

# FleetNews

# iQ

Quarter 3 • 2025



Fleet spotlight

**LEONIE  
CHANNELL**

**SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC**

*'To shape the future of mobility, you need to be on board the EV revolution'*

**Fleet profile: Amey**

**Richard Guy reveals how he took Amey's car fleet from 5% BEV to 92% in two years**

**Supplier spotlight: Arval**

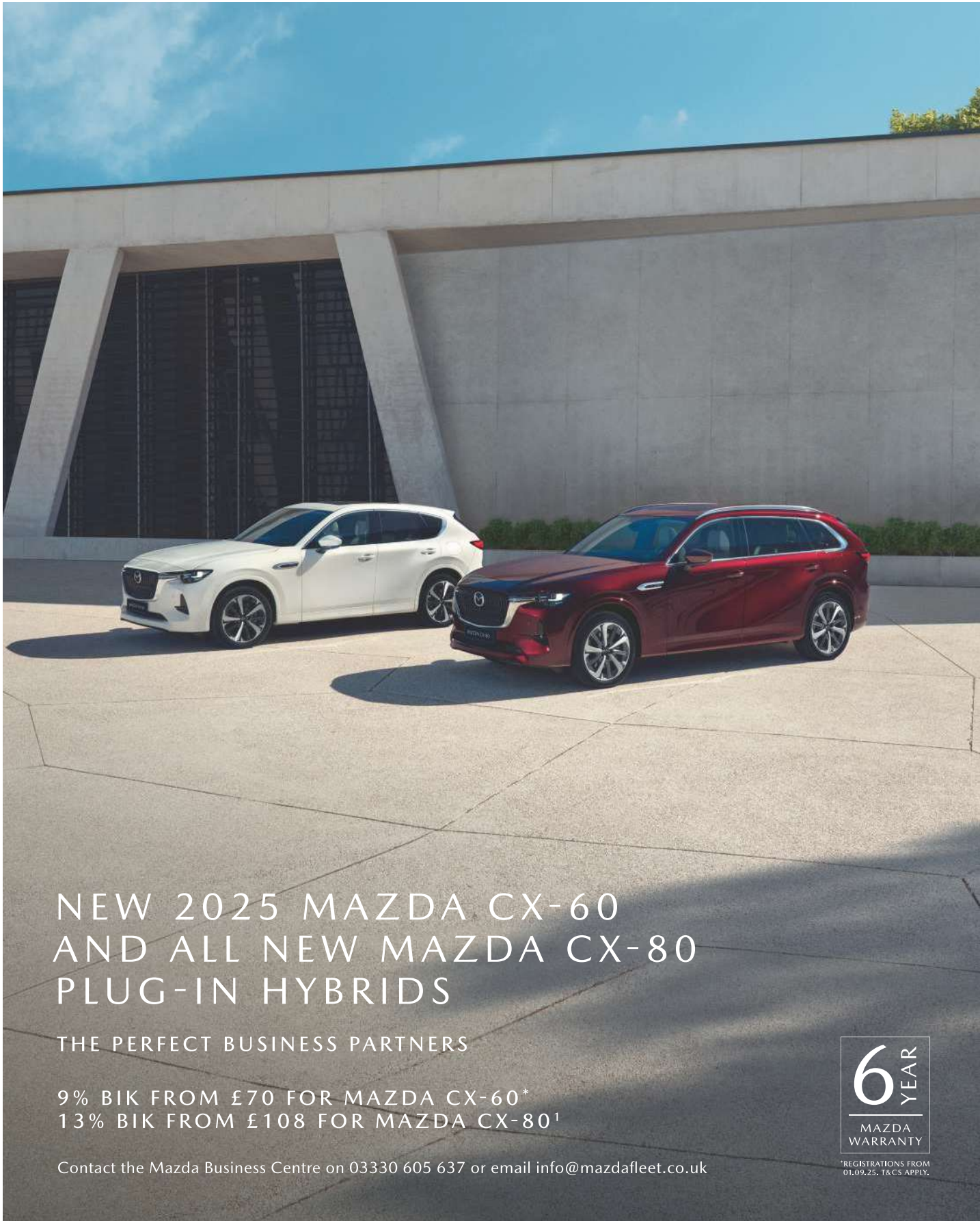
Lakshmi Moorthy navigates change on road to 200k fleet

**Insight: Women in Fleet**

How to address the lack of women running UK fleets

**Group test: seven-seat BEVs**

We test the Peugeot E-5008, Kia EV9, VW ID Buzz and Volvo EX90. Which is best?



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\*BIK effective from 6 April 2025. For BIK purposes, 39.77 miles is rounded up to 40 miles as per HMRC legislation and therefore qualifies for 9% BIK 2025/26. £70 BIK rate based on Mazda CX-60 2.5 Exclusive-Line e-Skyactiv PHEV 327PS AWD AUTO (on the road price - £46,940) for basic rate taxpayers. Model shown: Mazda CX-60 2.5 Takumi e-Skyactiv PHEV 327PS AWD AUTO (on the road price - £51,040) in Rhodium White (£750). <sup>1</sup>13% BIK based on 38 miles electric range. BIK effective from 6 April 2025. £108 BIK rate based on Mazda CX-80 2.5 Exclusive-Line e-Skyactiv PHEV 327PS AWD AUTO (on the road price - £50,080) for basic rate taxpayers. Model shown: Mazda CX-80 2.5 Takumi e-Skyactiv PHEV 327PS AWD AUTO (on the road price - £54,180) in Artisan Red (£900).



# Welcome

Welcome to issue two of *Fleet News IQ*, the quarterly insight magazine that you asked for!

We received some wonderful feedback after our first edition, which remains available to view digitally via [www.fleetnews.co.uk/digital-issue/show/318](http://www.fleetnews.co.uk/digital-issue/show/318).

This quarter, we put the spotlight on two sector-leading fleet professionals who are each making dramatic progress in electrifying their vehicle fleets, despite facing an array of challenges.

Richard Guy, fleet & plant director at Amey (who will also be speaking at Fleet & Mobility Live on October 7), offers a detailed account of the process he went through to accelerate the electric transition of his car fleet, going from 5% electric to 92% in just two years.

A similarly rapid transformation has also been undertaken by Leonie Channell on the Schneider Electric car fleet, which now sits at 86% electric. Leonie harnessed her enthusiasm and expertise in technology and sustainability to spearhead the shift as part of her desire to – in her words – “shape the future of mobility”.

Leonie is also a founding member of the *Fleet News*

Empowering Women in Fleet initiative, which recently held its second meeting.

It was launched to support, facilitate and champion the achievements of women, who remain under-represented within fleet – our data suggests they represent fewer than a quarter of fleet professionals. In this edition of *FNIQ*, former *Fleet News* features editor Sarah Tooze asks why this is so, and what can be done about it.

Lack of diversity is something close to the heart of Arval UK managing director Lakshmi Moorthy. She offers her thoughts and advice, while also explaining the strategy successes that will see the leasing company surpass a 200,000-vehicle funded fleet this year for the first time.

Elsewhere, we put the best seven-seat electric cars through their paces to find out which one you should be recommending to your drivers; Renault reveals the halo strategy that is seeing iconic models reinvented for the modern age; and contributor Ben Rooth takes a deep dive into the technology that could revolutionise safety on your fleet.

Enjoy the read!



**Stephen Briers,**  
group editor,  
*Fleet News*



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# Company car surge indicates changing fleet dynamic

With more than a million company cars now on UK roads, what's behind the resurgence in popularity of this employee benefit? *Gareth Roberts* investigates

**T**he company car market is booming, with figures suggesting that more than one million employees enjoy the at-work benefit. It's a marked difference to the year-on-year decline in company cars that first started 10 years ago.

Numbers fell for five consecutive years, with cash becoming an increasingly attractive option, amid fears so-called 'perk' cars were becoming a thing of the past.

However, that decline was halted when more favourable company car tax rates were introduced as policymakers sought to encourage the uptake of electric vehicles (EVs).

The Treasury introduced a 0% benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax rate for a zero-emission vehicle in 2020/21, which rose to 1% the following tax year and 2% the year after, where it stayed before increasing

by one percentage point to 3% in April 2025.

It signalled a significant change in the dynamics driving the adoption of company vehicles. Job-need cars continue to remain an important part of the mix, but the role of perk cars as a recruitment and retention tool has been strengthened, with the emergence of salary sacrifice providing a boost to uptake.

"We've definitely seen a switch in a demographic within the customer that cares and wants a company-funded vehicle or a salary sacrificed vehicle," said Alan Bastey, decarbonisation and sustainability consultant at Zenith.

Where data is available for its customers, he says "perk is growing and has grown" by between 1-2% year-on-year, while job-need vehicles have fallen by a similar amount.

"Over the past five years, there has been a distinct downward trend (in job-need cars)," he added.

That downward trend in job-need cars has been driven, in part, by better fleet utilisation of vehicles and a tough economic backdrop leading to a dip in demand.

John Peters, head of consultancy at Arval UK, told *Fleet News*: "The focus here has been on making fleets as efficient as possible by prioritising utilisation.

"These businesses value having high levels of control over vehicle choice, replacement cycles, managing downtime and mileage flexibility.

"Growth has instead been seen where companies have moved the perk element of their fleet to a salary sacrifice offer, as well as the exponential growth of these schemes generally.

"This has opened up company cars to employees who would not normally be entitled to a vehicle, something especially driven by the widespread trend to electrification."

**158,000**  
vehicles funded  
via salary sacrifice

The 2025 Arval Mobility Observatory Barometer showed that a third (34%) of UK fleet managers are expecting an increase in company car numbers, with more than half (54%) believing they will remain constant.

### MILLION-PLUS COMPANY CARS ON UK ROADS

At the start of the summer, company car tax data published by HMRC showed that the number of employees in receipt of the benefit had risen by 80,000 year-on-year – a 10.5% uplift.

This surge in company vehicles had come on the back of an increase of 5.5% in the preceding year (2022/23) – the first since 2015.

The number of company car drivers had been steadily declining since 2015/16, when there were 960,000 employees paying BIK on a company vehicle.

The latest BIK statistics available show that there were 840,000 employees paying company car tax in 2023/24, compared with 760,000 the previous tax year (2022/23).

HMRC, however, acknowledges that the overall number of company car drivers could be higher, with “considerable under-reporting” after voluntary payrolling was introduced in April 2016.

While there is also a lag in available HMRC data, the latest new car sales figures, from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT), suggest the growth in company cars is continuing.

Fleet and business new car registrations, from January to September, equated to 779,312 units – a 1.1% increase compared with the 770,511 units registered at this stage last year.

Separate data for Q1 2025 in the latest Leasing Outlook, published by the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA), showed its members had more than 900,000 cars (912,589) funded via business contract hire (BCH) – up 7.5% year-on-year.

BCH, it says, has risen quarter-on-quarter, without interruption, since the first three months of 2022, when it started to recover from the Covid pandemic lockdowns.

Meanwhile, the number of vehicles supplied on salary sacrifice arrangements almost doubled year-on-year in Q1 2025 – up 96.2%.

Figures from BVRLA members suggest a salary sacrifice fleet of more than 158,000 units, pushing the overall company car fleet beyond the one million vehicle mark.

BVRLA director of policy and public affairs, Thomas McLennan, told *Fleet News*: “What you’ve had is an aligning of appropriate taxation and product coming to market.

“The product portfolio has really expanded over these past five years, and we’ve seen an appropriate level of taxation.

“At the same time, there are lots of the macro factors that you will have experienced before.

“Grey fleet is a pernicious problem, for example. It’s a challenge managing that from the obligations you have towards the health and safety of your staff.”

### SALARY SACRIFICE DRIVES INCREASE

Last year’s FN50 survey revealed that salary sacrifice had reached its highest market share ever, totalling almost 83,000 units and accounting for 6.2% of cars on the FN50 risk fleet.

The benefit’s popularity has been further boosted by an increase, from 13.8% to 15%, in employer national insurance contributions (NICs) in April while the threshold dropped from £9,100 to £5,000.

