shine the spotlight on areas of fleet management where action can result in considerable savings. And during a period of rising costs – leasing rates, employment, insurance, SMR, fuel, energy – this advice couldn't come at a better time.

From understanding your total cost of ownership when selecting the right vehicles for your fleet, to in-life management which results in lower end of contract charges, we speak to the industry experts with the solutions.

Particularly pertinent is the feature on managing downtime (or, if you prefer, managing uptime – there is a difference, according to our experts). With thousands of pounds on the line for each day a vehicle is off the road, improvements here potentially have the biggest impact to any company's bottom line.

Elsewhere, we offer six ways in which you can better manage your tyres, saving money on procurement and usages, while also offering thoughts on the age-old premium versus budget debate.

And with pump prices staying stubbornly high, thanks to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, we consider five ways in which you can reduce your fuel costs.

Get reading – and get saving!



Stephen Briers,
group editor,
Fleet News

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ISSN 0953-8526.

Controlling fleet costs begins with robust analysis

Having comprehensive and accurate data is key to identifying areas where savings can be made. *Andrew Ryan* reports

At times, it seems safety and electric vehicles are vying for the top spot in a fleet manager's to-do list, but cost management is emerging as one of the principal challenges facing fleets.

As organisations face high fuel prices, rising repair costs and increasing insurance premiums, in the latest FN50 report the UK's biggest leasing companies said their customers are consumed by the need to make savings and reduce the cost of the fleet operation to the business.

However, running a fleet is a complicated task, with costs being incurred from a multitude of different areas.

An important first step is to carry out a robust analysis of these costs.

"Without a clear, data-driven understanding of where money is being spent, fleet managers are essentially making decisions in the dark," says Tom Mansbridge, senior technical consultant at Jaama.

"A robust cost analysis not only serves to highlight inefficiencies, but also provides the evidence base needed to justify investment decisions to senior stakeholders."

Mark Robbins, head of client relations at Holman UK, adds: "Many fleets are still being managed based on assumptions about what vehicles cost to run, rather than what the data is actually telling them."

"Today, fleets generate huge amounts of data-points, and that gives managers the opportunity to make much more informed decisions."

As well as identifying potential savings, a cost analysis can also demonstrate real value across a fleet operation. While headline prices, monthly lease rates or initial procurement costs may appear attractive, they rarely reflect the full financial picture – this can be uncovered by deeper examination.

Fleet analysis should examine both fixed and variable costs. Fixed outgoings include vehicle acquisition, depreciation, insurance and VED, while variable figures encompass fuel or energy consumption, maintenance, tyres, penalty charge notices (PCNs) and accident repairs.

"Neither category should be viewed in isolation," says Mansbridge. "Fleet managers must also remember to look beyond the data itself: driver behaviour and vehicle utilisation also carry significant financial implications."

"A vehicle sitting idle or a driver with a poor fuel efficiency score represents a hidden cost that can't necessarily be seen by looking at a multi-thousand-line invoice."

Nyanya Joof, head of UK at Motive, adds: "Done right, comprehensive cost analysis allows you to shift from a reactive state to a proactive one – helping to control operating expenses, boost driver productivity and, ultimately, protect profitability."

IMPORTANCE OF ACCURATE DATA

However, while the benefits of controlling costs are clear, fleet decision-makers are often overwhelmed with the challenge it presents, says Peter Golding, founder and CEO of FleetCheck.

"If you turn around and say 'well, let's reduce our fleet operating costs by 10%, what does that mean?," he asks.

"Are you looking at cutting your maintenance spend by 10%? In which case, how are you going to do that? Are you looking at insurance, fuel or purchase costs?"

"To effectively control costs, you need to know what the total cost of ownership (TCO) is, and you need to bring in factors that can influence that."

"For example, if you are looking at the service, maintenance and repair (SMR) side, you've got to be careful to make sure that you are putting things in there that are only wear, tear and service items, because damaged wing mirrors, bumpers or windscreens can very easily distort the overall cost of running that vehicle when you're making comparisons with other vehicles on your fleet."

"The reality is the only way organisations can effectively control their fleet operating costs is to look at the quality of data they've got, and how you bring it in from a myriad of different sources."

Today's fleets generate huge amounts of data, but if this information is fragmented and lives on separate spreadsheets, supplier portals and disconnected systems, then fleet decision-makers will only ever see part of the picture. Analysis will likely produce unreliable results.

"Ideally, all cost data should sit within a single fleet management system, giving a single source of truth from which meaningful conclusions can be drawn," says Mansbridge.

The ability of artificial intelligence (AI) to handle huge amounts of data quickly can enhance the analysis. "It can significantly reduce manual work by automating and simplifying tasks," says Joof.

Once compiled, the data can be analysed to establish what 'good' looks like across a fleet, comparing similar vehicles with each other to identify any outliers.

"By also comparing vehicle performance, maintenance costs, downtime, fuel consumption and lifecycle costs against industry standards or similar vehicle groups, businesses can see where they are outperforming expectations and where improvements are needed," says Robbins.

A fleet cost analysis should not be treated as a one-off exercise, but as an ongoing process to ensure an organisation remains on top of its expenditure.

When the process has been completed, then it is time to address the issues. For fuel costs, this could be through procurement or improving driver

behaviour to improve efficiency; for SMR this could mean switching to pay-as-you-go if a fleet currently bundles it into a vehicle leasing contract.

Some actions could require additional resource, with the fleet manager presenting a financial case to the board for investment.

For example, if your company receives a high number of PCNs, a dedicated person could challenge and dramatically reduce the cost.

This was the experience at Speedy, whose fleet team member more than covers the cost of her salary in PCN savings, according to fleet manager Kristopher Parkes.

Performing an analysis is not the end of the cost reduction process: merely a stepping point to a more efficient and effective fleet.





Assess service levels

As well as adopting a wholelife cost approach and considering all major cost drivers, service levels delivered by suppliers should also be assessed.

“Poor service can lead to increased downtime, operational disruption and additional expense,” says Simon Staton, client management director at Venson Automotive Solutions.

“Where vehicles require specialist equipment, conversions or ancillary assets,

organisations should also consider future refurbishment, transfer or replacement costs.

“These costs can be substantial over the life of a contract and are often overlooked during the procurement process.”

Transparency is critical throughout the process. Fleet managers should seek from service providers a complete understanding of all charges and contractual obligations, ensuring that hidden costs are identified and factored into decision-making.

“By evaluating both financial and operational considerations over the full contract term, organisations can achieve better long-term value rather than pursuing short-term savings that may, ultimately, prove more expensive,” says Staton.

“Fleet managers should regularly review fleet performance, supplier performance and operational data to identify trends, inefficiencies and areas where costs may be reduced without compromising service delivery.”



Beware the sting in the tail

End of lease contract charges are rising, but with careful fleet management they are avoidable. *Jonathan Manning* reports

End-of-contract recharges are the 'scorpion' of vehicle leasing – the sting in the tail no fleet wants to pay and no leasing company wants to impose.

With careful management and cast-iron fleet policies, recharges for excess mileage and unfair wear and tear are avoidable, but data suggests they are moving in the wrong direction.

Last year's FN50 survey of the largest car and van leasing companies in the UK found end-of-contract charges have risen to record levels, undermining carefully formulated total cost of ownership calculations, and potentially souring relationships between fleets and their leasing suppliers.

The research revealed that 20% of lease cars drove beyond their agreed mileage terms last year, incurring an average excess mileage charge of £587.

A slightly smaller proportion (16%) of vans exceeded their contracted mileages, but the recharges were higher, at an average of £627.

To put this into some context, in 2023, only 12% of cars incurred excess mileage fees at an average of £527 each, although the lower figures likely reflect the time cars spent at standstill during pandemic lockdowns.

A similar proportion of vans were returned with excess mileage in 2023 as in 2025, but the average recharge rose by £60 to £627.

The increases highlight the inflation in excess mileage fees from an industry average of 11 pence per mile to 12ppm.

The rise in wear and tear charges over the same two-year period is even more marked, although the percentage of damaged cars and vans remained consistent. Almost half (48%) of lease cars incurred wear and tear recharges in 2025, at an average cost of £421 per car, compared with £370 in 2023.

A higher proportion (58%) of vans incurred damage recharges in 2025 at an average of £597 per vehicle (2023: £588).

One further note of caution for fleet and HR departments is the finding that 36% of salary sacrifice cars received damage recharges in 2025, at an average cost of £286.

Many of these drivers will never have leased a new vehicle before, so the recharges are likely to have caused anguish and anger.

EXCESS MILEAGE

Of the two principal areas of recharges, excess mileage is the more objective.

A vehicle's odometer plays a key role in determining its residual value (RV), and the charges for exceeding contracted mileages are clearly established at the start of an agreement.

Nonetheless, fleets still need to understand the small print – some excess mileage fees only cover depreciation, whereas others bundle in the additional service and maintenance costs associated with driving greater distances.

There is no industry standard for these charges. They vary significantly between leasing companies – the FN50 found a spread of 8ppm-to-20ppm for cars, and 6ppm-to-20ppm for vans.

Moreover, some leasing companies operate a stepped approach – the first 2,000 excess miles, for example, might be charged at a lower rate than subsequent miles.

Leasing companies also charge different mileage excesses dependent on the make and model.

Higher mileages might have a bigger impact on the resale price of a luxury car, for instance, than a mainstream vehicle.

"We see a myriad of different excess mileage charges," says David Bushnell, Fleet Operations' director of consultancy and strategy.


"Some leasing companies might offer a lower rental, but have a very high excess mileage charge. Conversely, you could have a low pence mile figure and a higher rental."

The challenge for fleet and procurement teams is to minimise the mileage element of a contract in order to lower the monthly rental, but never to breach this threshold during the working life of the vehicle.

Larger fleets can negotiate mileage pooling agreements that offset excess mileage vehicles against under-mileage vehicles, although fleets need substantial volumes with one supplier for this to work satisfactorily.

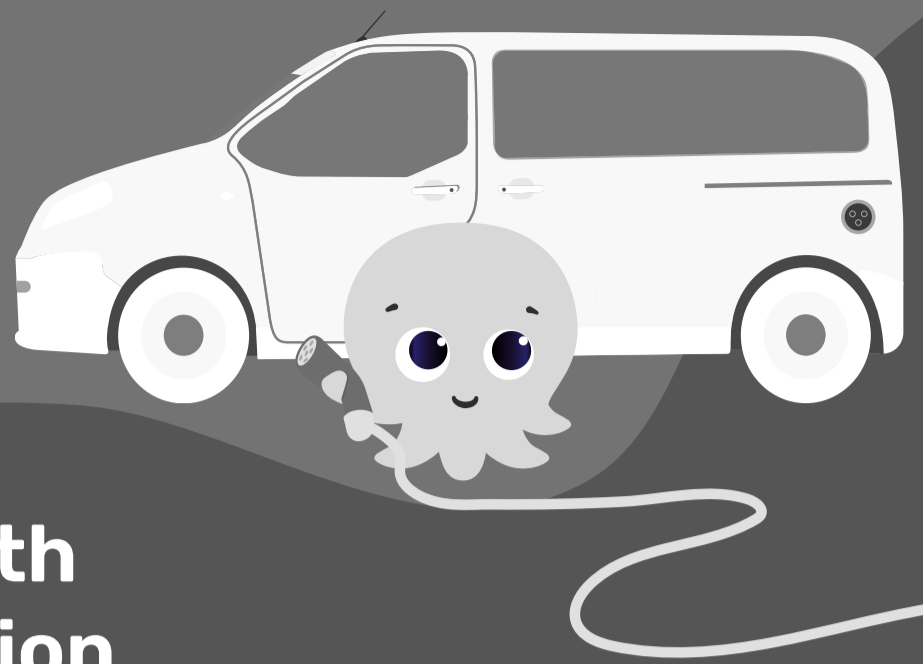
Smaller fleets with vehicles in danger of exceeding their contracted mileages have to choose between renegotiating the contract to spread the additional cost of extra miles through the remaining rentals, or facing a sizeable bill at the end of the lease.

"Generally, I would say if a vehicle is running 15%-to-20% over its contracted mileage, then you start to look at a form of re-contracting," says Bushnell.