For a business employing 2,000 people on average UK salaries of £36,000, Ayvens estimated this equated to an additional annual tax burden of around £1.9 million.

Matt Walters, head of consultancy and customer

value at Ayvens, explained: “Salary sacrifice schemes are becoming an increasingly effective way to mitigate these rising costs.

“With typical employee take-up rates, businesses can offset approximately 12% of the NIC increase.

“Employers who provide cash allowances can also benefit from implementing EV salary sacrifice, especially if drivers trade up beyond the value of the allowance.”

For example, an Ayvens customer is projected to save up to £6,000 per employee over four years simply by switching from cash car allowances to salary sacrifice car schemes.

“These savings are both immediate and substantial,” added Walters.

“From the employee’s perspective, the benefits remain strong, even with the company car tax on EVs increasing from 2% to 3%.

“The tax efficiency of salary sacrifice still far outperforms personal car finance, particularly when bundled with extras such as insurance, maintenance and breakdown cover.”

### EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS MOTIVATED BY TAX SAVINGS

Tusker’s latest ‘EV Driver Survey Report 2025’ shows that tax and national insurance (NI) savings are the top reason employees opt to have an EV through a salary sacrifice scheme.

A survey of 6,000-plus employees found that more than a third (38%) with an EV cited the tax and NI savings as their main motivation for choosing electric, up from 31% last year.

Fuel savings were the next biggest driver at 28%, while just 20% named environmental benefits as their primary reason for switching.

Moreover, price, tax benefits or affordability on a salary sacrifice scheme were the top reason for



“While companies appreciate the downstream environmental benefits of electric vehicles, the momentum has really been driven by tax incentives”

JOHN PETERS, ARVAL

69% of non-EV drivers to choose an EV as their next car, followed by 62% citing cheaper running costs as the reason for the choice.

Environmental benefits only concerned 38% of these employees – almost half of those instead wanting it for the cost savings.

Kit Wisdom, managing director at Tusker, believes much of the EV market's growth is being driven by salary sacrifice car schemes, where people are making "excellent use" of tax and NI savings.

"Employers also gain from NI savings; plus, as employees are more likely to join an organisation and stay, employers see improvements in recruitment and retention figures," he said.

Arval's Peters agrees. "While companies appreciate the downstream environmental benefits of

electric vehicles, the momentum has really been driven by tax incentives," he said.

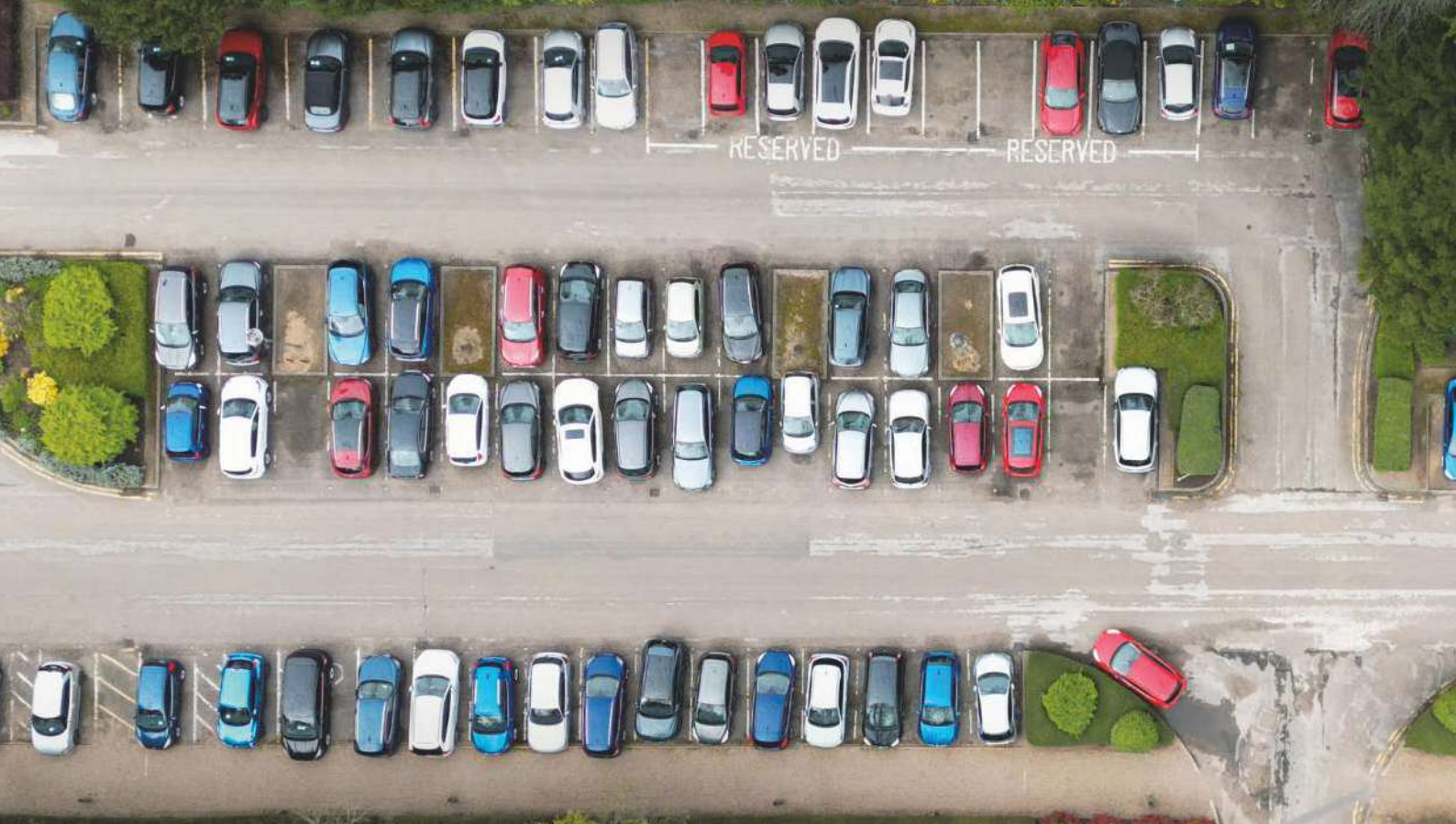
However, he told *Fleet News*: "This is not the only reason for salary sacrifice growth. Cost-of-living pressures make having access to a tax-efficient car that is fully funded from salary particularly attractive, the large number of providers in the market makes it easier for companies to assess different options and implement schemes quickly, and drivers who leave one company often articulate the benefits to their new employer."

Caroline Sandall-Mansergh, Alphabet GB's consultancy and channel development manager, also believes salary sacrifice is a "really important influencing factor", but highlights other developments helping to drive growth in company cars.

For example, she explained: "We are starting to see cash-takers coming back into company schemes, and sometimes that is where they are being tempted back in by their employers, with not necessarily enhanced arrangements, but just making them aware of the benefit that's available, particularly for EVs."

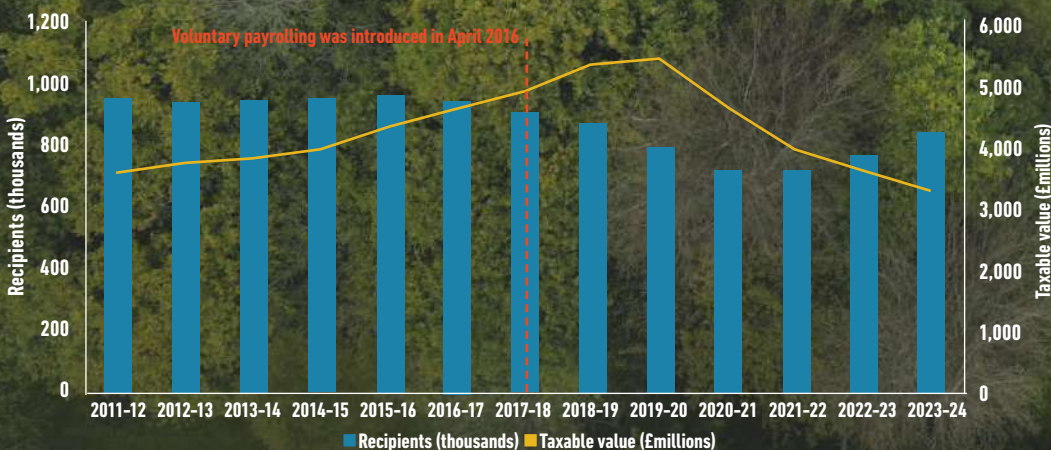
She added: "Attracting people back out of cash into a company-supported scheme that is a lower emission vehicle scheme is now quite important for lots of customers."

"There are lots of different spinning wheels around the reasons why people are starting to come back in. But I do think we are moving to a stage where more people are paying more attention to their carbon emissions."



Number of recipients and total taxable value of company cars

Source: HMRC



## ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS INCREASING COMPLEXITY

There's nothing new about environmental concern driving company car taxation policy. The current BIK system, which determines tax paid according to a percentage of the P11D value of a car, dictated by its emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> per kilometre, was introduced in 2002.

However, the drive to reduce emissions to net zero and the forthcoming ban on the sale of new diesel and petrol cars, alongside employers and employees wanting to mitigate their exposure to tax rises, highlights the increasing complexity of the fleet manager's role.

"They're still very much trying to get to grips with their regulatory obligations in terms of reporting, because it's quite a hefty burden," said Sandall-Mansergh. "We're trying to help fleets to navigate their way through. There is so much that's changing now with digitisation and connected vehicles."

She added: "Where we're seeing more sophistication coming into fleet strategy, with that comes complexity, because quite often, you're then shining a spotlight on your fleets within the fleet, and then you're starting to realise that you already have considerable inequity because you've got one single vehicle policy that's based on aggregated data."

"As soon as you start to take a more individual driver-specific strategy, you start to then uncover that there is a lot of complexity, and that can be really challenging."

Bastey says that Zenith's largest customers have all made net zero commitments across their businesses. "All of them are therefore looking to fleet as a place where you have a relatively quick turnover of asset, which you can easily switch to a lower carbon alternative," he said.

It has not only resulted in the fleet decision-maker's role becoming more complex, but it has also raised its profile and made it more strategic.

Walters explained: "With environmental standards tightening and scrutiny around CO<sub>2</sub> reporting growing, fleet strategy is no longer just about operational efficiency, but also about managing compliance risk, protecting employee value and keeping long-term costs in check."

## GROWTH EXPECTED TO BE CURTAILED

Arval's view is that the relative benefit of company cars and salary sacrifice will never be better than it is today.

HMRC gathered £5.4 billion in tax from company cars in the 2019/20 financial year. Four years later it has fallen to £3.2bn. "You can see why they are increasing percentage benefit-in-kind year-on-year," said Peters. "By 2030, the tax rate of 9% will be three times the current level."

This trend is expected to have a long-term impact. "In the near future, we expect to see growing salary scheme adoption, but, as tax increases, individuals will scrutinise the relevant cost benefits of having a company car against taking another option," predicted

Peters. "Ultimately though, the appeal of having an employer-provided car will remain high and options such as leasing a used car through salary sacrifice may help relieve rising costs."