"You just need to make sure that you're not giving your leasing company the opportunity to adjust the RV that they may have set two or three years ago to reflect updated market conditions." 



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END OF CONTRACT CHARGES

For fleets trying to establish the optimum mileage profile of their lease contracts, data from Cap HPI shows the used car market has taken a fairly consistent view of car mileages up to 60,000-to-70,000 miles. Only after that point values soften.

This raises an interesting question about how fleets will be charged for excess mileage in electric vehicles (EVs), especially when odometer readings approach the limit for the warranty on the traction battery.

"There's very limited data on vehicles that have covered more than 100,000 miles, because they haven't worked their way through the vehicle parc yet," says Chris Plumb, Cap HPI head of current car valuations.

The fact that used EV prices are dropping off today at 90,000 to 100,000 miles, because buyers would prefer vehicles that retain a standard battery warranty, underlines the value that battery state of health certification brings to the market, adds Plumb.

"Battery health certificates in the battery electric vehicle (BEV) market help to dispel concerns about some of those higher vehicles, even more so than with a petrol or diesel vehicle," he says.

"When you have a read of the battery health and the usable range of that vehicle, it gives you an extra layer of confidence."

Looking to the future, if variations in battery state of health leads are reflected in RVs, it is conceivable that leasing companies will look to factor this into their end of contract wear and tear assessments.

Geotab's analysis of more than 22,700 EVs discovered that those which recharge predominantly at low speed, AC chargers suffer average annual battery degradation of 1.5%, compared with 3% for EVs that are primarily charged at rapid DC chargers.

Plus, EVs that habitually spend more than 80% of their total time at extreme (80%-plus) state of charge levels experienced a significant acceleration in battery degradation, averaging 2% per year.

Businesses will have to decide between the productivity gains of company cars and vans minimising their charging downtime by using ultra-rapid DC chargers and filling their batteries to 100%, against accelerated degradation of batteries and potential end of contract recharges.

The primary alternative to excess mileage

"FOR ME, IT IS ABOUT SEEING A FLEET AS A WHOLE BOOK – IT'S NOT ABOUT ONE VEHICLE COMING BACK ON TIME OR MILEAGE"

**RORY MACKINNON,
HOLMAN UK**

charges is for fleets to take on residual value risk themselves by switching from an operating to a finance lease.

Such a move sees fleets pay the exact cost that their mileages have on the resale price of vehicles, rather than an approximation set at the outset by a leasing company.

But such an approach still requires regular, detailed monitoring of mileages, says Rory Mackinnon, commercial director of Holman UK, a company which prioritises finance leasing.

Mileage data forms an important part of Holman's

four Rs assessment to: retain, reallocate, remarket or replace a vehicle.

The assessment is as valuable for identifying underutilised assets that can be redeployed or sold, as it is for spotting vehicles clocking up more miles than expected, says Mackinnon.

"Fleets are trying to find cost savings everywhere, but you can't really find it in fuel, you can't find it in vehicles, because they're no cheaper than they were, and maintenance costs are broadly more expensive than they were as well. So, having the right size in the fleet is the only real way to be able to make cost savings," he says.

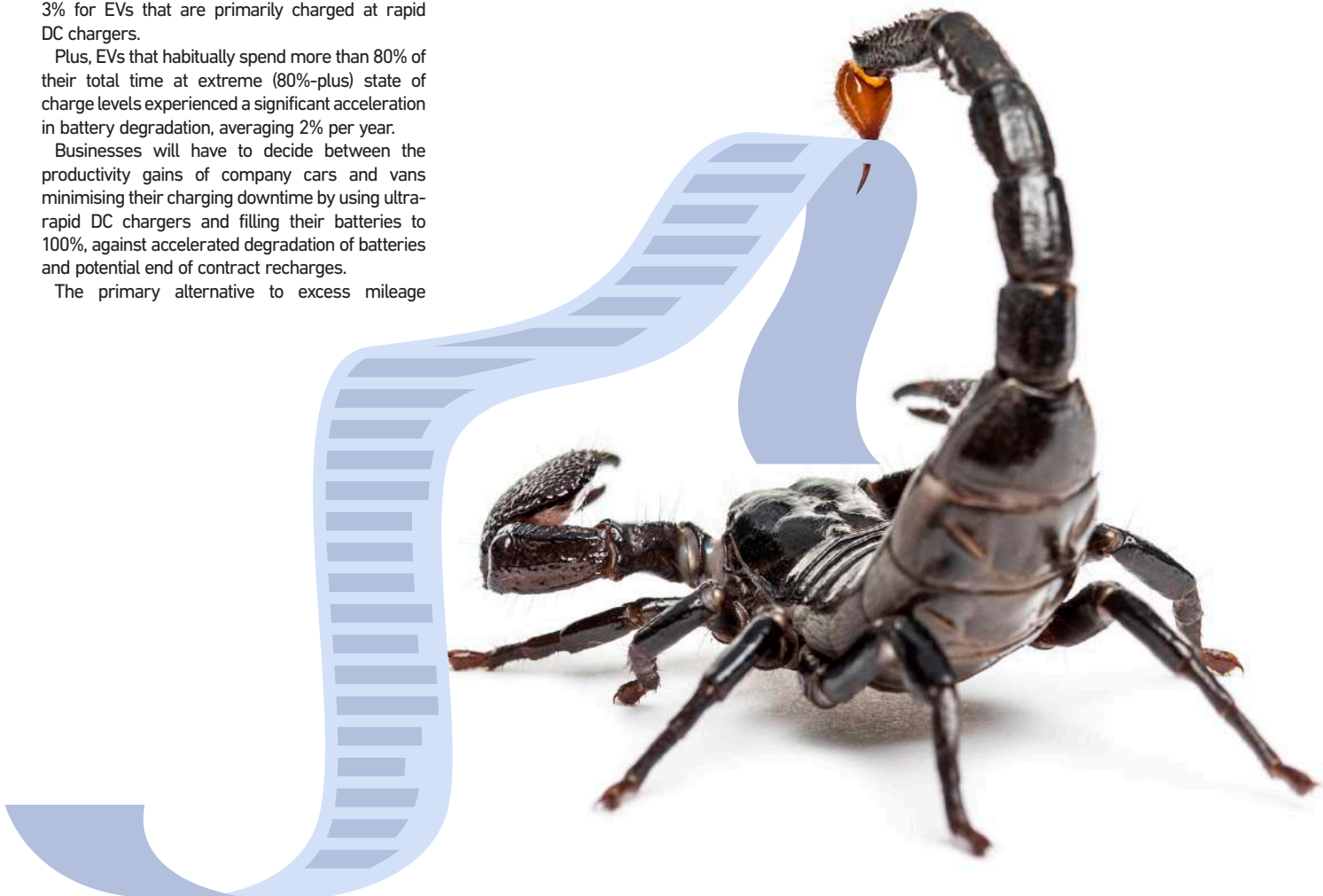
"If we can do dynamic fleet replacement properly and retire vehicles that aren't needed, redeploy ones that are being underused, and replace those that are costing too much in maintenance and off-road times, we end up in a pretty good place. For me, it is about seeing a fleet as a whole book – it's not about one vehicle coming back on time or mileage."

UNFAIR WEAR AND TEAR

The second – and more contentious – area of end-of-contract recharges covers the cost of unfair wear and tear.

The British Vehicle Rental & Leasing Association (BVRLA) Fair Wear and Tear Guide sets the industry standard for acceptable vehicle conditions but, despite its objective measures, there are still areas of contention between leasing companies and fleets.

One conspiracy theory suggests that the rigour ↻



of end-of-contract inspections correlates with the buoyancy of the used vehicle market.

When RVs soared after the pandemic, leasing companies apparently turned a blind eye to damages, confident they could still achieve a healthy disposal profit.

But, as used vehicle prices have normalised, so end-of-contract scrutiny has intensified.

An alternative explanation for the rise in wear and tear recharges is the growing use of technology.

"Some of the leasecos are using AI technology to do the walk-around checks at end of a lease," says Paul Hollick, chair of the Association of Fleet Professionals. (AFP). "The digital tools are a lot better now."

These apps can measure to a fraction of a millimetre the dings, dents and scratches that lead to recharges, removing subjectivity from inspections.

They are also part of a digitised appraisal process that automatically triggers recharges for sums that human inspectors may have chosen to waive.

"Most leasecos don't want to recharge customers because they don't want to disrupt the overall relationship over relatively small bills," says Hollick.

The lower end of these bills is frequently covered by damage waivers that protect fleets from the first few pounds of recharges.

Waivers typically stretch from about £150 to £250 (the average in the FN50 was £165 for cars and £172 for vans), but their finer details vary.

Some waivers are a fixed amount that fleets can deduct from the final damage recharges invoice, whereas others only protect fleets up to a certain financial threshold – if the damage exceeds this limit the fleet is liable for the full amount.

"MOST LEASECOS DON'T WANT TO RECHARGE CUSTOMERS BECAUSE THEY DON'T WANT TO DISRUPT THE OVERALL RELATIONSHIP OVER RELATIVELY SMALL BILLS"

PAUL HOLLICK, AFP

"Negotiate the waiver right at the outset of your relationship with a leasing company when you have maximum leverage," says Ben Varey, former fleet manager of a very large fleet and now a consultant.

Some recharges are easily reversible. Bills for missing keys, absent charging cables and incomplete service records can all be chalked off if the driver or fleet manager can find the items.

It is also worth checking that the initial inspector has captured the mileage correctly – transposing two digits could lead to an invoice for excess mileage.

Fleet policies should require drivers to conduct a vehicle audit prior to it being returned, ticking off a checklist of everything that the leasing company will expect to collect, says Bushnell, before ensuring that someone is available to attend the inspection and counter-sign the inspector's report.

"Then, when you see these end-of-contract invoices coming through, have you got the appropriate tools to challenge them? Have you seen all the pictures and evidence?," asks Bushnell.

Prevention being better than cure, the optimum scenario is for vehicles to reach the end of their leases in pristine condition, having avoided all the 'hit while parked' incidents that test the patience and credulity of fleet managers.

"It's important that there is some skin in the game from the driver community," says the AFP's Hollick.

"So, if there is a bill, the drivers get charged.

It could either be the full amount or it could be a representative amount. You do need drivers to be aware that damage is a business cost."

Regular monitoring of vehicle condition throughout a lease enables fleets and drivers to repair any damage at their own cost, rather than pay recharges.

Prompt action is of the essence here, says Wasim Sattar, head of DWV, which runs one of the UK's largest networks of SMART repair technicians.

"If there's damage on a metal panel, whether it's a stone chip or scratch, there's always a risk of the damage getting more severe through rust or corrosion," he says.

"And it's the same with a little chip on a diamond cut wheel – before you know it, the bare metal is exposed and it's starting to corrode, and then it becomes a bigger repair."

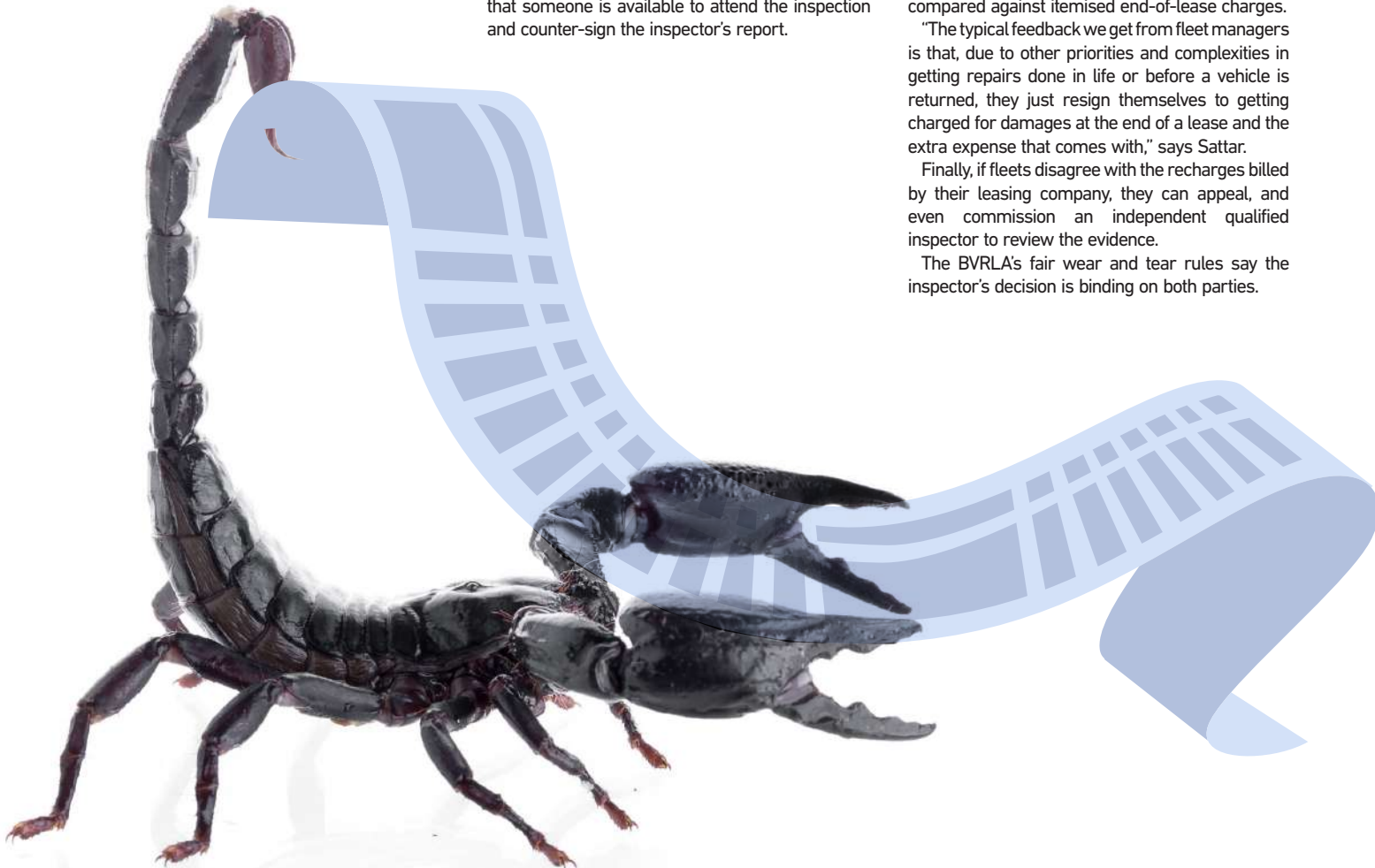
The foremost assessment for fleet decision-makers is whether a repair will cost more than a leasing company would invoice in recharges.

DWV sets fleets up with a repair portal where they can upload images of damage and receive an estimate of the smart repair cost (including discounts based on fleet size), which can then be compared against itemised end-of-lease charges.

"The typical feedback we get from fleet managers is that, due to other priorities and complexities in getting repairs done in life or before a vehicle is returned, they just resign themselves to getting charged for damages at the end of a lease and the extra expense that comes with," says Sattar.

Finally, if fleets disagree with the recharges billed by their leasing company, they can appeal, and even commission an independent qualified inspector to review the evidence.

The BVRLA's fair wear and tear rules say the inspector's decision is binding on both parties.



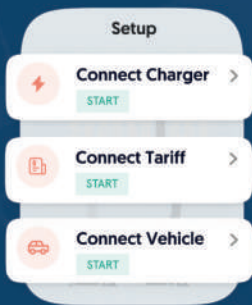


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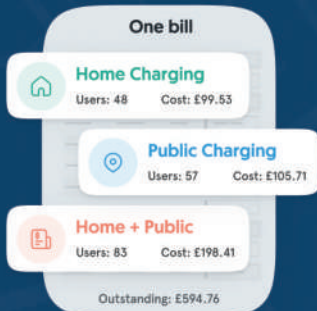
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Charlie Cook Founder and CEO of Rightcharge

Why your charging bill might be telling you only half the story

I stopped at a motorway services recently, plugged in my car and saw the price sitting at over 80p per kWh. At home, the same charge cost me less than a third of that. Many fleets never see the cost difference, because it sits inside one line called 'charging'.

This is where the cost of fleet electrification can add up. The vehicle and infrastructure get all the attention, but day-to-day running can increase costs. In 2025, our platform data showed public charging made up just over a quarter of sessions but over half of total charging costs.

This is not a reason to slow down. There are now more than two million electric cars on UK roads and fleets are pushing forward. Those getting the most out of electric vehicles are treating charging data as seriously as they treat fuel, knowing where every kWh goes and what it costs. The vehicles are ready and the savings are available; they just need to be unlocked.



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PHEV tax changes drive uptake of flexible leasing

Businesses are shortening leases on plug-in hybrid electric vehicles ahead of tax hike in April 2028, but what are the pros and cons of this approach? *Sarah Tooze* reports

From April 6, 2028, fleet operators and company car drivers of plug-in hybrid vehicles (PHEVs) face a double whammy: benefit-in-kind (BIK) rates jump to a minimum of 18% from as low as 4% today, and the new pence-per-mile charge for electric vehicles (EVs) and PHEVs, known as eVED, will take effect.

Exacerbating the situation is the removal of the two-year Euro 6e-bis tax easement, which was announced in the November 2025 Budget to mitigate the impact of the change in the way PHEVs are emissions tested.

Previously assessed under the Euro 6d standard, PHEVs are now tested under the more rigorous Euro 6e-bis to give more accurate real-world results, which has resulted in a significant increase in emissions being reported.

Without easement, PHEV BIKs would've immediately jumped several percentage points.

In one indicative example from the Department for Transport, a PHEV with a CO₂ figure of 30g/km and equivalent all-electric range of 50 miles could increase to 90g/km.

Attracting a BIK rate of 9% in 2025/26, the PHEV would've been hit with a much higher BIK

rate of 24%, without the Government intervention.

Instead, easement meant all PHEVs were treated as having emissions of 1g/km if registered before April 6, 2028. And they will continue to enjoy that treatment until April 2031.

This action has helped stop the decline in PHEV orders seen in the second half of 2025 and ensured they "remain a viable option for drivers not ready or able to move to a fully electric vehicle", according to Alan Bastey, head of decarbonisation at Zenith.

Nevertheless, easement will not prevent PHEVs registered prior to April 6, 2028, from hitting the 18% tax bracket in 2028, when all cars emitting 1-50g/km are lumped together, regardless of electric-only range.

Harvey Perkins, co-founder at HRUX, says: "A PHEV subject to easement, which therefore is treated as 1g/km regardless of what appears on the Certificate of Conformity for company car tax purposes, with, say, EV-only range of 75 miles, will go from 8% to 18% overnight."

Meanwhile, PHEVs registered on/after April 6, 2028, will sit in the bracket relevant to their actual emissions.

"The challenge is what comes next," says Bastey. "With BIK for PHEVs rising from as little as 4% today

to 18% from April 2028, fleets need to carefully manage timing and cost, while also avoiding a technological lock in."

WAYS TO TACKLE FUTURE TAX CHANGES

Fleet operators are taking a variety of actions in response to the future tax changes, according to the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP).

A number of fleets are removing PHEVs from their choice lists altogether or making them 'order by exception'.

"At the same time, demand from some employees for these vehicles remains high, especially among those who, for various reasons, don't yet want to opt for a full EV," says AFP chair Paul Hollick.

"We're hearing reports of fleet managers not just ensuring drivers still opting for PHEVs are verbally aware their BIK may rise, but asking them to acknowledge the fact in writing and saving the documentation. The objective is to avoid a situation where drivers want to suddenly exit their vehicles.

"Choosing shorter or more flexible leasing is another answer to this issue, especially as there are some attractive short-term lease rates for PHEVs available at the moment, and some of our members are using this as a solution. If the costs stack up, ↻

Managing costs and efficiencies in fleet management: a strategic approach

By Kelly Pinner,
Head of Business Development

If you're managing a mixed fleet with HGVs, vans, and specialist vehicles, you're juggling more than most. O-licence compliance, DVSA inspections, maintenance scheduling across different asset types, driver duty of care, all while keeping costs under control and vehicles on the road.

At Jaama, we work with hundreds of fleet operators managing complex, mixed-vehicle operations. Here's what we've learned about managing costs and efficiency in a way that actually sticks.

Real-time visibility

If you can see what's happening across your entire fleet in real time (vehicle location, driver behaviour, asset utilisation) you can spot inefficiencies quickly and fix them before they become expensive problems.

When you're managing different vehicle types with different usage patterns, this visibility becomes critical. You need to know which assets are working hard and which are sitting idle now, not at the end of the month.

Proactive maintenance

Unplanned vehicle downtime doesn't just cost you in repair bills, it's the knock-on chaos: missed customer commitments, drivers sitting idle, operations scrambling to find a replacement vehicle, potential DVSA compliance issues if you're running late on inspections.

Implementing a proactive maintenance strategy, supported by automated service scheduling and alerts, helps you prevent costly breakdowns before they occur. Tracking service intervals, MOT dates, and component lifecycles across your mixed fleet enables you to schedule maintenance during off-peak hours and extend vehicle lifespan significantly.

DVSA-ready compliance and O-licence management

If you hold an operator licence, you know that DVSA compliance isn't optional, and the consequences of getting it wrong go well beyond fines:



Traffic Commissioner inquiries, licence curtailment, reputational damage with customers who expect reliability and professionalism.

Modern fleet management systems automate compliance tracking for driver licences, vehicle taxation, insurance, and inspections. This reduces your administrative burden and minimises the risk of costly penalties. Just as importantly, it gives you an audit trail you can trust. Comprehensive incident reporting also helps you identify patterns and implement preventative measures, reducing insurance premiums over time.

Optimising fuel efficiency

For mixed fleets, the challenge is understanding fuel performance across very different vehicle types. Advanced telematics and driver behaviour monitoring can identify fuel-wasting habits such as excessive speeding or prolonged idling and break that data down by vehicle type. Implementing targeted driver training programmes based on this data can improve fuel efficiency and deliver substantial savings.

The strategic advantage

Jaama's fleet management platform Key2 is built to handle the complexity of mixed-vehicle operations, with centralised data, automated compliance tracking, proactive maintenance scheduling, and real-time visibility across every asset type.

When you centralise your fleet data, automate the compliance and maintenance tasks that eat up your time, and get the visibility you need to make confident decisions, your fleet stops being a source of stress. It becomes what it should be: a well-run, compliant operation that supports your business, keeps vehicles on the road, and stays on top of costs.

About Jaama

Jaama is a UK-based fleet and asset management software provider, supporting ambitious businesses with powerful technology backed by real people who care. Our Key2 platform is trusted by hundreds of organisations to manage complex fleet operations with confidence. To learn more, visit www.jaama.co.uk

For more information
email: enquiries@jaama.co.uk
or visit: www.jaama.com



FLEXIBLE LEASING

it's quite an effective way to avoid a tricky short-to-medium term problem."

Zenith has seen a "clear shift towards shorter PHEV lease terms", according to Bastey.

There has been "strong fleet interest in moving close to the lower end of the 36-to-48-month range", he says, and there has been a 5% increase in leases of 24 months or less this year compared with 2025.

Zenith's average lease term has fallen by four months since 2025, showing how quickly customer behaviour is evolving.

"Most leases still sit within the 36-to-48 month banding, but minimising BIK in the third year and keeping the option to switch technologies sooner is evident," says Bastey. "This is also reflected in demand, with PHEV order share increasing by around three percentage points since December 2025."

It's a similar picture at Sogo Mobility.

"We are still seeing customers raise concerns that new PHEV orders could take them into the 2028/29 tax year and beyond," says Tom Brookbanks, head of leasing at Sogo Mobility.

The majority of Sogo customers are leaving the decision to drivers, while ensuring they have all the necessary information to make an informed choice, according to Brookbanks. But Sogo is seeing "stronger demand for flexible rental products with a minimum 12-month term" for PHEVs.