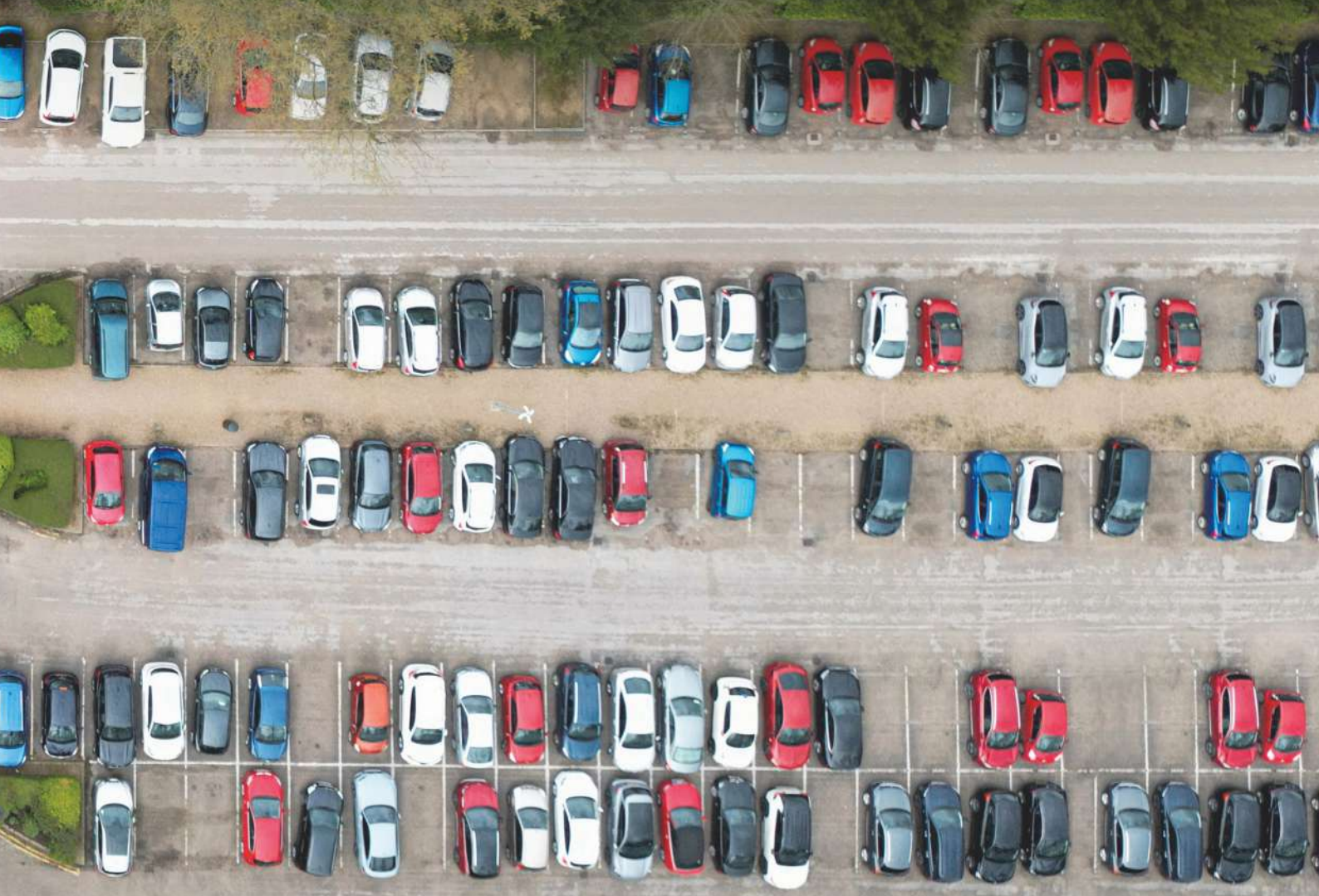
Paul Hollick, chair of the AFP (Association of Fleet Professionals), also highlighted the changing tax picture. "While the tax tables are advantageous for electric vehicles, there is a drop-off point in 2028/29, where the BIK starts to become more expensive," he said. "That might reduce demand."

What Hollick would not like to see in the UK is what happened in the Netherlands, where they changed the tax tables overnight and everybody went back into petrol and diesel vehicles.

He added: "My general view is that (the number of company cars) will continue to increase until the end of the decade, particularly given planned changes to ECO (employee car ownership) schemes."

Trade bodies such as the BVRLA and AFP will continue to lobby Government to ensure fleets and company car drivers are incentivised to access a vehicle through their employer.

McLennan said: "The journey to date has been one with lots of foresight, with a steady escalator and that's what enables people to make those decisions, to have confidence, to shift to believe in the system and say, 'actually I do want to give up my grey fleet vehicle, my cash allowance, and I want to shift into whatever version of the scheme my company is providing.'"





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CITROËN

# Energy infrastructure will determine speed of green transition

By Lamech Solomon, head of decarbonisation policy at Logistics UK

**D**ecarbonising commercial transport and the transition to electric vans is no longer a question of “if” but “how quickly”?

The vehicles themselves are improving, driver experience is overwhelmingly positive, and early adopters are demonstrating that zero-emission operations can be successful.

The bottleneck now lies not in technology, but in the energy infrastructure required to support widespread commercial electrification.

For a sector that stakes its reputation on reliability, commercial and operational viability will always be the deciding factor when choosing vehicles. The challenge, and opportunity, for industry is to ensure the infrastructure is in place to make electrification not just an environmental aspiration, but a day-to-day reality.

A recent report by Logistics UK, on the total current and future energy demand required from road freight provides insights as to where and when expanded energy infrastructure will be needed.

It highlights the scale of the challenge and reveals that to electrify the UK’s entire road freight fleet would require 32 terawatt-hours (TWh) of electricity annually – substantially more power than Scotland uses in the same period.

That figure alone underlines the need for joined-up planning between the logistics sector, energy providers and government if net-zero ambitions are to become a commercial reality.

The report, prepared for the Department for Transport’s Freight Energy Forum combines official statistics and the real-world experiences of road operators to provide a snapshot of the road freight industry as it continues towards net-zero.

It reveals that a quarter of operators surveyed have already begun adapting their operations to reduce emissions, with 20% saying they are “on track” to decarbonise by 2050. Nearly 40% are already using zero tailpipe emission technologies or low carbon fuels (LCFs).

When it comes to charging infrastructure, the study shows that most operators (around 79% for vans and 77% for HGVs) expect to do the bulk of their charging at depots or operating bases.

This highlights the immediate need for substantial grid upgrades to address current delays to connections which are often quoted to take months and cost hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Without substantial grid upgrades and streamlined connections, businesses risk being left unable to power the very vehicles policymakers want them to adopt. At the same time, depot charging cannot be the whole solution.

Operators also identify a pressing need for public charging in remote areas, along main road arteries, at service stations and at ports.

For van fleets in particular, where operating patterns can vary and flexibility is paramount, access to en-route charging is a prerequisite for operational viability.

Despite the hurdles, momentum is building and the recent extension of the plug-in van and truck grant has been welcomed across the sector.

While the grant extension helps provide clarity that the Government is serious about a transition to zero-emission vehicles, it also needs to demonstrate that it recognises the operational realities of upgrading fleets and ensure grants are delivered through multi-year settlements to give operators the confidence to transition, since commercial vehicle procurement cycles often extend beyond a single year.

Alongside vehicle expense and lack of charging infrastructure, the cost of non-domestic electricity remains a major barrier to fleet electrification.

The UK has the highest industrial electricity costs in the G7, and some of the highest in the world.

For companies that operate internationally, price differences are noticeable and at a recent Logistics UK event one delegate suggested that if UK electricity costs were the same as in Europe, their organisation would electrify all its vehicles “tomorrow”.

It’s hard for Government to intervene directly in wholesale electricity prices, but it can help reduce the bills companies pay by reforming policy costs and green levies and introducing a logistics tariff similar to reliefs for energy-intensive industries.

Commercial viability will always be the main driver for businesses and decarbonisation needs a multi-faceted solution.

Logistics UK continually urges policymakers not to overlook the role of low carbon fuels such as hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) and biomethane in a fair and economically pragmatic transition to net zero.

These alternatives can deliver immediate greenhouse gas reductions while the infrastructure for electrification at scale is rolled out over the medium-to-long term.

The cost of non-domestic electricity remains a major barrier to fleet electrification



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## Andrew Jago leaves JLR for role at BMW

Six years after being named general manager, fleet and business at Jaguar Land Rover (JLR), Andrew Jago has left to become the new general manager for corporate sales at BMW Group UK.

He replaces Matt Collins, who was appointed general manager national sales, customer support, at BMW Group UK, in February.

Jago will be responsible for leading the team which manages all BMW and Mini sales to business and leasing customers, reporting to Debbie McIntosh, sales director at BMW UK.

He said: "I'm delighted to join BMW Group UK at such a pivotal time and to work with two brands I have long admired."

Jago also paid tribute to his time at JLR. "After 13 wonderful years, I will leave JLR to commence a new career opportunity at BMW Group," he said.



## Senior leadership team changes at Ogilvie Fleet



Long-serving managing director of Ogilvie Fleet, Gordon Stephen, has taken on the new role of chairman of Ogilvie's automotive businesses.

He is replaced by Ogilvie Fleet's sales and marketing director, Nick Hardy, who is promoted to the top job.

Hardy's career spans four decades in fleet, with the past 18 years in sales and marketing.

"It's a real honour to take on this role," he said. "Gordon has built something truly special at Ogilvie Fleet – an organisation defined by its people, values and commitment to our customers."

Under Stephen's stewardship, Ogilvie's fleet size has grown from 750 to more than 24,000 vehicles taking it to No14 in the 2024 FN50.

As well as becoming chairman of the Ogilvie Fleet board, he will remain on the boards of Ogilvie Group, First Vehicle Leasing and Active Claims Solutions.

### Kia appoints new fleet boss as John Hargreaves retires

Kia has appointed Dave Williams as its new head of fleet. He took over on 1 July following John Hargreaves's retirement. Hargreaves had been with the manufacturer since 2011.

Williams will assume responsibility for all aspects of the role, from fleet sales and remarketing to business-specific areas, including Kia Rental, Motability and PBV sales.

His automotive career spans numerous roles from sales and general manager within dealerships, to sales consultant, coach and trainer, working with various brands. Williams joined Kia in 2005 as national dealer marketing manager.

He said: "It has been my privilege to work for Kia over the past 20 years, and I very much

look forward to returning to the fleet side of the business."

### Chamberlain heads fleet sales at UK new entrant Changan

Chinese newcomer Changan, which will launch its first model in the UK this month (September), has appointed experienced fleet leader Richard Chamberlain as head of fleet.

Reporting to UK managing director Nic Thomas, Chamberlain joins from SAIC Maxus, where he was country manager, for the UK and Ireland.

Before that, he spent more than six years as director of commercial vehicles for Stellantis UK and country manager at Fiat Professional.

Chamberlain told *Fleet News IQ*: "I am incredibly enthusiastic about joining Changan at such a pivotal time in its global expansion and UK launch."

### Wren leaves Morrisons for fleet operations role at EFM

Marcus Wren, Morrisons online fleet manager, has left the supermarket group to rejoin former employer, Wythenshaw, Manchester-based EFM Fleet Services.

Wren, who spent almost three years running the Morrisons online fleet, started as head of fleet operations at the fleet management company early in August.

He assumed responsibility for full operational delivery on EFM's two major grocery home delivery fleets, working closely with each customer's internal fleet team.

"I'm joining EFM because there's a solid base to build from, but with some of the UK's largest, high-volume and time-sensitive home shopping fleets relying on us, there's a real opportunity to

lead from the front," said Wren, who previously spent seven years with EFM which was established 10 years ago.

### Calum James named general manager at Farizon UK

Calum James has been named as general manager of Farizon UK by Jameel Motors UK.

He was head of sales at Farizon, which is the commercial vehicle division of Geely, China's largest private vehicle manufacturer.

The Farizon SV is being introduced to the UK by Jameel Motors UK, a London-based automotive distribution business and part of Jameel Motors.

"I have enjoyed a variety of roles within the automotive industry so far in my career, but this opportunity with Farizon UK is the most exciting challenge yet," said James.