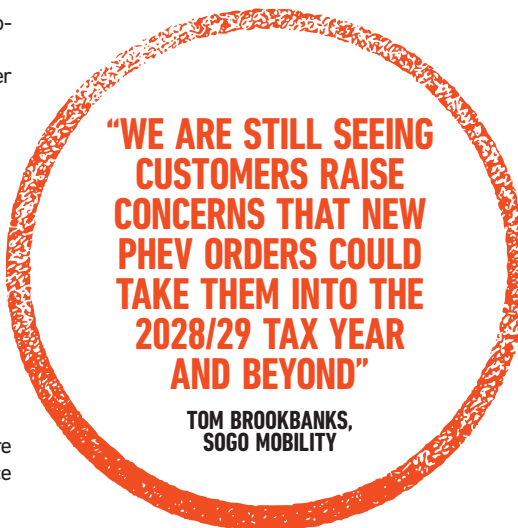
"Many of these arrangements are expected to continue for between 12 and 18 months, after which drivers are likely to transition into BEVs (battery electric vehicles) on more traditional long-term lease agreements," he says.

OPTIMUM LEASE LENGTH

The current ideal lease length differs for company car drivers and fleet managers.

"From a driver perspective, the optimum lease term for a PHEV is currently around two years," says Brookbanks.

"However, from a fleet manager and cost perspective, dependent on the vehicle and residual



"WE ARE STILL SEEING CUSTOMERS RAISE CONCERNS THAT NEW PHEV ORDERS COULD TAKE THEM INTO THE 2028/29 TAX YEAR AND BEYOND"

**TOM BROOKBANKS,
SOGO MOBILITY**

value performance, the optimal lease duration is generally three years, with some exceptions either side. As a result, there is a balancing act between driver preference and overall fleet cost efficiency."

He continues: "It is also worth noting that even a two-year lease taken out today is likely to extend into the 2028/29 tax year, when BIK rates will increase significantly. That said, an 18% BIK rate on most current PHEVs remains tax advantageous compared with petrol and diesel vehicles.

"In addition, where company car drivers are well informed, a three-year PHEV lease can still represent a favourable overall position. When the lower BIK rates in the current and next financial years are combined with the higher rate in 2028/29 and averaged across the full lease term, the proposition can still stack up positively."

BENEFITS OF FLEXIBLE LEASING

Aside from shorter leases helping fleet managers avoid or reduce the impact of higher BIK rates on PHEVs in the 2028/29 tax year, fleet managers and

drivers gain "more time to assess developments in EV technology", according to Brookbanks.

"This may make BEVs more viable for certain driver groups, particularly those who cannot charge at home or who still have concerns around charging and vehicle suitability, although charging anxiety is becoming less prevalent," he says.

Bastey told the Fleet News at 10 audience that shorter PHEV lease cycles "ensure your hand isn't forced so much in your decision-making", and allow the adoption of BEVs "based on total cost of ownership and operational capabilities".

The downside is that shorter leases or more flexible arrangements have higher monthly costs. How much depends on the specific vehicle and contract length but, generally, a PHEV on Sogo's Flexi product with a minimum 12-month retention could be about 15%-20% more expensive than a traditional three-year contract hire arrangement.

"The shorter the commitment, the more expensive the flex product becomes," says Brookbanks.

One fleet manager, who wishes to remain anonymous, says that a two-year lease was going to be "double the price", compared with the fleet's usual four-year contract hire arrangement.

However, a smaller additional cost is justifiable for some fleets due to the flexibility.

Zenith advocates a blended funding approach rather than a single lease model.

"Keeping a core fleet locked into longer term cycles where there is proven BEV suitability and highly stable usage profiles provides cost stability. Building in flexibility on around 10% to 20% of the fleet allows managers to respond to BIK and tax changes, technology improvements and the BEV infrastructure roll-out," says Bastey. "This approach gives fleet managers true agility while maintaining control of cost and operational complexity."

Brookbanks adds: "There is no definitive right or wrong approach. However, there are sensible, low-risk options available for those who want to support drivers who are not ready to move to EV adoption."

Reducing the cost of vehicle downtime

Vehicle downtime is enormously expensive and inconvenient. *Jack Carfrae* asks why it is such a problem and what fleets can do to minimise the cost and impact

Downtime is a strong contender for the industry's biggest headache. A fleet operator is supposed to keep employees rolling, so stationary vehicles are the antithesis of the job – and they are really expensive.

A car off the road is far from ideal, but a dud van is worse, because light commercial vehicle (LCV) drivers can rarely work from home.

Research by Mercedes-Benz Vans published in May claims operators lose £1,172.20 for every day a van is off the road, while on average service, maintenance and repair (SMR) specialist Fleet Assist cites an anecdotal figure of £800 per day. Either way, it is a lot of money.

Vans, typically, spend more time out of action, too. Average vehicle-off-road (VOR) times from fellow SMR specialist Epyx shows the average for an LCV in April was 5.9 days versus 3.2 for cars.

Premium models are worst hit. They spent an average of 6.5 days off the road in April, compared with 5.8 for mid-level models and 5.4 for value brands. The equivalents for cars were 3.0, 2.8 and 3.3 days respectively.

There is good news, though. In May, Epyx reported that overall fleet downtime had fallen to its lowest level since before the pandemic.

It said the average length of time fleet vehicles (cars and vans) spent off the road for maintenance or repair work was 1.46 days in January, 1.47 in February and 1.53 in March.

That was down from the peaks of 1.83 days in May 2023 and November 2025 and 1.91 days in December 2025.

However, Epyx admits that data does not include warranty work, lead times for which can be astronomical – often because dealers do not prioritise getting this lower margin business into the workshop – and figures for which are the preserve of OEMs.

"That's when your new EV has an issue and it goes in and out of the garage three times over," says Charlie Brooks, vice-president of strategy, growth and data at Epyx.

He adds: "There's a huge amount of that, and I think everyone lacks a bit of visibility about exactly how to measure it.

"Although standard VOR times have peaked and come down, some of these warranty issues are becoming slightly more painful, given the introduction of more and more EVs and more and more different models with teething issues."

Mark Sinclair, downtime management specialist at leasing firm Ogilvie Fleet, says waiting five

months for warranty work is "not unrealistic... particularly with the premium manufacturers".

He and others tell *Fleet News* that parts availability is a significant cause of stagnation, as macroeconomic factors such as the pandemic and international conflicts have repeatedly stymied production and supply.

GROWTH IN GREEN PARTS POPULARITY

It has made green parts more popular, purely because they may be accessible when new components are not.

Ford, for example, launched an online store for certified used components in June, and specialists say more fleets are turning to them.

"We're certainly getting feedback from some of our major fleets that they're using more and more green parts rather than waiting for new ones... and it is more the availability of the parts than the green aspect," says Tim Meadows, CCO of Epyx.

Vincent St Claire, managing director of Fleet Assist, says: "Rather than having a van sitting there waiting for a door mirror – and it doesn't have to be body parts, they can be mechanical as well – if you can source a green part, why wouldn't you get it?"

DOWNTIME OR UPTIME?

It sounds obvious, but specialists are keen to distinguish between downtime and uptime. The former is a position of distressed reactivity, while the latter is something that, to a degree, can be planned or used as a target to cut costs and improve efficiency.

"With downtime, the event has already happened," adds St Claire. "You've now got a van in the workshop, you can't get a water pump for it and if there are none available, you're stuck."

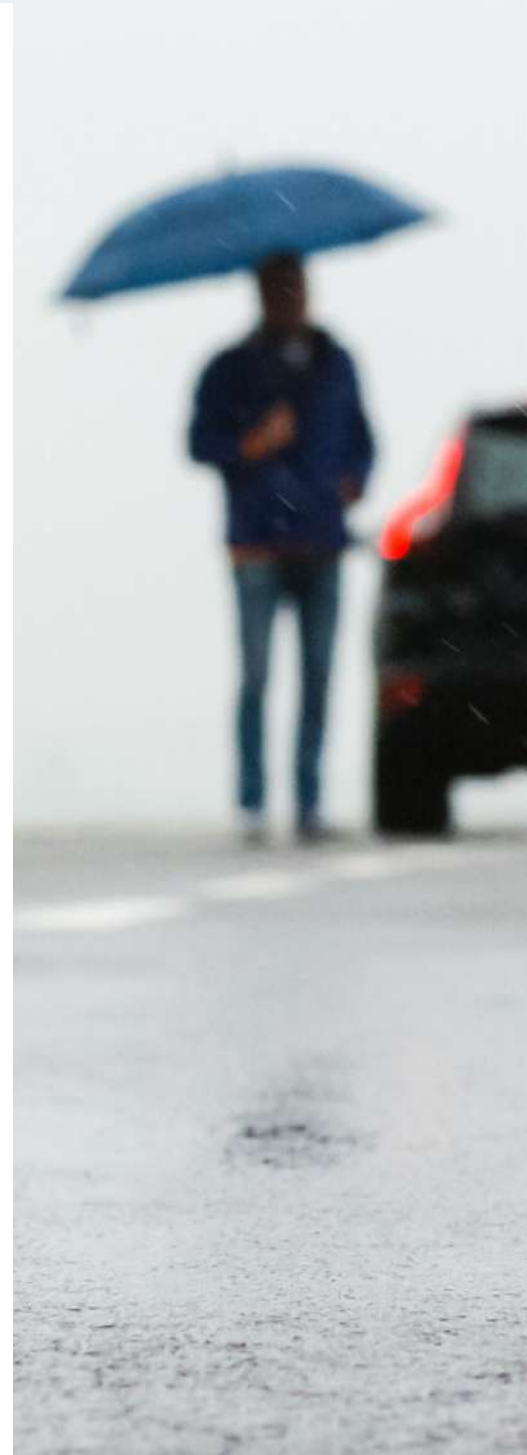
Sinclair comments: "Uptime is vehicles on the road... it's keeping the customer mobile. When we speak of uptime, it means the car's off the road... but the driver doesn't have to be sitting on the couch."

St Claire says: "[It's] compliance and making sure everything's routine." He adds that applying the mandatory truck maintenance model to light vehicles can tighten up a fleet.

"Everything's scheduled in the HGV world," he says. "What typically happens is you mitigate downtime by booking far enough in advance to make sure you've got a workshop space to deal with things.

"You're also dealing with warning indicators early in the process, rather than waiting for the service."

St Claire challenges the conventional notion of coveting shorter lead times and suggests that, ➔





Beyond electric: What next for fleet operators?

With over 80% of company car drivers now choosing plug-in models, and fleet policies increasingly driving towards zero emission motoring, Grosvenor, the UK's largest privately-owned contract hire, fleet management and EV salary sacrifice specialist, is advising companies to look 'beyond the current EV trend' and begin planning a future of broader and more flexible, efficient and sustainable business travel options.

Analysis of DVLA and National Travel Survey data reveals a sharp 'generational tilt', with the demographics of license holders ageing rapidly. Nearly one-third (32.8%) of all UK licenses are now held by those aged 60 and over, while drivers aged 17-24 now account for just 7% of full license holders.

Financial pressures are one reason why young drivers are delaying taking their test. The average cost to get on the road in year one now sits between £7,352 and £10,852, compounded by stricter DVLA booking rules that came into effect in March 2026.

A rise of digital connectivity, increased urbanisation, and environmental awareness are other contributing factors. As a result, a lower proportion of new talent coming into the UK workforce has a driving licence, with many younger employees accustomed to using Apps and flexible travel options.

The traditional company car therefore faces potential change once again and, for fleet managers, this cultural shift serves as a catalyst to look at what the future may hold.

To support companies in planning these future fleet strategies, Grosvenor recently



"We must now look over the horizon once again and begin planning our longer-term business travel strategies, where the company car is supported by other sustainable, digital alternatives"

**Steve Beadle,
head of Vista at Grosvenor**

launched Vista. This consultative solution looks at how businesses will move employees from A to B sustainably, efficiently and cost-effectively.

Vista is made up of 8 pillars that cover all key areas, including policies, technology, infrastructure, culture, regulations, data, financial implications and propulsion, with the Vista team broadening the scope of fleet consultancy by advising companies on more flexible, sustainable travel choices to complement the company car.

Steve Beadle, head of Vista at Grosvenor, said: "We are seeing a shift in the very culture of the fleet. EV uptake in the company car sector has been successful due to tax incentives and business decarbonisation strategies.

"Yet, whilst continuing to advise and support customers on the transition to EVs and the infrastructure that supports this, we must now look over the horizon once again and begin planning our longer-term business travel strategies, where the company car is supported by other sustainable, digital alternatives."

Grosvenor's Vista solution is supporting fleet managers by:

- Looking at how more flexible business travel plans could be incorporated alongside the company car and grey fleet.
- Ensuring the diverse business mobility needs of both the traditional workforce and a newer, more tech-driven, workforce is combined.
- Helping companies with the cultural shift of a younger generation entering the workforce who may expect greater flexibility in their business travel choices over and above the company car.

VEHICLE DOWNTIME

when measured by the time between the booking and the vehicle leaving the garage – rather than from when it arrives at the workshop – longer lead times are a sign of a pre-emptive approach to maintenance and a reduction in downtime.

“Extending lead times is not a bad key performance indicator (KPI); it’s actually a really positive thing. It means you’re being proactive in getting the vehicles in (to a workshop),” he says.

“Rather than always thinking that it’s garage capacity or the lack of it that’s the problem, you’re getting in there earlier.

“We’ve seen compliance levels increase (with this approach) and, if a driver has ignored three warning lights, we’ve been able to catch it before the vehicle’s broken down.”

VEHICLE SELECTION IS VITAL

Picking reliable vehicles in the first place is as good a way as any to curtail downtime, and fleets with access to swathes of data can – and should – use it to identify dependable options.

A certain amount of downtime is inevitable, though, and when it comes to vehicle replacements to plug a gap, Sinclair says like-for-like models are especially important for company car drivers, because of the tax ramifications.

He says: “P11Ds are a big issue for benefit-in-kind (BIK). If you’ve been given a petrol vehicle as a replacement, but you’re declaring an EV, after 30 days, that’s going to hit you in the pocket.

“We need to have that at the forefront of our minds, and we can’t just think, ‘they’ve got a set of wheels, so that’s fine.’”

“IF YOU’VE GOT A PREFERENCE TO GO FRANCHISED OR INDEPENDENT, MAKING SURE IT GOES TO THAT RIGHT GARAGE IN ADVANCE IS WORTHWHILE”

VINCENT ST CLAIRE, FLEET ASSIST

Ogilvie has introduced measures aimed at cutting downtime, and fleets can now see VOR status via its MiFleet platform for greater visibility.

Behind the scenes, Sinclair says his team’s work is more about maintaining relationships with manufacturers and dealer groups, and ringing around to get vehicles booked into workshops as quickly as possible.

This approach clearly pays dividends as Ogilvie’s year-on-year figures for 2024–2025 claim its average VOR fell by 17% – 3.6 days – from 21.4 days to 17.8, bringing the median days off road down to nine.

Finding a garage with availability can be difficult enough, irrespective of whether downtime is reactive or scheduled, and Sinclair says Ogilvie often moves vehicles, “to Nottingham, for example, if it’s based up here in Stirling and we can’t get it into a garage”.

Epyx and Fleet Assist both believe there is a strong case for identifying garages with strong track records.

“If you’re using data to book a vehicle into a garage in Leicestershire, and saying, ‘this garage typically gets vehicles back on the road quicker than this garage’, directing more of your work there is important,” says Brooks.

St Claire says: “What you want to do is pre-book it into the most appropriate garage. It’s not just about making sure there’s workshop capacity, it’s also about getting the vehicle maintained at the garage where you want to get the work done.

“If you’ve got a preference to go franchised or independent, making sure it goes to that right garage in advance is worthwhile.”

In June, Epyx reported that fleets’ use of franchised dealers for SMR work had fallen to “a new low”.

It again used January 2020 as a point of comparison, when 54% of jobs logged on its 1link Service Network platform went to franchised dealers, but that had fallen to 41% by late 2025.

Hourly franchised dealer rates were cited as part of the reason for the trend, having risen from an average of £70 in January 2020 to £93 in March 2026, while Meadows says the firm had “increasingly seen vans and lower cost cars directed towards independent SMR outlets”. ↻



VEHICLE DOWNTIME

"For these vehicles, there is less sensitivity to having a non-franchise stamp on the service book and a reduced need for particular skills and workshop equipment."

PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

Brooks says connected vehicle data has a big part to play in cutting downtime. In addition to regular vehicle checks – again, similar to mandated practices for heavy vehicles – it can be used to identify issues before they become serious.

"We've done several trials with large customers around connected vehicle data," he says. "It involves pulling data directly from the car and the diagnostic trouble codes to understand that a vehicle is coming in for a brake change, or it has an issue with the clutch or it has a pollen filter issue.

"That means you can direct that vehicle into the right garage, but not only that, you could potentially order those parts ahead of time.

"With light driver checks and connected vehicle data, you're getting that information sooner and pushing the driver to book in the vehicle in the most effective manner so there isn't longer term damage because they're ignoring warning lights."

Mobile servicing is yet another technique to reduce downtime by working on vehicles wherever they happen to be stationed. Aside from the obvious convenience, it has the dual effect of freeing up conventional workshop bays.

Renault is among the latest manufacturers to offer it (the likes of Ford, Mercedes-Benz Vans and VVCV have done the same, and similar initiatives exist in the independent sector), having launched a six-month trial in March.

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SAQIB QURESHI, RENAULT

It currently has seven Master vans kitted out to perform the likes of basic servicing and repairs and software updates, based at franchised dealers in Brighton, Chesterfield, Edinburgh, Hayes (West London), Oldham, Swansea and Worcester.

The company is aiming for 25 with more vans due in the second half of this year.

"We can also do some pre-warranty diagnosis," says national fleet aftersales manager Saqib Qureshi.

"If there is an issue with the vehicle before it comes into the workshop, the dealer can go out and see what the issue is before it comes in to minimise downtime.

"It's not just a case of booking your service in for a day you're free," he adds. "It's also, what set-up

have you got? Is the floor flat (to jack up the vehicle)? Have you got somewhere the mobile van can park?

"We have to take all those little things into consideration. And if you're doing a software update, what is the 5G coverage in the area like? That's one of the reasons we've only got seven vans at the moment. We want this to be a slow starter on purpose."

Startin Group is one of the seven dealers and actually had the demo Master displayed at the CV Show in April.

Head of group fleet, Lee O'Connell, explains why he took it on.

"We've got several fleet users who take Renaults from us. It works well when the vehicle's local to Worcester because we can look after it, but these are high-mileage users, and when it's elsewhere, they're having to book them (into other garages) in advance and things can become very difficult," he says.

"Dealerships are becoming much busier and a lot of them have got other brands, so from an end user's perspective, you could see the frustration with the downtime.

"We've had the odd customer who's said 'I'm working in the office this day, can you come on site and service my car?' But it's pretty much vans... we've been out to engineers on sites and to an auto parts company with several warehouses, so if someone's stationed at a site for a day, we can do a couple of vans together."

If downtime thrives on anything, it is reactivity, and the aforementioned initiatives – all of which major on planning – can take the edge off it.

Managers need only glance at the daily VOR costs mentioned early in this article to see how worthwhile proactivity truly is.



Managing vehicle cost and efficiency with Rivervale

Controlling vehicle costs is only one part of running a fleet. For most operators, the pressure comes from keeping vehicles on the road managing downtime, compliance, driver support, and day-to-day admin. Rivervale works with businesses to simplify these challenges, helping operators improve visibility, reduce admin, and keep vehicles moving. Whether managing a small fleet or a multi-vehicle operation, the focus is on practical, hands-on support that delivers measurable efficiencies.

Practical Fleet Management from £5 per Vehicle

Fleet management does not need to feel complex. Rivervale's solutions start from just £5 per vehicle, giving businesses access to expert support, driver assistance, and tools that help improve efficiency without adding unnecessary overheads.

Our approach is built around flexibility. We work with each customer to understand how vehicles are used, where time is being lost, and where support makes the biggest difference.

Smarter Fleet Management with the 'My Vehicle Manager' App

A key part of Rivervale's approach is its My Vehicle Manager app, designed to give managers and drivers a simple, consistent way to manage essential tasks.

The platform centralises vehicle information, driver support, and operational data, helping to reduce downtime, improve communication, and support compliance. Vehicle records such as service intervals, MOT due dates, inspection history, and documentation are stored in one place, making it easier to stay organised and keep vehicles road-ready.

Core benefits include:

- Maintenance made easy: Flexible service and tyre booking options, including mobile servicing and delivery.



- 24/7 driver support: Access to Driverline, 365 days a year.
 - Stronger compliance: Inspection tracking, reminders, and central document storage.
 - Clear reporting: Driver activity records and fleet-wide visibility.
- The platform supports fleets of all sizes, with Rivervale managing in excess of 10,000 vehicles across operations ranging from 10 vehicles to 750 vehicles.

Supporting ESG Goals & Lower-Emission Fleet Strategies

Cost and efficiency are closely linked with sustainability. Many businesses are reviewing how their fleet can support environmental, social, and governance goals, from reducing emissions to improving reporting and planning for future vehicle needs.

Rivervale helps businesses assess their fleet, explore lower-emission alternatives, and plan a practical transition where electric or hybrid vehicles are suitable. Our aim is to help customers make informed decisions that support operational needs and sustainability goals.

More Than Leasing

Rivervale brings together expertise across leasing, fleet management, and minibus services, giving customers access to joined-up support from one experienced team.

We help with more than vehicle supply. From driver support and maintenance to compliance, reporting, and long-term fleet planning, we work in partnership with businesses keeping operations running smoothly.

Speak to Rivervale About Your Fleet

Fleet management can seem expensive or out of reach, but it doesn't have to be. Rivervale's fleet management solutions start from just £5 per vehicle, giving businesses access to practical support, greater efficiency, and expert guidance without major overheads.

To find out how Rivervale can reduce fleet admin, improve driver support, review vehicle costs, or plan your next stage of growth, book a discovery call and enjoy a complimentary Costa Coffee on us.

Book a discovery call and enjoy a coffee on us: rivervale.co.uk/fleet



Rivervale

Tyre management

Tyres are a vital, but often undervalued, part of running a fleet, impacting directly on safety, cost, operational efficiency and compliance. *Ben Rooth* looks at six key considerations for how they can be effectively managed

As the only part of a vehicle that is in contact with the road, tyres form a key part of every fleet operation, but their importance is frequently overlooked.

They influence numerous critical outcomes simultaneously – safety, compliance, operating efficiency and vehicle availability. And, of course, they have an obvious impact on each fleet's operational costs.

"Fleet decision-makers and company car and vans drivers can spend hours looking for, test driving and ultimately spec'ing their next vehicle," says Lee O'Neill, operations director at Venson Automotive Solutions.

"However, it is almost a racing certainty that, in searching out the very latest technology and available bells and whistles, the one feature they probably ignore is tyres.

"Yet, in many ways, tyres are perhaps the most critical feature or item of equipment on any vehicle.

"After all the essential contact area – no larger than the palm of a hand – is all that is linking the car or van to the road.

"What's more, tyres are essential for safe driving, providing grip for braking and acceleration, steering and directional control."

Safety charity TyreSafe says over the past five years an average of 153 people have been killed or seriously injured in incidents involving defective tyres, while 2.1 million MOT failures were attributed to tyre defects in 2023-24.

Furthermore, tyre-related issues remain one of the most common causes of roadside incidents, with one-in-five motorway breakdowns tyre related.

"The tyre management landscape has evolved significantly in recent years, making it important for

fleets to revisit their strategies," says Jason Chamberlain, chief revenue officer at DTM (Direct Tyre Management).

"Increased availability of data, including pressure and condition monitoring, is enabling fleets to move away from reactive checks toward more preventative and exception-based management."

Consequently, the volume and complexity of the different tyres now available has made proactive planning more important than ever.

"Overall, tyres may be a relatively small component in isolation, but they play an outsized role in fleet performance," he concludes. "A structured, well-governed tyre strategy remains one of the most effective ways for fleets to improve safety, control costs and maintain uptime."

Here we look at six key considerations of robust tyre management.



TYRE PROCUREMENT

Fleets generally face a choice between sourcing tyres independently or bundling them into a leasing or 'maintenance included' agreement. But what are the pros and cons of each approach?

"Independent procurement offers greater control over brand choice, specification and supplier relationships and can deliver strong value where fleets have sufficient scale and governance," says Jason Chamberlain, of DTM.

"However, it also brings added administrative complexity and the risk of inconsistency if

standards are not tightly enforced. Bundled tyre provision, by contrast, can offer cost predictability and operational simplicity, but requires clear specification and performance measures to ensure tyre quality, availability and service levels are maintained.