# Events coming soon

Our pick of must-attend fleet events over the next three months

Event	Date	From	Where	More details
<b>UK Fleet Champions Awards</b>	25 Sep	Brake	Royal Armoury, Leeds	The UK Fleet Champions Awards celebrate the hard work and dedication of fleet organisations striving to prevent road deaths and injuries and reduce pollution caused by their vehicles. <a href="http://www.brake.org.uk/get-involved/for-professionals/fleet-safety/uk-fleet-champions-awards">www.brake.org.uk/get-involved/for-professionals/fleet-safety/uk-fleet-champions-awards</a>
<b>Fleet News at 10</b>	26 Sep	<i>Fleet News</i>	Online	A guest panel of knowledgeable fleet decision-makers joins <i>Fleet News</i> to dissect the biggest news announcements and industry topics. Viewers can get involved in the chat and offer their own topics for discussion in this much-valued and highly popular webinar series. Learn more and register for this webinar at <a href="http://www.fleetnews.co.uk/fleet-news-at-10-webinars-september-2025">www.fleetnews.co.uk/fleet-news-at-10-webinars-september-2025</a>
<b>Fleet and Mobility Live</b>	7-8 Oct	<i>Fleet News</i>	NEC	Europe's biggest fleet show assembles fleet and mobility professionals to share and discuss the most pressing subjects and challenges facing the industry. With relevant insights and practical expertise to be shared across topical seminars, this two-day event offers networking, information and learning. Find out more at <a href="http://www.fleetandmobilitylive.com">www.fleetandmobilitylive.com</a>
<b>Fleet200 Report</b>	23 Oct	<i>Fleet News</i>	Online	See this research report to discover trends across different industry segments on a year-on-year basis. Assessing key metrics such as fleet size, funding methods, emissions and operating cycles – based on a survey of the UK's 200 biggest fleets. Find this report upon release at <a href="http://www.fleetnews.co.uk/digital-issue/special-reports">www.fleetnews.co.uk/digital-issue/special-reports</a>
<b>Fleet News at 10</b>	31 Oct	<i>Fleet News</i>	Online	A guest panel of knowledgeable fleet decision-makers joins <i>Fleet News</i> to dissect the biggest news announcements and industry topics. Viewers can get involved in the chat and offer their own topics for discussion in this much valued and highly popular webinar series. Learn more and register for this webinar at <a href="http://www.fleetnews.co.uk/fleet-news-at-10-webinars-october-2025">www.fleetnews.co.uk/fleet-news-at-10-webinars-october-2025</a>
<b>FN50 Dinner</b>	4 Nov	<i>Fleet News</i>	Park Plaza, London	The annual FN50 dinner event is the place to be. Join members of the fleet industry in networking and celebrating the reveal of the FN50 listing – an annual guide to the largest leasing companies in the UK – and receive a detailed analysis of the state of the industry.
<b>Fleet200 Strategy Network Meeting</b>	25 Nov	<i>Fleet News</i>	Venue TBC	Join the UK's most professional fleet decision-makers to debate the issues of greatest importance to your business, share ideas on new initiatives and industry developments, and hear from outstanding, thought-provoking speakers. Learn more at <a href="http://www.fleetnews.co.uk/about/fleet-200-strategy-network">www.fleetnews.co.uk/about/fleet-200-strategy-network</a>
<b>Fleet Scotland Strategy Network</b>	27 Nov	<i>Fleet News</i>	Scotsman Hotel, Edinburgh	Take part in the first meeting in a new initiative from <i>Fleet News</i> , combining thought-provoking speakers and peer group roundtable discussions with unrivalled networking opportunities. This network was launched in response to demand from fleets in Scotland and the north of England. Learn more and register for this event at <a href="http://www.fleet200.co.uk/live/en/page/fleet-scotland">www.fleet200.co.uk/live/en/page/fleet-scotland</a>
<b>Fleet News at 10</b>	28 Nov	<i>Fleet News</i>	Online	A guest panel of knowledgeable fleet decision-makers joins <i>Fleet News</i> to dissect the biggest news announcements and industry topics. Viewers can get involved in the chat and offer their own topics for discussion in this much valued and highly popular webinar series. Learn more and register for this webinar at <a href="http://www.fleetnews.co.uk/fleet-news-at-10-webinars-november-2025">www.fleetnews.co.uk/fleet-news-at-10-webinars-november-2025</a>
<b>Fleet Recommended Report</b>	4 Dec	<i>Fleet News</i>	Online	Save the date to be ready to explore this list of the UK's most trusted suppliers – as voted for by today's fleets. From <i>Fleet News</i> , this programme is an invaluable guide to partnerships as recommended by peers and users around the industry. Find this report upon release at <a href="http://www.fleetnews.co.uk/digital-issue/special-reports">www.fleetnews.co.uk/digital-issue/special-reports</a>
<b>Fleet News at 10</b>	12 Dec	<i>Fleet News</i>	Online	A guest panel of knowledgeable fleet decision-makers joins <i>Fleet News</i> to dissect the biggest news announcements and industry topics. Viewers can get involved in the chat and offer their own topics for discussion in this much valued and highly popular webinar series. Learn more and register for this webinar at <a href="http://www.fleetnews.co.uk/fleet-news-at-10-webinars-december-2025">www.fleetnews.co.uk/fleet-news-at-10-webinars-december-2025</a>

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TOGETHER**

# CHOOSE YOUR FLEET WITH CONFIDENCE

In today's evolving landscape, fleet decision-makers face a critical challenge: achieving ambitious sustainability goals while maintaining crucial operational efficiency. At Toyota and Lexus Business, we understand these complexities and are dedicated to supporting your transition to decarbonisation. We're here to guide you to the right mix of vehicles and powertrain options, ensuring your choices align with both your environmental commitments and business objectives for a future-proofed, efficient, and sustainable fleet.



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<sup>^</sup>Every new Toyota comes with a 3-year manufacturer warranty. After expiry, benefit from a 1 year/10,000 mile warranty each time you choose to service with us until your car turns 10 (or 100,000 miles, whichever is soonest). T&Cs apply. \*Visit [toyota.co.uk/owners/roadside-assistance](https://toyota.co.uk/owners/roadside-assistance) for more detail.



# 'I GET A BUZZ OUT OF MEANINGFUL CHANGE'

*Leonie Channell is harnessing her enthusiasm and expertise in technology and sustainability to spearhead Schneider Electric's rapid transition to an electric fleet. Andrew Ryan reports*

Change is an inevitability in fleet management – and this is something Leonie Channell, fleet and mobility manager at Schneider Electric, relishes.

"I'll never forget the buzz of the first time I was able to help drive change within fleet," she says.

"It was also the first time I saw how new technology could completely change the way a business approached its fleet. That's when I realised sustainability and fleet could go hand in hand."

That moment came almost 20 years ago when, as a fleet administrator at BSKyB, she supported the launch of the UK's first corporate hybrid fleet with the introduction of 200 Toyota Prius models.

Since joining Schneider Electric in 2023, she has overseen a rapid transformation of Schneider's 1,400-strong UK&I car fleet, which is now 86% electrified.

"I've always been excited by new technology," she says. "But what drives me is making it meaningful. When drivers feel engaged, supported and proud of what we're doing, that's when true transformation happens."

"I could see that if I wanted to really shape the future of mobility, I had to be part of the EV revolution"

Channell's career is steeped in electric vehicle (EV) experience. After five years at BSKyB, her career has seen her move to Dubai to work for LeasePlan as a business development manager, giving her experience of the leasing side of the industry.

A desire to move back to Europe and work with EVs saw her join battery electric vehicle (BEV)-focused broker start-up WeVee as its relationship manager. She later became international head of fleet at rental firm UFO Drive which saw her manage BEVs across Europe.

"I could see that if I wanted to really shape the future of mobility, I had to be part of the EV revolution," says Channell. "Schneider gave me the platform to bring everything I'd learned about EV technology and fleet management together."

The electrical infrastructure giant had previously committed to becoming a sustainability leader, including pledging to electrify its fleet by 2030 as part of its membership of the global EV100 group: a decision which held great appeal for Channell.

"My experience from the electric car side – understanding range, battery capacity, charging coupled with a people-first approach to drive adoption, is what really spurred me on to drive change," she adds.

## RESHAPING FLEET POLICY

A core part of Schneider's fleet transformation has been its partnership with Novuna Vehicle Solutions.

Working together, Channell and Novuna have reshaped the fleet policy, introduced a streamlined vehicle choice list and created new ways to engage drivers.

Schneider has also changed funding methods. Historically, the company used a blended employee car ownership scheme and moved to salary sacrifice in 2020 to fund its cars.

"We did a cost review with Novuna Vehicle Solutions and following this we transitioned job-need employees to contract hire so now they only pay the benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax on their vehicle," says Channell.

The choice list is reviewed quarterly and there are a number of key requirements a vehicle must meet to be included. The cars must be from a premium brand, the support terms must be right and stock ↻



availability must be good. "When you order a car, it should be delivered in no more than four-to-six weeks," says Channell.

The streamlined, premium choicelist means drivers don't include any additional options. "That supports us with reallocation," she adds.

"Our policy helps us reallocate our vehicles instead of early terminating the leases – it's a huge saving.

"It's almost like having a used fleet and we're also looking at whether we offer employees a discount to take those vehicles, to help drive adoption across our perk car users."

The EVs are leased on four-year cycles as this strikes a good balance between cost and the technology remaining up to date, says Channell.

"The vehicles are evolving so quickly," she adds. "We want to keep the cars as fresh as possible."

Perk car users either have access to cars via salary sacrifice or take a car allowance.

#### WINNING DRIVER BUY-IN

Channell says the move to contract hire for job-need drivers has helped with winning buy-in for EVs, with Schneider working closely with Novuna to further boost the profile and acceptance of the technology.

"So, we invested heavily in engagement, starting with senior leadership and management to drive buy-in, to reigniting the scheme across our employee base with ride-and-drive events and online workshops with OEMs, making sure every driver had the chance to ask questions and get comfortable with change."

Since the engagement programme began in 2023, employee queries and concerns have dropped by 90%, proving Schneider's approach is the right one, says Channell.

Employees taking on electric cars are offered the opportunity to have a home charge point installed on a payment plan through Qmerit, which Schneider Electric is a majority owner of.

Channell is also carrying out a review of charging behaviour to understand the split between home and public networks.

Employees are reimbursed for business mileage. "We've implemented a unique quarterly reimbursement programme in partnership with The Miles Consultancy," she adds.

"This programme allows employees to choose between being reimbursed at the advisory electric rate (AER) or by the actual cost of charging their EVs, empowering them to select the option that best suits their needs."

## Empowering women in fleet

Leonie Channell is a passionate supporter of initiatives such as *Fleet News's* Empowering Women in Fleet (EWiF), which champions, celebrates and elevates the achievements of women working across the fleet sector (for more on EWiF see page 74).

"I still remember attending my first Fleet News Awards in 2009 and feeling quite daunted walking into the room as one of the few young women there," says Channell "But it also inspired me. I knew this was an industry where I could make a difference."

A key influence in her early years in the industry was working under Sara Cook at BSKyB, whose leadership and encouragement gave Channell the platform to grow.

"I could see she was doing so well and winning awards. Having a female role model who pushed me to develop really showed what was possible," she says.

"I'm very proud to be one of the women leading the way in EV fleet, and I want to support the next generation to gain the confidence, experience and skills to excel.

"It's about lifting each other up and making sure our industry benefits from a truly diverse talent pool."





# “This initiative is about making sustainable choices the standard for every employee journey, from the first mile to the last”

Schneider Electric also places a strong emphasis on EV charging and energy management as part of its focus on cost optimisation. It provides both rapid and slow chargers at its sites and is exploring how to manage energy usage more effectively.

Electric cars are being added to the fleet organically as replacement cycles on existing internal combustion engine (ICE) cars end, which means the entire car fleet should be electric by 2028.

The company also operates 100 vans, and Channell has started the process to transition these to electric.

It is looking into where vans can be charged, so it has adopted the Ford Pro telematics and software package to monitor and track vehicle usage to enable it to analyse vehicle behaviour, payload and charging patterns. “My passion is for innovation that works for people,” says Channell. “AI and automation is the future of fleet management, and I’m excited to see how we can use AI tools to simplify processes and make better decisions.”

## IMPROVING FLEET SAFETY

Driver safety is also high on the agenda. Schneider Electric is working in partnership with Novuna and Applied Driving Techniques to strengthen risk management and deliver targeted training.

Driver licence checking is carried out by Applied Driving since 2025, with a driver training programme being launched later this year.

It is also using an apprenticeship assessment day when all of the apprentices gather to drive home the safety message.

“This year, for the first time, we’ll be joined by Novuna and Applied Driving,” says Channell. “There will be classroom sessions, insights from Novuna, and practical guidance on using the vehicles to equip our drivers with the knowledge and confidence to stay safe on the road.”

## MANAGING MOBILITY

As fleet and mobility manager, Channell is broadening her remit to cover sustainable travel policies for all staff mobility, from car hire to rail, with the aim of reducing emissions and cutting grey fleet use.

“How do we move? How do we monitor employees that travel for business? How do we manage that and ensure they are commuting in a sustainable way?,” she says.

“We’re not just thinking about cars. It’s about every journey an employee makes and how we can make that travel more sustainable. Ultimately, this initiative is about making sustainable choices the standard for every employee journey, from the first mile to the last.”

**ORGANISATION:** Schneider Electric

**FLEET AND MOBILITY MANAGER:** Leonie Channell

**FLEET SIZE:** 1,400 cars/200 vans

**CAR FUNDING METHOD:** Contract hire

**REPLACEMENT CYCLE:** Four years

30 years of opening doors. Opening doors for mobile bookshops, portable pizza joints and on-the-go gyms. Opening businesses big and small and ever-changing in size. Opening up fully stocked fridges and freshly filled cupboards. Opening up same-day deliveries and last-minute gifts. Opening birthdays and graduations and anniversaries and new jobs and happy tears and you-shouldn't-haves.



Opening ambulances and urgent treatment and life-saving support. Opening building sites, building supplies and building communities. Opening roads. Opening railways. Opening airports, ferry ports and shipping container ports. Opening infrastructures to open up cities and countries and continents. Opening potential. Opening growth. Opening opportunities. Opening up the world.

***SPRINTER***

Mercedes-Benz

# The EV grant: A catalyst, not a cure

By Dylan Setterfield, head of forecast strategy at Solera Cap HPI

**T**he UK Government's newly announced electric car grant, which offers up to £3,750 for battery electric vehicles (BEVs) priced at less than £37,000, has raised the profile of BEVs at a critical moment for the market. The aim is clear: stimulate retail demand and accelerate the transition to zero-emission mobility. Yet, from a valuation perspective, the timing and structure raise questions about the stability of long-term residual values (RVs) in a market still grappling with volatility and shifting price anchors.

The grant's impact will hinge on manufacturer response. If OEMs simply absorb the subsidy into their existing discounting strategies, the net benefit to consumers could be minimal.

Even so, the announcement has generated positive press, renewed buyer interest, and re-energised the lower end of the BEV market, a useful short-term win for registrations.

The weakness lies in the used EV sector. While new car incentives grab headlines, there is little structured support for nearly new or second-hand BEVs – a missed opportunity.

Most drivers will first experience EV ownership through the used market, and without targeted measures to protect values, whether via Government policy or OEM-backed schemes, there is a risk of continued depreciation.

Practical interventions, such as aligning VAT on charging or offering incentives for second-hand EV buyers, would provide much-needed certainty and encourage adoption.

Eligibility is another limitation. Currently, only just more than 20 models qualify, and the vast majority fall into band two, which caps support at approximately £1,500.

Strict criteria for the top-tier grant make rapid expansion unlikely. This restricts the scheme's impact on new transaction prices and, by extension, its influence on the used market.

Current data illustrates the challenge. A 25/25 plate BEV with 1,000 miles is typically valued at around 70% of its original cost new.

Even with the full £3,750 grant, the gap between new and used values remains wide.

In most cases, the grant is unlikely to significantly shift used prices, because discounting was already factored in before the policy's implementation. In fact, pre-grant discounts often exceeded the subsidy, meaning consumers were already accessing lower transaction prices.

What is more likely is a reshuffling of incentives. OEMs qualifying for the grant may withdraw tactical discounts, while others may adjust list prices but reduce dealer-level support, leaving on-the-road costs broadly unchanged.

The exception will be brands that combine grant support with existing discounts, where RVs may come under fresh pressure as lower new transaction prices reset market anchors.

The interplay between policy and manufacturer behaviour will be the key determinant of RV performance in the months ahead.

Short-term registrations will benefit as awareness grows and affordability improves marginally. But long-term stability depends on OEM discipline and policy evolution, particularly measures that extend into the used market.

Consistency in new price anchors and targeted support for used buyers are essential to break the cycle of volatility.

Despite ongoing pressure, there are tentative signs of improvement in the used EV market.

BEV value movements are currently tracking better than the same period last year, suggesting the pace of decline may be easing.

Seasonal trends are also worth noting: the summer months have historically been the weakest for BEV prices, with greater stability emerging in the second half of the year.

If this pattern repeats, 2025 could see values find firmer ground as the market matures.

Affordability is another encouraging factor. Nearly 7% of used BEVs are now listed at less than £10,000, including names such as the Nissan Leaf, Renault Zoe and Vauxhall Corsa.

Even premium brands such as Tesla are represented, with older, higher-mileage Model S and Model 3 cars being made available below this threshold.

Expanding the price range to £20,000 brings almost half of all used BEV listings into play, covering a broad mix of models from the VW ID3 and Kia e-Niro to the Jaguar I-Pace and Audi e-tron.

This wider spread of affordable options makes electric mobility more attainable for a growing pool of buyers.

In conclusion, the EV grant should be seen as a catalyst rather than a cure. It can stimulate demand in the new market and sharpen price points, but its direct influence on used values will remain limited.

The greatest impact on residuals will occur where OEMs layer discounts with the grant,

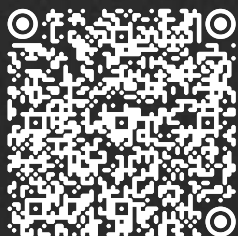
creating new price anchors that reverberate into the second-hand market. With coordinated action across Government, manufacturers and the retail sector, there is genuine potential to create a more resilient and inclusive EV ecosystem, one that supports both new and used buyers alike.

There is little structured support for nearly new or second-hand BEVs – a missed opportunity



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Fuel economy figures and CO2 results for the MINI electric range: Mpg (1/1000km): Not applicable. CO2 emissions: 0g/km. Electric range 182 – 287 miles. The MINI electric models are battery electric vehicles requiring mains electricity for charging. Whilst recommended the battery for these vehicles are charged to 80% to help optimise the life of your battery, the electric range figure shown is the WLTP figure after the battery had been charged to 100%. WLTP figures are shown for comparability purposes. Only compare fuel consumption, CO2 and electric range figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results which will depend on a number of factors including the starting charge of the battery, accessories fitted (post registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load.

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Fuel economy figures and CO2 results for the MINI electric range: Mpg (l/1000km): Not applicable. CO2 emissions: 0g/km. Electric range 182 – 287 miles. The MINI electric models are battery electric vehicles requiring mains electricity for charging. Whilst recommended the battery for these vehicles are charged to 80% to help optimise the life of your battery, the electric range figure shown is the WLTP figure after the battery had been charged to 100%. WLTP figures are shown for comparability purposes. Only compare fuel consumption, CO2 and electric range figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results which will depend on a number of factors including the starting charge of the battery, accessories fitted (post registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load.

# Cutting costs and reducing downtime



## Fleet managers discuss their approaches to SMR (service, maintenance, and repair).

*Mike Roberts* reports

### Attendees

**Standing, from left:** Chris Rowles, head of fleet, CEF; Neil Thomas, head of fleet supplier management, Royal Mail; Stephen Briers, group editor, *Fleet News*; Colin Hutt, fleet and environmental manager, Clarion Housing Group; Jason Gadsby, UK & EMEA fleet manager, Crawford & Company; Ryan Naughton, head of B2B connected car & European relations, The AA; Gavin Smith, business development manager, The AA; Martin Edgecox, national fleet manager, National Highways.

**Seated, from left:** Jo Coffey, fleet manager, CEF; Lorien Conti, assistant fleet manager, Sciensus Pharma Solutions; Lorna McAtear, head of fleet, National Grid; and Julie Davies, group fleet & plant compliance manager, Amey



**P**rocesses and tactics that work for fleets to reduce costs and maximise vehicle uptime were discussed at a *Fleet News* roundtable held at the Crowne Plaza in Stratford.

Participants also heard from sponsor The AA about new artificial intelligence (AI) technology designed to prevent breakdowns, reduce downtime and costs, and support smarter fleet planning and maintenance.

Skills shortages were another key concern. One fleet gave the example of having to move 15 electric vans from Scotland to Telford for repairs due to a lack of qualified technicians north of the border.

The discussion also explored the growing shift towards pay-as-you-go maintenance models as a way to better manage costs.

### *Fleet News:* How do you approach SMR? What works for you, and why?

**Chris Rowles:** With our UK and Northern Ireland fleet, we outsource maintenance to our leasing company. We didn't opt for proactive management – it's fully reactive. I set this up about four years ago to bring everything under one supplier so I could collect and analyse data more effectively.

**Neil Thomas:** We use a single system and our own workshops. We proactively inform delivery office and mail centre managers when a vehicle is due for maintenance. We can also add recalls and warranty events to the system. It's much easier to manage a fleet when you're in full control.

**Lorna McAtear:** We take a mixed approach. Where geography and vehicle density support it, we use our own workshops; otherwise, we outsource. Having both models keeps us informed and allows for benchmarking. The challenge with proactive maintenance is that it can still take weeks to get a vehicle into a dealership.

**Colin Hutt:** We've always outsourced to a leasing company. That said, I've spoken with other fleet managers who separate maintenance so it can be managed more efficiently, and that's something we're considering.

Hearing about connected vehicle data really excites me. I believe the leasing company, or whoever is managing the maintenance contract, should receive that data, as they're the ones using it.

I'd happily pay a little more for that service, as downtime is costly and the long-term savings would outweigh the expense. Vehicle downtime is a nightmare, so ↻

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# “Sometimes it becomes a sport for fleet managers – spotting when a driver reports a tyre needs replacing, but failed to flag it during their checks”

LORNA McATEAR, NATIONAL GRID

Anything that helps us manage it better would be fantastic.

**Jo Coffey:** We've had situations where a driver took a van to a garage, only to be told they couldn't work on it because it was too large or heavy.

**LMcA:** When I ran my tender, we mapped vehicle types against suitable garages, and that became part of the evaluation.

**CR:** Garages don't like to turn down work, so they often say yes to everything. But there should be software that checks a vehicle's registration at the time of booking and flags if the garage doesn't have the capability.

**Martin Edgecox:** We also outsource, but we're slightly different as we purchase our vehicles rather than lease them. We're a 24/7 operation, with traffic officers and inspectors across the strategic road network.

Our vehicles are serviced about every six weeks, as our fleet covers around 2.7 million miles a year. In our leasing tender, we specified that any repairer had to be within 10 miles of a depot, and we also receive night-time support. As a result, our down-time is at its lowest in nine years.

**Lorien Conti:** We use two different leasing companies for our cars, and they operate differently. With one, drivers contact garages directly; with the other, the leasing company books work after receiving a call. Sometimes during a service, garages recommend tyre replacements, but that requires another visit elsewhere, which is time-consuming.

Servicing lead times can also be long, especially if a master technician is required – sometimes several months.

**LMcA:** Larger fleets have an advantage, as they may employ ex-technicians who can challenge garages or leasing companies when needed. Smaller fleets don't have that resource, which makes it harder for them.

**ME:** We invested in EV training for technicians supporting our leasing company, and that investment has already paid dividends.

**LMcA:** Many fleets are now considering pay-as-you-go maintenance models, which can deliver greater efficiency and savings.

## Fleet News: What's the best advice for fleets with limited resources?

**JC:** Join an industry-standard organisation and ask questions. Suppliers may say “we can't do that,” but if you know what the standard is, you can push back.



**LMcA:** Put in the work upfront during the tender process. Research the market, ask questions, and request detailed cost breakdowns. That way, you're comparing like-for-like. Also, don't be afraid to ask who their third-party suppliers are.