"In both cases, success tends to depend less on the procurement model itself and more on how clearly expectations are defined and managed."

Chris Milligan, head of key accounts at ATS Euromaster, says that fleets have a choice between "the flexibility of independent sourcing" versus the "predictable security of bundled leasing packages".

"Going independent often results in lower initial outgoings and grants freedom over brand choice and service providers," he explains.

"However, this path carries the risk of unexpected costs, greater admin and requires strict adherence to lease return conditions.

"Conversely, bundling tyres into a maintenance-included lease offers fixed, higher, monthly payments, greater convenience and minimal surprise charges.

"The main trade-offs here are reduced flexibility in tyre brands and the fact damage caused by poor driving is typically excluded.

"Coming out of a bundled package and using a reputable service, maintenance and repair (SMR) provider can give the best of both worlds by offloading the technical burden of tyre health to experts while retaining more independent cost control."



WHEN SHOULD YOU REPLACE TYRES?

Although the legal minimum tread depth in the UK is 1.6mm, many fleets choose to replace tyres before this point.

Waiting until the legal limit has been reached can increase wet-weather risk and leave little margin for error if inspections are missed or conditions deteriorate.

Consequently, replacement thresholds should be considered based on vehicle usage, seasonal conditions and operational risk, particularly for high-mileage or safety-critical vehicles.

Manny Singh, commercial director at JCT600 Vehicle Leasing Solutions (VLS), adds: "While the legal minimum tread depth is 1.6mm, most leasing companies operate a replacement threshold of 2mm, ahead of the legal limit.

"Some fleets prefer to replace at this stage to improve planning and reduce safety risks.

"However, some fleets – predominantly operational ones – adopt a 3mm replacement threshold, increasing the margin of safety taking advantage of better stopping distances, specifically in the wet and a lower aquaplaning risk.

"The trade-off here is cost, with tyres effectively being replaced 16.67% quicker, which would directly impact your costs either as a pay-as-you-go (PAYG) or through an increased budget if included within your lease.

"This is all about finding the right balance between the key drivers and objectives for your fleet and working with the right providers to support the management of your policy."

David Legg, director of propositions and partnerships at i247 Group, asserts that recent regulatory changes should give fleets the confidence to run tyres closer to the 1.6mm limit.

"Under EU Regulation R117-04, introduced last year, tyres must now meet the same minimum wet braking performance at 1.6mm tread depth as they do when brand new," he says.

"As long as the tyre condition is good, early replacement is no longer necessary, so we expect to see a change in approach from 3mm tyre policies and, therefore, fewer tyre replacements.

"There are also clear environmental and sustainability benefits associated with extending the life expectancy of tyres.

"Replacing tyres in line with the legal limit reduces raw material use, manufacturing emissions and tyre disposal volumes which directly supports fleet and wider business sustainability policies."



TYRE INFLATION AND CONDITION

Maintaining correct tyre inflation and condition is another cornerstone of effective fleet management.

Regular inspections, accurate pressure checks and prompt action on damage or irregular wear are essential.

"Under- or over-inflation can accelerate wear, increase fuel or energy consumption and compromise handling," says Jason Chamberlain, of DTM.

"Just as importantly, tyre condition often provides early warning of wider mechanical or operational issues such as alignment problems, overloading or aggressive driving."

Drivers need to understand what is expected of them and how to do checks correctly.

Regular visual inspections of tread depth and overall tyre condition are also important.

Drivers should be checking for uneven wear, cuts, bulges or embedded objects that could lead to failure.

"With any vehicle, ensuring that the correct tyre pressure is maintained will maximise tyre life," says Lee O'Neill, of Venson Automotive Solutions.

"Therefore, fleet operators need to ensure that drivers check tyres on a regular basis – every two weeks is the industry recommendation – for excessive and uneven tread wear, damage and pressure.

"Far too often we find that company car and van drivers are failing to check their tyres and are running on illegal tread depths," says O'Neill.

"Too frequently drivers only give their vehicle tyres a cursory glance and do not put the steering wheel on full lock to check across the full width."

The increased popularity of electric vehicles (EVs) – which often have higher inflation pressures than internal combustion engine (ICE) models due to their additional weight – increases the need for driver engagement.

"Tyre longevity is influenced by numerous factors – tyre selection, in-life maintenance and driver behaviour – and those characteristics will have a greater dominance in respect of EVs due to their added weight versus ICE models," says O'Neill.



SHOULD YOU CONSIDER SPECIALIST TYRES?

Specialist tyres have the potential to offer clear benefits, but fleets should assess whether the convenience and resilience gains outweigh any performance trade-offs.

"EV-specific tyres can improve efficiency, manage higher loads and reduce noise, but they often come at a higher cost and should be selected based on actual usage rather than vehicle type alone," says Jason Chamberlain, of DTM.

"All-season tyres can improve year-round capability and operational resilience in the UK climate, though they represent a compromise compared with dedicated summer or winter tyres."

Lee O'Neill, of Venson Automotive Solutions, maintains that all-season tyres should be fitted to vehicles that are identified by fleet operators as 'business critical'.

"The UK does not consistently have the extremes of weather that justify the cost and inconvenience of changing tyres on a season-by-season basis," he adds.

"For vehicles that are identified as business critical or that are required for emergency response on a 24-hour basis we recommend all-season tyres.

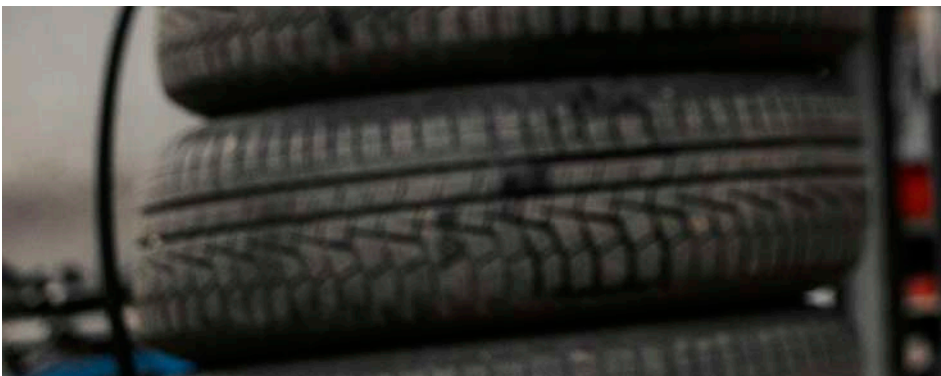
"In many cases it may not be the whole fleet that is required to be fitted with all-season tyres only those perhaps in certain locations.

"Ultimately all-season tyres are not a magic carpet, but if drivers live on a steep road or have a steep drive, they can also be a useful asset."

James Parnell, procurement director at Grosvenor, is in no doubt about the potential benefits of all-season tyres.

"All-season tyres can carry a higher upfront cost and may not match the peak performance of specialist seasonal tyres in extreme conditions," he says.

"However, for most fleet use, these drawbacks are outweighed by year-round safety and reduced changeovers."





MINIMISING DOWNTIME

Minimising downtime during tyre replacement requires both planning and coordination.

Aligning tyre work with scheduled servicing, using mobile fitting where appropriate and having clear pre-approved tyre policies all help reduce vehicle off-road time.

Holding the right stock in the right locations and replacing tyres in logical pairs or sets can also prevent repeat visits and unplanned disruption.

"I'd recommend fleets transition from a reactive 'fix-it-when-it-breaks' approach to a proactive, preventative mindset," says ATS Euromaster's Milligan.

"Central to this strategy is the increasing use of telematics and data analytics to predict potential failures. By working closely with a SMR provider to negotiate fixed pricing or volume discounts, fleet managers can also mitigate the impact of rising costs and supply chain disruptions."

David Legg, of i247 Group, asserts the importance of 'proactive management' when it comes to minimising downtime.

"Regular inspections by drivers and/or the fleet operators allow bookings to be made before tyres reach the legal limit or fail – rather than reacting at the last minute," he says.

"Providing accurate information to the tyre supplier is critical to ensure the correct stock is available and avoid delays, as downtime can be caused by unusual or new-to-market tyre sizes.

"Where tyre replacements are pre-planned, fleets may be able to take advantage of mobile fitting services, which reduces downtime and increases convenience. However, when mobile fitting is used reactively or as a breakdown response it is typically more costly, so it's key to anticipate tyre requirements."

Singh, of JCT600 VLS, adds: "For fleets where even short periods off the road are problematic, it's worth discussing short-term hire options. Having access to replacement vehicles when your own are unexpectedly out of action ensures service continuity."



BUDGET, MID-RANGE OR PREMIUM TYRES?

When choosing between budget, mid-range and premium tyres, fleets should look beyond the initial purchase price.

Factors such as mileage to removal, safety performance, durability, energy efficiency, availability and driver acceptance influence total cost of ownership (TCO).

In many cases, the lowest-priced tyre does not deliver the lowest overall cost once downtime, wear rates and operational risk are considered.

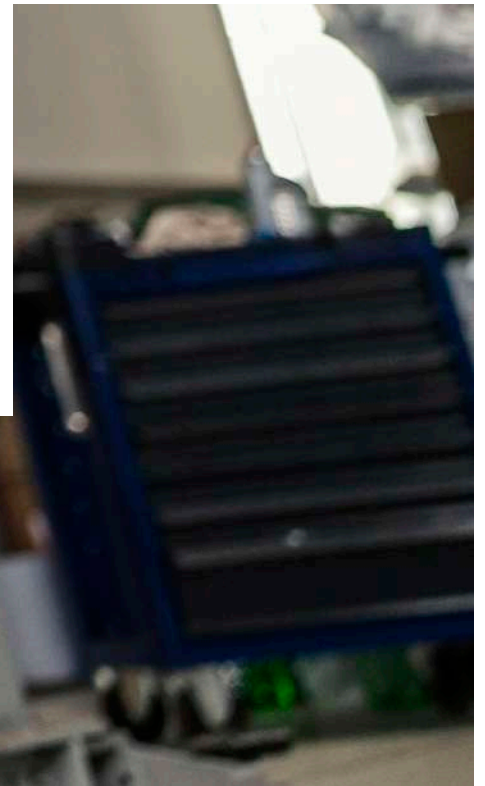
But Milligan, of ATS Euromaster, says choosing the right fit depends on your fleet's profile.

For example, premium tyres are best for high-usage vehicles where tyre integrity and performance are critical for safety and operational uptime.

And budget tyres have the potential to be a cost-effective solution for low-mileage drivers whose vehicles are subject to less intense wear and tear.

"As budgets face continued pressure, many fleets are considering budget tyres – however this can be a false economy," adds Milligan.

"True value is found by analysing initial spend against longevity to ensure every pound of the maintenance budget is used effectively."



Tarmac reduces collisions and repair costs by 30%

Data-led fleet safety partnership with Motormax and Geotab delivers measurable results in 12-months



Tarmac has reduced fleet collisions and achieved significant improvements in driver safety and fuel efficiency following the implementation of an integrated Motormax multi-camera and Geotab telematics solution.

Within 12 months of implementation across the van fleet, Tarmac achieved:

- 30% year-on-year reduction in driver-fault collisions
- 30% year-on-year saving in collision repair costs
- High and medium-risk drivers reduced from 40% to 6.5%
- Fuel economy improved by 25%
- 50% reduction in 'pulling out' incidents
- Speeding incidents per 1,000 miles halved since technology implementation in May 2023



Reducing incidents

Tarmac operates a mixed fleet of more than 2,000 vehicles and required a solution to reduce incidents, improve operational efficiency, enhance fleet visibility, and deliver meaningful, data-driven reporting.

A single integrated fleet platform

The Motormax multi-camera system integrates with the MyGeotab platform via API, leveraging Geotab's rules engine and reporting capabilities to deliver a "single pane of glass" experience. When predefined events are triggered, fleet teams can access and download video footage via a single platform to provide evidence to protect drivers, develop driver training and produce efficient and accurate incident reporting.

Proven return on investment

Tarmac Fleet Risk & Compliance Manager, Jonathan Meddings, said: "The integration allows managers to view telematics data and high-quality camera footage in a single platform, accelerating decision-making and streamlining fleet operations. As a result, we have already seen significant cost savings."

Protect drivers not at fault

"Our insurance company has provided Tarmac with a bursary, which we are now investing in multi-camera technology. We install cameras on every new vehicle because the return is proven - they reduce claims, avoid unnecessary costs, save management time and resource, and protect drivers who are not at fault."

Faster insurance claims resolution

By integrating video and telematics data, Tarmac has strengthened collaboration with its insurer, AXA, enabling faster claims resolution and improved liability decisions. Tarmac's claims team utilise video footage to support investigations and identify trends. For example, where data highlights recurring rear-end shunts, the teams consider adding rear cameras. The technology provides greater fleet visibility and supports continuous improvements.

Building a culture of positive driver engagement

The technology has also transformed driver engagement and recognition. Using Geotab's bespoke reports, Tarmac rewards positive driver behaviour through initiatives such as the '100 Club', recognising drivers who achieve a perfect driver score over more than 300 miles in a month. This approach reinforces positive behaviours and promotes safer driving across the organisation.

Embedding fleet safety into governance

Fleet safety data is now embedded within Tarmac's governance structure, with monthly MI Fleet Safety Packs reviewed in management meetings to track performance, reward success, and identify further improvements.

[Read more about what Tarmac achieved on the Motormax website. Find out more about Motormax fleet safety solutions.](#)

New Product Launch - Low Bridge Detection System

Motormax's latest technology - Low Bridge Detection helps prevent bridge strikes and low-clearance incidents for high-sided vehicles and variable-height loads. Using AI, GPS or both, the system identifies potential height-clearance conflicts and provides early in-cab warnings for drivers. Integrated with My Geotab or Maxconnex®, operators can analyse routes and driver behaviour to reduce claims, downtime and repair costs. Find out more about Motormax Low Bridge Detection System.

MINIMISE THE



OF GREY FLEET

Grey fleet is convenient for short, occasional trips, but can all too easily become seriously expensive if not managed well. *Jack Carfrae* reports

Few would argue that May's Approved Mileage Allowance Payment (AMAP) rate increase to 55p per mile did not need to happen; it's only the second time they have changed since introduction in 2002.

The RAC said average petrol and diesel prices respectively hit 157.93p and 180.92p per litre as of the second week of June, while AMAPs have been frozen at 45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles since 2011 (before that, they were 40p per mile).

Like everything else, it is yet another rising cost for businesses, and unfettered grey fleet is an expensive way to travel.

It is, and always has been, fine in well-managed moderation and remains an adequate option for sporadic, local trips.

Exceed the 50-mile mark with any degree of regularity though, and other options make much more sense.

"If you're doing a high business mileage, you have a company car," says Chris Chandler, principal consultant at Lex Autolease.

"If you're a perk driver and do some business

mileage, you can have a company car or you might go salary sacrifice, and it's a blend of HR and business-need.

"If you do very ad hoc mileage, say, an admin person who will drive to a local printer 10 minutes down the road once a week, then paying 55p per mile makes sense.

"That, to me, is the hierarchy, but it doesn't work like that. I've been into businesses, and especially the public sector, where people are doing significant mileage – more than 10,000 in a grey fleet vehicle.

"And it's interesting how people on AMAP rates tend to slow down their mileage when they go over the 10,000 threshold and only get 25p. I've seen clustering around that 10,000."

GREY FLEET ALTERNATIVES

There are several alternatives to grey fleet, among them rental, car clubs, pool cars and non-car options such as public transport, cycling and walking.


They are often billed as cheaper and more eco-friendly direct replacements – and they can be,

rental especially – but their efficacy depends entirely on the driver's situation.

Mobility budgets and travel cards, frequently termed mobility-as-a-service, were all the rage before the pandemic and have seen success in Europe, but never made it to a serious degree in the UK.

"On our mobility committee at the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP), we were talking about a solution where, instead of an allowance for cash or for a vehicle, there is potentially a mobility allowance," says James Pestell, AFP board director and national sales manager at IFC.

"For certain areas of the country, certainly urbanised ones, that may work. There's an argument to say that if you've got someone based in London or its suburbs, giving them a car is probably the worst thing, because they've got to find somewhere to park and it's a pain, whereas some level of mobility budget would be beneficial... there are various people talking about it, but from my own experience, I've yet to be convinced it's being done well."

Walking, cycling and public transport are again good options for those in urban areas or who 



happen to be close enough to their destination, but the latter can be prohibitively expensive or just inconvenient for anyone used to their own car.

Instead, experts suggest the best way to approach grey fleet is to thoroughly examine the driver population to understand who is doing what and why, then ask whether the existing method is suitable.

"I am not anti-grey fleet," says David Bushnell, director of consultancy and strategy at Fleet Operations.

"I think it has a good purpose and meets requirements for businesses without having to invest in a company vehicle, but it has to have the right controls, checks and balances in place to identify the tipping point where it actually costs you more than a company car.

"You need to do a full financial analysis to establish what it actually costs to provide a company car from a total cost of ownership (TCO), post-tax perspective with everything included.

"And how many miles at 45p or 55p does it take to get to that tipping point? Then, if you're offering cash allowance, where does that tip back into the provision of a company car?"

ESTABLISH GOOD POLICIES

Chandler believes fleets should establish policies that favour traditional grey fleet alternatives – company cars and rental – at the appropriate mileage points, while ensuring that the company car and cash allowance options are not weighted in either direction.

"The art of putting a good policy together is your company car and your cash allowance are worked out so there's a form of parity," he explains.

"They shouldn't be working out the tax fiddle, and

**"THE ART OF PUTTING
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OF PARITY"**

**CHRIS CHANDLER,
LEX AUTOLEASE**

we tend to find that if there's a really heavy population going for cash, you've got your sums wrong and you've likely created an emissions and risk issue.

"Your policies should try to encourage AMAPs for those little occasional journeys, daily rental for periodic long trips. The example I always use is, if somebody's going from Birmingham to Manchester for training, get them a hire car for two days and then if somebody's doing significant annual mileage or doing it frequently, a company car."

The aforementioned 10,000 business miles has long been the industry's line in the sand to qualify for a company car, but both Chandler and Bushnell believe the figure) is now lower than it used to be, courtesy of home and hybrid working and EVs, so an 8,000-mile threshold may be more appropriate.

THE POWER OF AI

Pestell says fleets could use artificial intelligence (AI) to determine whether drivers should stick with grey fleet or are better off in rental or a company car.

"Clearly, you've got to be sensitive, and it's got to be in a gatekept AI environment, but if you've got your own corporate AI, I would suggest getting some outputs from your expenses system and/or your mileage capture solution.

"Then, if you have a grey fleet system, take an output from that, merge it all together and ask it to tell you, for example, are there drivers that are going over certain mileage parameters? Are there drivers there that could potentially be better suited in an alternative solution?"

At the other end of the scale, Chandler says there remains a strong argument for traditional transport management – a human questioning whether grey fleet or another solution makes the most sense for the task at hand.

"An interesting one I found was people going to training courses in separate vehicles from similar places," he says.

"That's when you say, 'hold on, we're paying eight people full AMAP rates to go from London to Birmingham for a course'. It'd likely be expensive getting trains, but you could vehicle share.

"This is really where what I call old-fashioned fleet management comes into it. You look at it and say, 'right, what are we doing? How are we doing it? Is it cost effective and is it effective on a transport delivery basis?' And when you understand that, you can understand the best solution for their mobility needs."

The numbers every fleet needs to know. Rightcharge CEO Charlie Cook on cracking EV costs

Charlie Cook has seen the inside of more fleet charging operations than most. As Founder and CEO of Rightcharge, he's seen the platform process tens of thousands of charging sessions in 2025 alone.

Q: Your platform handles thousands of charging sessions. What does that data show?

A: The gap between charging at home and in public. In 2025, our platform data showed that public charging made up just over 25% of sessions but 57% of total cost.

Q: You said charging should be as simple as filling up. How far off are we?

A: Very close. Filling up was simple because you gave your drivers one fuel card and got one bill. Charging can work the same way; a driver uses one charge card on the road and at home on the same account, with everything on one bill for a fleet. The piece that's still missing is seeing the price on a billboard before you plug into the public network.

Q: Home charging sounds simple, but what are the practical barriers when rolling it out?

A: Fleet managers often worry about reimbursing drivers accurately, ensuring chargers work with different vehicles, and getting visibility across home setups. That used to mean chasing energy bills and doing manual calculations. Now, our platform connects the home charger, the energy tariff and the vehicle, calculates the cost automatically, verifies the vehicle and pays the driver directly. The fleet gets one bill a month.

Q: What's the single biggest mistake fleets make when switching to EVs?

A: Treating charging as an afterthought. Fleets that don't have visibility over where their drivers are charging and what they're paying are leaving real money on the table. The savings are there, but without the data, you can't achieve them.

Q: Why do you recommend an 'average unit rate' as a fleet's financial north star?

A: It's easy to look at one charging cost and worry. A driver plugs in at a motorway rapid charger paying 80p/kWh and suddenly the whole business case feels questionable. But a single session doesn't tell you much. If that same driver charges at home on a smart tariff at 7p/kWh for the rest of the month, that picture looks very different. That's why we point fleets at their average unit rate. It's the rate across every session and every driver.



Charlie Cook,
Founder and CEO,
Rightcharge

Keep an eye on your average unit rate; push as much charging towards home as you can to bring it down. Use the Rightcharge Gold Card to reduce what you pay in public (49p AC, 59p DC across four major networks).

Q: What's the one piece of advice you'd give fleets switching to electric?

A: Treat charging like fuel. You wouldn't run a fuel card with no visibility over where drivers fill up or what they pay per litre, and charging is no different. The fleets winning with EVs know where every kWh goes and what it costs.

For more information call 0808 164 1045
or email sales@rightcharge.co.uk



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.

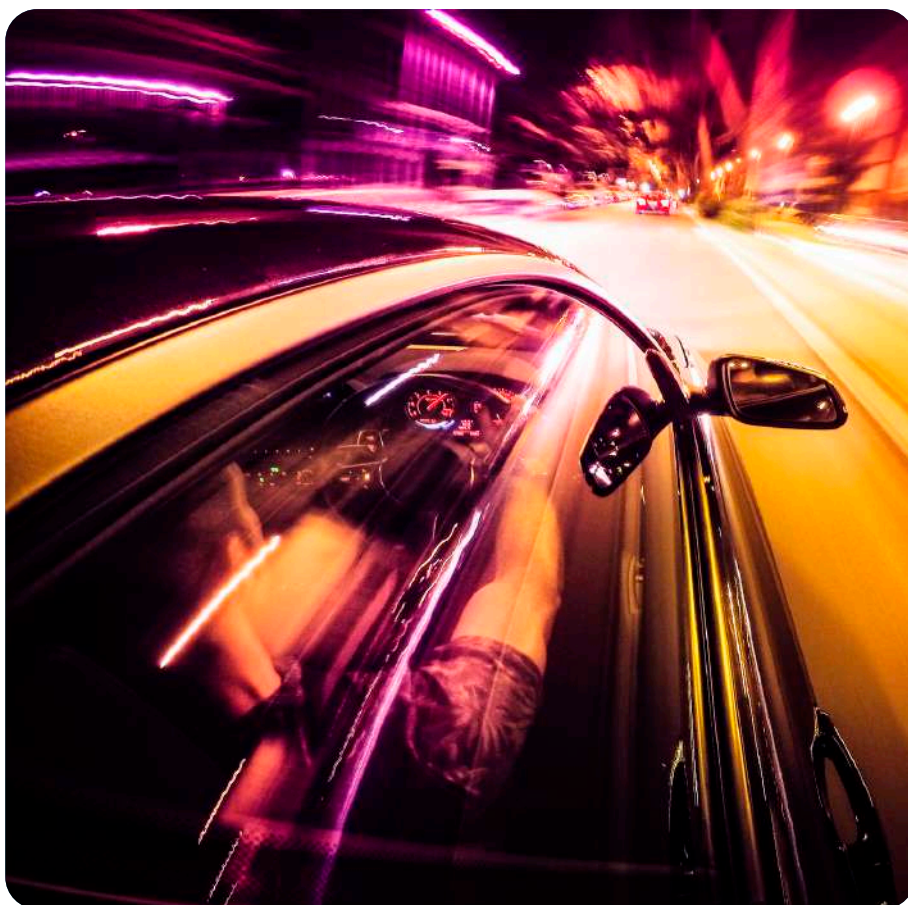
“A planned programme of refresher training can help prevent drivers from reverting to poor driving behaviours.”