**JC:** Visit supplier sites or invite them to yours – don't rely solely on their documents. Ask to speak with their current customers. And choose suppliers who are willing to collaborate; you don't want to discover later that two providers can't work together.

Also, consolidate as much data as possible into one system – though it doesn't have to come from a single supplier.

**LMcA:** Ask to follow a customer complaint through from start to finish.

**CR:** Not everyone likes doing this, but when visiting a site, pick someone at random and ask them about their work. During one tender process, I spoke to someone in the fines department about how many fines they handled weekly and whether there was a backlog. That gave us a reality check compared with what the company had claimed.

My other advice: attend a *Fleet News* event. Other fleet managers are always willing to share insights and give support.

## Fleet News: How do you use pre-checks to spot potential vehicle problems?

**NT:** Our postal workers use a PDA with a custom-built pre-use check that's completed daily.

**JC:** Our waste experts use an app that's timed and includes job and location details. We also have a process for cars and vans, but we're reviewing how well it's being followed.

**LMcA:** Sometimes it becomes a sport for fleet managers – spotting when a driver reports a tyre needs replacing, but failed to flag it during their checks. It's vital to manage the tools drivers use, as some will always look for workarounds.

**Jason Gadsby:** A common issue is urgent tyre replacements being delayed because a driver chose oversized alloys. We're currently assessing which app to use for checks.

**Julie Davies:** We also use a timed system, with results sent directly to a supervisor or transport manager. Sometimes drivers complete checks too quickly or forget to log out. We now require end-of-day checks covering fuel levels, tyre condition and visible damage.

Our supplier is always willing to adapt the app to our needs.

When we went out to tender, we selected a provider whose founders had transport industry experience, which made a real difference.

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# Grosvenor's Legacy Fleet Management: A seamless transition for your fleet

**C**hanging contract hire providers has never been an easy switch. With replacement cycles on company cars and vans varying between two-to-five years, and leasing companies also using their own preferred network of partners for ancillary services, moving can result in fleet managers adding to their workload with multiple funders and suppliers for many years.

Grosvenor's legacy fleet management solves that problem and has always been a huge success with new customers.

## Smooth and stress-free supplier transition

Recognising the challenges that come with switching contract hire providers, the legacy fleet management service makes the transition as smooth and stress-free as possible. From the moment Grosvenor onboards a new client, a dedicated team takes charge of managing all of the customer's vehicles, suppliers and drivers – irrespective of who owns or leases the vehicle.

"Our legacy fleet management service is a game-changer for companies looking to move suppliers efficiently and with minimal hassle," says Lee Brown, managing director at Grosvenor (pictured below).

"Our team manages the remainder of each vehicle's life until a new vehicle is ordered under a contract hire agreement with us. We also retain certain ancillary suppliers, such as licence check providers, or repairing garages that sit outside of our



approved network, if the relationship is working well for the customer. This provides an even greater continuity of service and minimises disruption."

## Managing the entire fleet supply chain

During the onboarding process, Grosvenor engages in extensive discussions about the client's existing suppliers across various areas. We make contact with all incumbent providers, creating valuable communication channels to allow us to manage the entire fleet supply chain. It means customers avoid the disruption of handling different providers for different vehicles and drivers enjoy the same consistent and familiar support, regardless of who provides their vehicle.

"The legacy management is provided at a very detailed level," continues Lee, "and we personally handle all aspects of in-life management, such as direct involvement in maintenance, downtime management, contracts and actual vs budgeted mileages, as well as end-of-life management. We can also add all vehicles into our Advanced Remote Connectivity

(ARC) solution, which has immediate benefits in proactive maintenance and downtime management.

## Advanced Remote Connectivity (ARC)

"ARC is a bespoke telematics solution and, for most vehicles, it can be activated remotely, eliminating the need for device installation.

"Connecting our fleet management system to each vehicle's on board diagnostics (OBD) system gives us a real-time feed of true odometer readings, service and maintenance countdowns, fuel or EV battery levels and vehicle dashboard warning lights. As a result, we can be truly proactive, not only with our own funded vehicles but when working with the outgoing providers too.

"In fact, one of the key benefits of our legacy fleet management service is the integration of all fleet data into our award-winning OSCAR 365 fleet management system. This provides a single point of reference for all fleet information, across all funders and suppliers, making it easy to manage and make informed decisions."

Visit: [grosvenor-leasing.co.uk](https://grosvenor-leasing.co.uk)  
Telephone: 01536 536 536  
Email: [info@grosvenor-leasing.co.uk](mailto:info@grosvenor-leasing.co.uk)



# Five key steps to mastering change management

Change management is increasingly becoming a key skill for fleet decision-makers with the need to introduce new technologies and strategies growing. *Andrew Ryan* reports

**T**hange is one of the few constants in modern fleet management, with the need to introduce new technologies, strategies or other operational improvements seemingly never-ending.

But this is often easier said than done, given that many line managers and drivers will not welcome with open arms any changes to long-established working practices.

Some of the fiercest resistance is shown to technologies which will ultimately have huge benefits for the drivers and organisation, such as electric vehicles (EVs) or in-cab cameras, meaning the modern fleet decision-maker needs to add change management to their increasing skill set.

"Something I speak about a lot is that many fleet decision-makers and their teams are becoming change professionals more than fleet managers," says Aaron Jarvis, associate vice-president, sales and business development, UK & Ireland at Geotab.

This is reflected in the increasing numbers of people being appointed from outside the traditional fleet sphere into fleet decision-maker roles.

These include Rob Simister, director of fleet operations at Centrica, who has a background in video game development, marketing, telecommunications and automotive, and Lucy Stuart, who worked for Cadent in a variety of project manager,

transition and risk management roles before becoming its head of fleet and logistics.

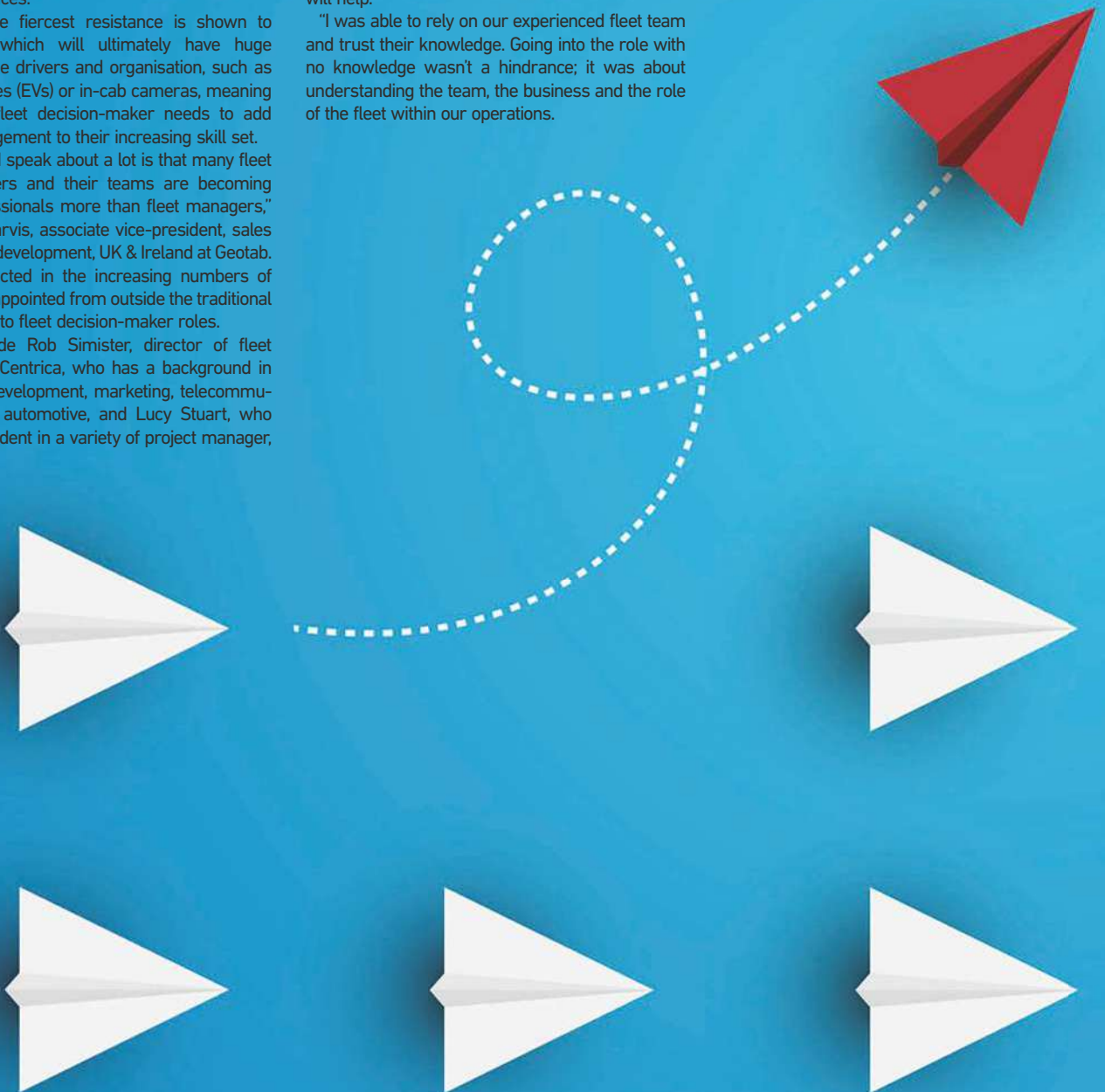
"I realised it wasn't knowledge of fleet processes that was required, but the other skills I have such as stakeholder engagement, leadership and project management," says Stuart.

"I know Cadent and I understand the areas to improve and where my project management skills will help.

"I was able to rely on our experienced fleet team and trust their knowledge. Going into the role with no knowledge wasn't a hindrance; it was about understanding the team, the business and the role of the fleet within our operations.

"It doesn't matter if it's fleet, property or operations; you simply have to understand the challenges and the organisation's key goal, which, for Cadent, is to keep people safe and warm in their homes while saving the planet."

Change management best practice is often broken down into the five Cs – clarity, communication, collaboration, culture and commitment.



## 1 Clarity

Clarity is the foundation to any successful change initiative and involves making it clear what the transformation is and why it is being made.

While some line managers and drivers will readily accept change – as evidenced by the enthusiasm towards electric vehicles by early adopters – many more are suspicious of it, particularly if it affects long-established working practices.

This reluctance can be minimised if employees understand why the company needs to evolve and what the change will achieve, as well as how it fits in with the organisation's broader strategic goals.

By aligning leadership and teams on a shared vision, the company can reduce uncertainty and rally employees around a common purpose.

"Start with a very clear, very comprehensive well-defined policy which covers all the aspects of the fleet operation it needs to," says Scott Chambers, corporate sales manager at Athlon.

"That gives you a base level to manage the driver population."



## 2 Communication

If clarity sets the foundation for successful change management, then communication is the heartbeat that keeps an initiative progressing.

To gain effective buy-in, fleets need to be consistent and proactive in how they message drivers, says Nigel Lawrence, strategic partnerships director at Applied Driving.

"It requires a top-down approach that is championed at a senior level and then focused at line management level to ensure communications are clear and inclusive for all, so drivers feel managed and supported," he adds.

"Not all organisations have a fleet manager, so messaging may come from multiple areas of the business, including HR, H&S and facilities.

"By creating a single stakeholder group, responsible for devising, implementing and leading the strategy, it is possible to create a programme of messaging that is delivered seamlessly and is inclusive for all."

The messaging can also be tailored to specific

groups to increase the likelihood of winning buy-in.

"Find out what resonates with drivers, because you are trying to win their hearts and minds," adds Lawrence.

"It's fine to share information about headline costs, incidents and impact to the bottom line, but is this really focusing on what is important to the driver?"

Openreach carried out research among staff to find out what issues they cared about. "We did some focus groups internally a few years ago and one of the biggest motivations was air pollution, especially in busy urban centres," says Abby Chicken, head of sustainability at Openreach. "They were willing to do something to stop that."