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.”



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.

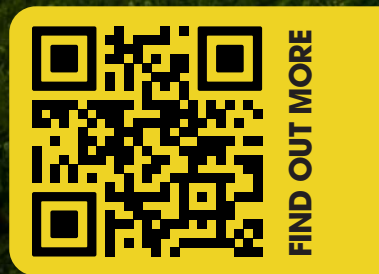
"Combine journeys, if possible," he says. "For example, for drivers attending meetings could car sharing be practicable? And could more than one meeting be planned either in the same area or on the way to or from their first meeting?"

"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."

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FUEL PRICES ARE LIKELY TO REMAIN HIGH FOR A LONG TIME TO COME AND THIS, INEVITABLY, CHANGES WHOLE-LIFE COST CALCULATIONS AROUND EV ADOPTION



5

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.”

How to control costs while running a complex fleet

Experts discuss how fleet decision-makers can juggle the demands of running their vehicles while minimising costs. *Tim Keogh* reports

Managing a modern fleet means juggling rising costs, complex operations and constant pressure to do more with less.

During a *Fleet News* webinar entitled *Driving Down Costs, Driving Up Performance: Practical Strategies for a More Efficient Fleet*, sponsored by Rightcharge, a panel of experts discussed the key cost and efficiency challenges facing fleet managers today and offered practical, evidence-based ways to tackle them.

COST PRESSURES

The panellists shared the cost pressures they currently face.

Chris Mullings, head of fleet at gas distributors SGN, noted the cost pressures inherent in fuel prices, saying: "Currently, we're seeing around a 1.5 times increase on where we were in 2020."

Lucy Stuart, head of fleet and logistics at fellow gas distributors Cadent, noted the impact of accident repair costs – particularly when considering electric vehicles (EVs).

She said: "We've had a heavy investment over the past couple of years on new vehicles, but they seem to be quite expensive to repair. If you look at the company car side, we are now 70% EV. If you damage a Tesla or similar EV, they're very costly to repair."

UTILISATION

One area where fleets can save money is by ensuring they have correct utilisation with the right number and type of vehicles.

Mullings highlighted the need for clear and agreed metrics to best establish utilisation thresholds and noted that assigning the correct vehicles in the right numbers to the correct drivers is also crucial.

He said: "Not only do we need to make sure that we have the right number of vehicles from a high level, if I've got 2,200 engineers I need 2,200 vehicles, but the split of the vehicles needs to be correct to be optimised. If I have 1,000 engineers of

one particular skillset, I need to have 1,000 vans specific to that job type."

Kristopher Parkes, fleet manager at tool hire provider Speedy, explained that utilisation can be accomplished for vehicles by ensuring they are used correctly.

He said: "With a tool hire vehicle, you want them going out, getting to customers, delivering, collecting, going back out. You want them to move. With engineers, you don't really want to see those wheels moving, to be honest. You want it to be on-site, fixing something, and then going to the next job, driving as little as possible – given the fuel costs."

"Normally the age-old rule was 'if the wheels are moving, it's utilised'. I don't think that's correct. You want them driving as little as possible, you want them doing the job that they're there to do."

FUEL AND ENERGY COSTS

The panellists discussed how to deliver measurable savings when it comes to fuel or energy – and what tends to deliver the biggest impact in this area.

Stuart emphasised the benefits of effective data usage to a fleet manager when examining fuel and energy use, but also to the wider business if that data is shared.

"I can see how much fuel we use, or how many miles somebody's travelling," she said.

"But actually, for the operational business to see that and to understand that, and the costs that are hitting their budgets as well as mine, is key."

To drive savings, Stuart also highlighted the benefits of telematics data to inform conversations with drivers and ensure that they are productive.

Parkes added that, particularly when it comes to EVs, how the vehicles operate can lead to better driving which, in turn, can contribute to savings in energy usage.

He said: "EV drivers, they don't want to keep charging, and they know if they put their foot down then the range is going to disappear. It inherently teaches them that if they drive slower or not as aggressively, they get more range so won't have to charge, and it makes their life a little easier."

The conversation turned to how to best improve driver behaviour, with panellists noting the

"WE DID A PIECE OF RESEARCH WITH THE AA LAST YEAR AND FOUND THAT THEIR MOVE TO MAXIMISE HOME CHARGING WAS SAVING AROUND £1,000 PER-YEAR-PER-VEHICLE VERSUS HAVING THOSE CHARGED ON THE ROAD"

CHARLIE COOK, RIGHTCHARGE

large impact that drivers can have on costs.

Parkes said Speedy makes use of a telematics solution to encourage better driving behaviour, but maintained that buy-in is crucial and that telematics should not become a tool to punish drivers.

He said: "We're here for the drivers, so it's about making sure that they understand why it's there, because a lot of drivers will find it very intrusive."

Mullings added that telematics can also enable greater transparency across fleet operations, and celebration of good driving behaviour to drive positive change.

He said: "Giving drivers visibility of their performance and celebrating that success as we move into the new financial year. We're looking to launch more driver awards for safe behaviour, incentivising best performance to encourage what we want to see."

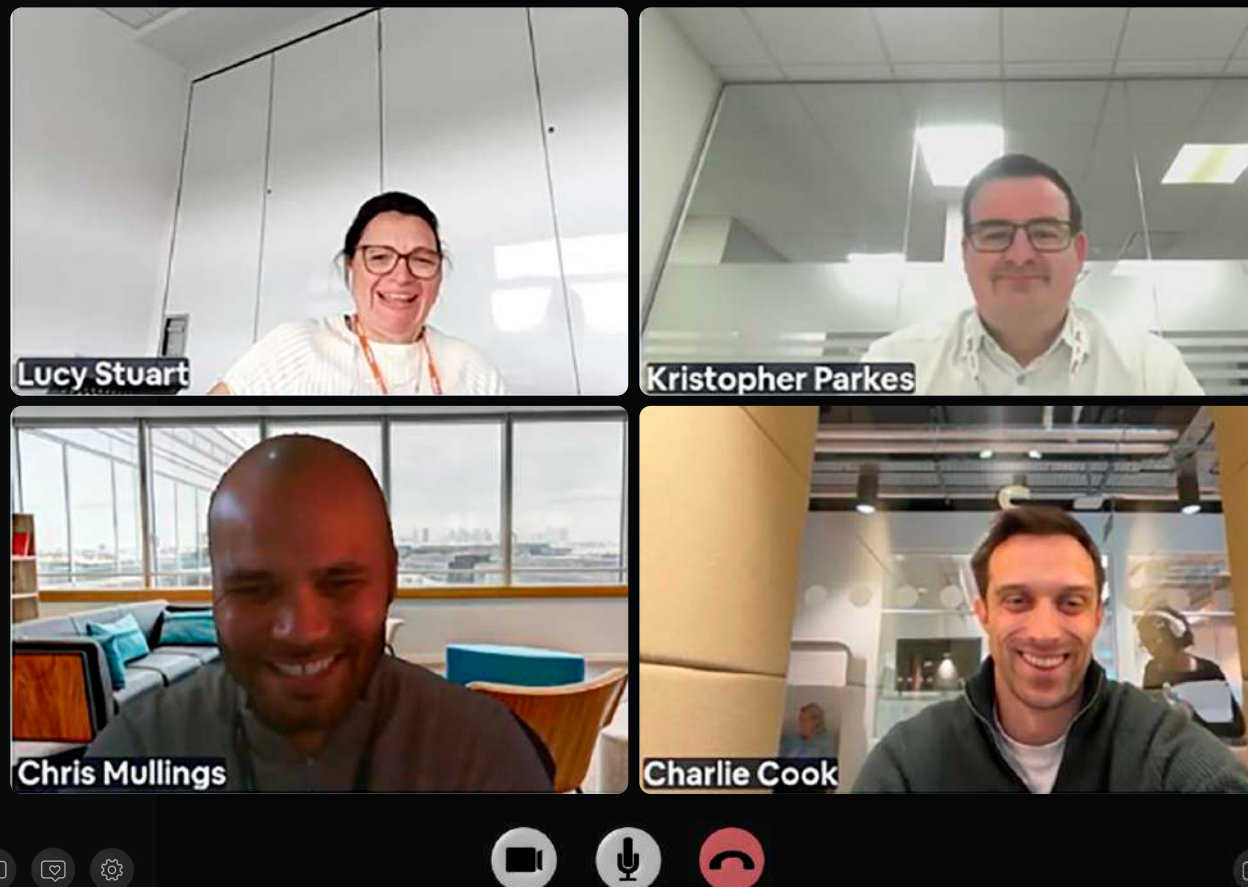
EV CHARGING

For fleets using EVs, home, public and workplace charging are the main options. Panellists discussed how they would effectively manage charging costs and reimbursements across these options.

Webinar attendees

- Charlie Cook, founder and CEO of Rightcharge.
- Chris Mullings, head of fleet at SGN.
- Kristopher Parkes, fleet manager at Speedy.
- Lucy Stuart, head of fleet and logistics at Cadent.

The opinions expressed by panellists were their own at the time of recording and do not necessarily represent the views or policies of their respective organisations.



Charlie Cook, founder and CEO of webinar sponsors Rightcharge, had key recommendations for fleets looking at their charging solutions, beginning by strongly advising fleet managers to make the most of any home charging opportunity.

He said: "We did a piece of research with The AA last year and found that their move to maximise home charging was saving around £1,000 per-year-per-vehicle versus having those charged on the road. And that didn't include downtime."

He urged fleets to take advantage of the best possible offers when using public charging, and to make it easy for drivers to know where they should be charging.

MANAGING DOWNTIME AND MINIMISING MAINTENANCE COSTS

The discussion identified vehicle downtime as a significant challenge for fleets, with panellists offering their thoughts on how to reduce maintenance costs and breakdowns.

Stuart noted that ancillary items on vehicles can require service, maintenance and repair (SMR) as much as the vehicles themselves, and that this can

lead to significant or unforeseen repair bills – particularly in the middle of a vehicle's lifecycle.

She advised fleets to work with their providers to cover ancillary items with fixed repair costs.

Stuart said: "To make sure that they were covered should they go down, but that they were getting the regular routine service when our vehicles were going in for a service.

"We worked that through with them – how that would look and what that cost would look like. So, then we weren't getting any big surprises from our maintenance bills."

Mullings discussed the value of proactive reporting when working to minimise SMR costs.

"Address the fault when it first arrives, or action it before it becomes a fault," he said.

"Being proactive from that stance can help, so encouraging drivers to be proactive with defect reporting, and hopefully reduce or remove some of that associated downtime."

MAXIMISING VALUE WITH PARTNERS

Panellists discussed how fleets can best maximise the value they receive from supplier partners.

Parkes recommended fleet managers work to pick the right suppliers for their needs and to see them as partners rather than just as service providers.

He said: "If something really needs to get done, you know who to lean on, you know that they know you and your business, you know their business, so they know what's important."

Stuart advised decision-makers to hold regular meetings that enable fleets to hold their suppliers to account.

She said: "Regular catch-ups are one of the things that's really working well with our SMR provider at the moment.

"It's a new monthly meeting we're having with them to get to the bottom of ongoing VORs (vehicle-off-road incidents), or those kinds of challenges.

"My team knows things are being done and are progressing."

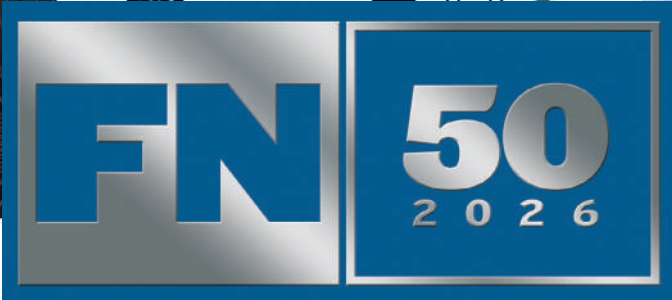
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