### IMPORTANCE OF EMPATHY

Stewart Lightbody, head of group fleet at Sureserve, adds that empathy is really important when communicating.

"I remember the start of my EV journey, going back a number of years," he says. "I didn't necessarily see the value. I could see the direction of travel, but I didn't understand why. So I had a go. I had a plug-in hybrid, used it properly every day and kind of lived and breathed it.

"That way, you can almost guess where people who are reluctant about EVs are going to come from. You know what the questions are going to be, what the blockers are going to be, because mine were no different.

"This doesn't just apply to EVs. It could be embracing telematics data to improve driving, for example. I've always described questioning people's driving behaviours as insulting someone's firstborn child – because they've passed their driving test, some people feel you can't tell them how to drive.

"I can say there might be a different way. They might want to try this, or slow down here."

Organisations should be flexible in how they communicate and in what format to gain the maximum engagement.

Bulletins sent by digital means are highly effective, but some drivers, especially in operational roles, may not have access to email. Therefore, face-to-face talks may be appropriate to ensure that messages are shared to all.

"Communication should ideally be shared monthly, but be prepared to be flexible with your communication so as not to disengage by, for example, sending too much information," says Lawrence.

"Be prepared to communicate with your workforce to measure quality of engagement and encourage ideas to keep things fresh."



### 3 Collaboration

Collaboration is essential when it comes to implementing change. This should involve all stakeholders, while it is also useful to ensure drivers' input on current policies – as well as suggestions for change – are considered.

"Wherever possible, get buy-in from drivers in the decision-making process," says Scott Chambers, corporate sales manager at Athlon.

"To some this might sound very scary but, actually, if you do that, you're more likely to get a successful outcome with more driver buy-in and engagement."

Working groups which include drivers and other stakeholders are an important tool to make operational improvements.

Many organisations, for example, use them when

ordering and fitting out new vans to make sure they are fit for purpose.

Even if a driver's suggestions cover what may seem like minor points over the positioning of interior lighting or shelving, they are likely to have operational benefits.

Drivers who are enthusiastic about change can be used to speak to their more reluctant colleagues to win them over.

It is relatively common for fleets to appoint drivers as EV champions and they can reassure other employees about the technology to build confidence in it.

One of these is Network Rail. "Find someone who has an EV and loves it because their infectious spirit means they will talk to others about it, they'll take people out in it," said James Rooney, head of road fleet at Network Rail.

"This helps to knock down any fear because they've been exposed to the technology."

One of the biggest facilitators to Openreach's electrification roadmap has been the positive feedback from drivers; once they are behind the wheel, they are happy with the experience.

"It has been far more influential for an engineer to say 'I didn't really want the EV, but I would never go back because it is more convenient, it's nicer to drive, I've got Apple CarPlay, I can heat the cab from my phone in the winter,'" says Chicken. "That gets more people on board than I ever could."

Some organisations also harness drivers' competitiveness through gamification to encourage a change in behaviour.

This is usually for driving behaviour and is done by using telematics data to produce league tables, with prizes – such as gift tokens – given to the best-performing or most-improved drivers.

"The gamification ethos is to provide visibility and transparency that encourages competitiveness and creates a positive environment, rather than one based on blame and punitive actions," says Lawrence.

Kelly Group has done this through the creation of its elite driver club, which uses telematics data to identify and reward its best-performing employees.

"We score drivers 0-100 on their performance and anybody who is at 98 or above every day for six months joins an elite driver club," says Dermot Coughlan, fleet director at Kelly Fleet Services.

"They have kudos. They get a jacket, a backpack and some other gear and a lot of people want to be an elite driver. We have a draw for everybody who has been in the elite driver club for the past month so someone in that group will get £1,000.

"Every six months we have a bigger prize, which could be a weekend away or similar. The cost of it gets offset by the savings we make through better driving – it pays for itself."





## 5 Commitment

The final pillar, commitment, is about ensuring that leaders visibly champion the change and provide the necessary resources to make it happen. It starts at the top. Without leadership buy-in, even the best-designed initiatives can falter.

This may be senior staff taking part in driver training programmes or having telematics installed in their company car as part of a wider programme.

One notable example has been Steve Openshaw, group fleet manager at Eric Wright Group, who decided to lead from the front when his employer was beginning its electrification journey several years ago.

To demonstrate that it was possible to live with an electric vehicle with a range of around 120 miles, he operated a BMW i3 range-extender for 48,000 miles, using just 30 litres of petrol.

"I am showing drivers what these cars can do," he told *Fleet News* at the time. "You get some people saying you can't go anywhere with them, you can't do anything, so I am showing day-to-day that you can live with them."

This proved to be the springboard for widespread EV adoption; on its fleet of 500 vehicles, only 17 diesel and four petrol models now remain. The remainder are either fully-electric, plug-in hybrids or mild hybrids.

Again, this works for other initiatives other than EVs. When Clarion Housing Group was installing forward-facing dashcams in its vans, fleet and environmental manager Colin Hutt also had one fitted to his car.

"This meant I knew exactly how it works, so when drivers were moaning to me about it I could say 'well, actually, no, it doesn't work like that because I've got one and this is how it works,'" he says.

## 4 Culture

Culture plays a pivotal role in determining whether a change initiative will become successful.

In organisations with adaptable cultures, change often feels natural and fluid, while organisations which are dominated by no clear purpose and rigid processes can find it feels like an uphill battle.

Clearly stated cultures can positively influence drivers in subtle ways. For example, when employees of an organisation with a robust safety culture understand that their employer prioritises their well-being over everything else, it can foster a sense of responsibility and loyalty.

"Fleet safety goes beyond having a safe, well-maintained vehicle fleet," says Ross Moorlock, CEO of road safety charity Brake.

"We see really good examples where road safety has been embedded not just across processes and procedures, but across the culture of the organisation and the clear benefits that brings in tangible results; fewer crashes, fewer injuries and significant savings."

Lesley Slater, CCO at Athlon, says cultures must be imposed from the top down.

"If the tone at the top is correct and the communication works well throughout the organisation, then an organisation can instil and develop a good culture," she adds.

This allows widespread acceptance of the culture and any changes, helping overcome any reluctance from drivers to accepting new training regimes, policies or responsibilities.

The profile of a culture can be elevated both internally and externally by formally incorporating it into an organisation's stated values.

Balfour Beatty conceived its Zero Harm terminology in 2008 as a succinct way to define its risk



management strategy and has since implemented a series of initiatives which have resulted in a 65% cut in at-fault incidents across cars, LCVs and HGVs since 2011.

Many other organisations have adopted the same or similar 'Zero Harm' terminology to embed safety into their company operations.

Univar Solutions, for example, has 'serious about safety' as one of its five universal values. The others are 'we do what we say', 'where people matter', 'valuable to others' and 'together we win'.

Company values can also cover other parts of the fleet operation, such as electrification.

One of DPD's four pillars under its 1-2-3-4 Strategy, which is used to shape how it goes

about its day-to-day business, is for the company to be the UK's leader in sustainable delivery.

This includes the target of being fully net zero by 2040, validated by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi).

"These aren't empty words," says Olly Craughan, head of sustainability at DPD UK.

"We have a 2030 target to reduce our emissions by 43% (baseline 2020).

"As part of our parent group, Geopost, we're fully validated by the SBTi, which means they've looked at our plans in detail and determined that they're realistic."

Currently, 38% of DPD's fleet is electric, with the company making 42 million EVs so far this year.



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# ‘An overwhelming mix of pride and gratitude’

Fleet manager of the year Matt Neale reflects on the honour of receiving a Fleet News Awards trophy – now it’s your turn

**FleetNews**



**AWARDS  
2026**

**H**ow does it feel to win a Fleet News Award? Matt Neale, Platform Housing Group head of fleet, described it as “surreal” with “an overwhelming mix of pride and gratitude” when he was named Fleet Manager of the Year at the 2025 Awards.

Neale was one of 33 winners back in March (another 22 were highly commended) across categories that recognised the best fleets, vehicles, manufacturers and suppliers.

He added: “Winning Fleet Manager of the Year is an honour beyond words, and I can’t express how much it means to me. Being part of such an incredible industry is a privilege, and I feel truly fortunate.

“Thank you from the bottom of my heart for this prestigious award. It’s a proud career milestone.”

Entries are now open for the 2026 awards, which seek to honour and celebrate people and companies that exemplify quality, innovation, knowledge and leadership, as well as the best cars and vans that fleets should be considering for their operations.

The awards offer individuals and companies an opportunity to boost their profile and credibility with customers, within the organisation and with the local community, as well as improve staff motivation.

Six experts join the judging panel for the first time, including Neale who takes his place on the fleet categories as is tradition for FMotYs.

Four join the supplier panel: Benjamin Mann, sourcing and contracts manager at National House Building Council; Steve Mulvaney, fleet manager at Canal & River Trust; Chris Mullings, senior fleet manager at Openreach; and Elaine Pringle, fleet manager at Scottish Water.

Meanwhile, the car panel is boosted by the addition of Leigh Merry, senior asset and credit risk manager at Novuna Vehicle Solutions.

Ensuring that every entry is given due consideration and the process is robust and transparent are returning auditor Nigel Morris, employment tax director at EY, and long-serving chair of the judges Christopher Macgowan OBE.

## To enter the awards, head to the

To discuss the wide range of sponsorship opportunities available at the Fleet News Awards 2026, please contact Kelly Crown via email [kelly.crown@bauermedia.co.uk](mailto:kelly.crown@bauermedia.co.uk)



website now: [fleetnewsawards.com](https://www.fleetnewsawards.com)

#### AWARDS 2026 TIMELINE

**AWARDS DEADLINE:**  
November 21

**JUDGING DAYS...**

**SUPPLIER:**  
January 21

**MANUFACTURER:**  
January 22

**FLEET INTERVIEWS:**  
January 28-29

**FINALISTS REVEALED:**  
mid-February on  
[www.fleetnews.co.uk](https://www.fleetnews.co.uk)

**AWARDS NIGHT:**  
March 18, Grosvenor House  
Hotel, Park Lane, London

## THE CATEGORIES

### FLEET AWARDS

Excellence in Fleet Safety and Compliance

2025 winner: Kelly Group

Sustainable Fleet of the Year (RENAMED)

2025 winner: Ovo

Most Improved Fleet Operator

2025 winner: Network Rail

Fleet of the Year: up to 250 vehicles

2025 winner: JJX Logistics

Fleet of the Year: 250-1,000 vehicles

2025 winner: Platform Housing Group

Fleet of the Year: more than 1,000 vehicles

2025 winner: SSE

### SUPPLIER AWARDS

Fleet Dealer of the Year

2025 winner: TrustFord

Rental Company of the Year

2025 winner: Europcar Mobility Group UK

Technology Provider of the Year

2025 winner: Chevin Fleet Solutions

Converter/bodybuilder of the Year

2025 winner: Bri-Star Systems

Graphics/livery Company of the Year

2025 winner: Ast

Services Provider of the Year

2025 winner: Driving for Better Business

from National Highways

Leasing Company of the Year: up to 20,000 vehicles

2025 winner: SG Fleet

Leasing Company of the Year: more than 20,000 vehicles

2025 winner: Novuna Vehicle Solutions

### MANUFACTURER AWARDS

Commercials

Best Small Van

2025 winner: Volkswagen ID Buzz Cargo

Best Medium Van

2025 winner: Ford Transit Custom

Best Large Van

2025 winner: Ford Transit

Best All-terrain Workhorse

2025 winner: Ford Ranger

Best Truck up to 7.5 tonnes

2025 winner: Daf XB

Cars

Best Compact Car

2025 winner: Renault Mégane

Best Medium Car

2025 winner: Kia EV6

Best Large Car

2025 winner: Polestar 4

Best Compact SUV

2025 winner: Hyundai Kona

Best Mid-size SUV

2025 winner: Kia EV3

Best Large SUV

2025 winner: Kia EV9

Manufacturer

Zero Emission Manufacturer of the Year

2025 winner: Kia UK

Most Improved Fleet Manufacturer of the Year

2025 winner: Renault Group

### HEADLINE AWARDS

Fleet Supplier of the Year

2025 winner: Driving for Better Business  
from National Highways

Fleet Manufacturer of the Year – Car

2025 winner: BMW

Fleet Manufacturer of the Year – Van

2025 winner: Ford Pro

Fleet Manager of the Year

2025 winner: Matt Neale, Platform Housing Group

Fleet News Hall of Fame

2025 inductees: Dale Eynon and

Alison Moriarty

“A nomination in the fleet industry’s most prestigious awards is recognition enough.

However, to go on and win large Fleet of the Year is the icing on the cake. Recognition in these awards justifies all the hard work and dedication by the teams involved”

**SIMON GRAY, SSE  
(FLEET OF THE YEAR MORE THAN  
1,000 VEHICLES, 2025)**



Simon Gray, head of fleet at SSE, picked up the trophy from Jennifer Davis, director of sales at award sponsors Kinto UK



James Rooney, head of road fleet at Network Rail (centre), collected the trophy from David Sawford, commercial director of award sponsors System Edström (left)

“It’s an absolute joy to have won a Fleet News Award. All the hours of convincing reluctant drivers, funding, setbacks and slow progress suddenly have recognised achievement. It cannot be beat and sits on our team desk as a reminder of why we do what we do”

**JAMES ROONEY, NETWORK RAIL (MOST IMPROVED FLEET OPERATOR, 2025)**

For more information visit: [fleetnewsawards.com](https://fleetnewsawards.com) or contact Sandra Evitt on 01733 468123 or [sandra.evitt@bauermedia.co.uk](mailto:sandra.evitt@bauermedia.co.uk)

## 7 BENEFITS OF ENTERING THE AWARDS

1. CREDIBILITY AND RECOGNITION OF BUSINESS EXCELLENCE

2. PERSONAL RECOGNITION; CAREER-ENHANCING

3. BENCHMARKING VERSUS COMPETITORS

4. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND MOTIVATION

5. FREE MARKETING FROM POSITIVE PRESS COVERAGE

6. INCREASED CUSTOMER AWARENESS

7. ATTRACT TALENT TO THE BUSINESS

## THE JUDGES



Chairman:  
Christopher  
Macgowan OBE



Auditor:  
Nigel Morris, EY



Stephen Briers,  
group editor,  
*Fleet News*  
(Fleet awards)



Aaron Powell, head  
of fleet, Speedy  
(Fleet awards)



Matt Neale, head  
of fleet, Platform  
Housing Group  
(Fleet awards)



Lorna McAtear,  
head of fleet  
National Grid  
(Fleet, Car &  
commercial awards)



Paul Hollick,  
chairman, AFP  
(Fleet awards)



Denise Lane,  
global commodity  
manager – fleet,  
Euro Car Parts  
(Supplier awards)



Kerry Teesdale,  
head of fleet,  
MJ Quinn  
(Supplier awards)



Leroy Thomas,  
fleet manager,  
Affinity Water  
(Supplier awards)



Jo Coffey, fleet  
manager, CEF  
(Supplier awards)



Gareth Jones, group  
fleet compliance  
manager,  
Speedy Hire  
(Supplier awards)



Benjamin Mann,  
sourcing and  
contracts manager,  
NHBC  
(Supplier awards)



Steve Mulvaney,  
fleet manager,  
Canal & River Trust  
(Supplier awards)



Chris Mullings,  
senior fleet  
manager,  
Openreach  
(Supplier awards)



Elaine Pringle, fleet  
manager, Scottish  
Water  
(Supplier awards)



Eddie Parker, LCV  
consultant, Arval  
(Commercial awards)



Matt de Prez,  
*Fleet News*  
(Car and commercial  
awards)



James Rooney,  
head of road fleet,  
Network Rail  
(Car and commercial  
awards)



Leigh Merry, senior  
asset and credit  
risk manager,  
Novuna  
(Car awards)



Nadim Mehar,  
global fleet  
manager, Alstom  
(Car awards)



Andy Cutler, senior  
residual value  
analyst, Glass's  
(Car awards)



Paul Titchmarsh,  
car forecast  
manager, Cap HPI  
(Car awards)



Ben Edwards,  
senior consultant,  
Arval  
(Car awards)



Duncan Webb, fleet  
director, The AA  
(Car and commercial  
awards)



Andy Picton,  
specialist residual  
value analyst, Glass's  
(Commercial awards)



Ken Brown, LCV  
valuations editor,  
Cap HPI  
(Commercial awards)



Paul Kirby,  
van expert  
(Commercial awards)



Matt Dillon, head  
of commercial  
vehicles, Ayvens  
(Commercial awards)



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## Perfect Grip

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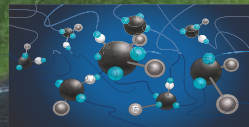
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## Available Sizes

**ION FlexClimate**

**ION FlexClimate SUV**

Inch	Series	Size	Rolling Resistance	Wet Grip	Noise Class	PBN	Available vehicle
20	45	215/45R20V XL	B	B	B	70	ID.3, Born
	35	235/35Zr20Y XL	B	B	B	70	Model 3
	45	245/45Zr20Y XL	C	B	B	70	BMW iX3, Taycan, e-tron GT
	35	285/35Zr20Y XL	C	B	B	73	EQE, Model S
19	50	215/50R19V XL	C	B	B	70	ID.3, Born
	40	235/40Zr19W XL	C	B	B	70	Model 3
	50	235/50R19V XL	B	B	B	70	EQA, EQB
	40	245/40Zr19Y XL	C	B	B	70	BMW i4
	45	245/45Zr19Y XL	B	B	B	70	BMW iX1, Model S
18	40	255/40Zr19Y XL	C	B	B	71	BMW i4
	40	205/40R18W XL	C	B	B	70	Mini Electric-e
	55	215/55R18V XL	C	B	B	70	ID.3, e2008, Copra Born
	55	225/55R18W XL	C	B	B	70	BMW iX1, IONIQ6
	45	235/45Zr18W XL	C	B	B	70	Model 3

Inch	Series	Size	Rolling Resistance	Wet Grip	Noise Class	PBN	Available vehicle
21	50	255/50Zr21W XL	B	B	B	71	BMW iX
	45	235/45R20V XL	C	B	B	70	EQA, EQB
	50	235/50Zr20W XL	C	B	B	70	Q4 e-tron, ID.4, EQC
20	40	255/40Zr20Y XL	C	B	B	71	EQE, Model Y, Model S
	45	255/45Zr20W XL	B	B	B	71	Q4 e-tron, ID.4, IONIQ 5, EV6, EQC, BMW i7
	45	265/45Zr20W XL	B	B	B	71	Model X, iD Buzz, Q5 e-tron
	40	275/40Zr20Y XL	B	B	B	71	BMW iX3
	55	235/55Zr19W XL	B	B	B	70	e-tron, ID.4, IONIQ 5, EV6, GV60, EQC
19	45	255/45Zr19Y XL	B	B	B	71	EQE, Model Y, Model S
	50	255/50Zr19W XL	B	B	B	71	Q4 e-tron, EQC, ID.4
	50	215/50R18V XL	C	B	B	70	e-Kona, e-Niro
18	55	235/55R18V XL	C	B	B	70	EQA, EQB
	60	235/60R18V XL	B	B	B	70	Enyaq IV, ID.4, ID.Buzz
	55	215/55R17V XL	C	B	B	70	e-Kona, e-Niro

# Charging ahead

Despite record growth in the number of charge points, many challenges still need to be overcome for the infrastructure to be fit for future fleet demands. *Andrew Ryan* reports

The public charging network is growing at a record rate – and it needs to as it will play an increasingly important role for fleets as the transition to electric vehicles (EVs) continues.

This is not only because the number of EVs on the roads will continue to rise, but because organisations are moving beyond the 'low hanging fruit' of transitioning vehicles which can either be charged easily at the workplace or at the employee's home.

Recent research for the new Arval Mobility Observatory Barometer found 41% of UK fleets said there are not enough public charging points, 39% have no charging available at their employees' homes and 25% have no chargers at their offices.

"The overall (charging) cake is growing by a huge amount and the share of that cake is going to be weighted ever more heavily towards public charging," says John Murray, principal and head of vehicles at LCP Delta.

Its analysis has found that currently 60% of all EV charging takes place at residential properties, with 32% on the public network.

By 2035, it projects the proportion of charging at home will fall to 52%, with the public charging network share increasing to 39%.



EVA England reports that, although the majority of drivers charge at home most of the time, 92% also use public charge points to top-up on longer journeys and this will only increase as more EVs hit the road.

This rising demand places a huge importance on the public charging network being fit for purpose to support the transition to zero emission vehicles, and the investment and growth looks to be meeting the challenge.

The latest Zapmap figures show that, as of July 1, the number of public charging devices installed in the UK was 82,369, an increase of 27% on the same date last year at 40,479 locations.

Of these, 16,698 – around 20% – are 50kW or above, while 65,671 (54%) were rated between 3kW and 8kW.

#### FUNDING TO SUPPORT ROLL-OUT

Funding is coming from both the public and private sector, with charge point operator (CPO) trade body ChargeUK's members committing to investing more than £6 billion in the public infrastructure by the end of the decade.

Government-funded initiatives include the LEVI (Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure) fund, which is

providing £381 million over the coming years to roll-out a further 100,000 on-street and local chargers, including in smaller towns and rural areas.

ChargeUK has confirmed all that money has now gone to local authorities and they are in the process of designing procurements, which need to be approved by the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles.

Further to these, Chancellor Rachel Reeves allocated £400m in June's spending review to support the roll-out of charging infrastructure.

It is not yet fully clear how the full £400m will be spent, but the Government has committed £25m to install cross-pavement technology that enables cables to run safely across pavements to allow roadside charging from domestic properties.

A further £30m will help fleets develop depot charging facilities and £8m will be used to power electric ambulances and medical fleets across more than 200 NHS sites.

In the weeks following Reeves's announcement, it was confirmed the £950m Rapid Charging Fund (RCF) announced in 2020 by the-then Chancellor Rishi Sunak, has fizzled out.

The RCF was supposed to help motorway service operators (MSOs) cover the cost of upgrading or installing the necessary grid connections at their sites.

Once the grid capacity was in place, individual charge point operators could then bid for contracts to operate charge points on those sites through separate commercial agreements.

However, Charge UK says the RCF never really exited its trial phase, so no full-scale disbursement to MSOs ever took place.

"While the outlook is positive, there is still work to be done," adds Vicky Read, CEO of ChargeUK.

"A combination of factors is needed to ensure roll-out for private investment is as commercially viable as possible including tackling high energy costs, stable regulation and removing local level barriers to charge point deployment, with subsidy targeted at where most needed and working in harmony with private investment."

She says the Government can help get even more chargers in the ground by removing the grid, planning and permitting delays which are slowing ChargeUK's members down.

This pressure exerted by the industry has had a positive impact. In May it was announced that substations for ultra-rapid charging hubs have become Permitted Development which means they

can be built without requiring formal planning permission from the local council, saving significant resource, cost and sometimes months of time taken on planning applications for large charging hubs' electrical equipment.

#### LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

However, there is much more involved in building a fit-for-purpose public charging network than just the overall number of chargers.

"Meeting numerical targets for charging points is all very well," says Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, chair of the Public Accounts Committee, which examines the value for money of Government projects, programmes and service delivery.

"Delivering thousands of points allowing Londoners to zip around the capital while leaving the rest of the UK's network patchy is obviously an outcome to be avoided."

Department for Transport (DfT) statistics, provided by Zapmap, show that while London has 275 devices per 100,000 population, all other regions have less than half this.



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☺ The UK average is 121 per 100,000 population, while the worst supported areas are the North West, Yorkshire and the Humber, and Northern Ireland, which have 75, 75 and 36 respectively.

As well as their location, the speed of charge points is becoming increasingly important.

"We need to make sure we are now building the right assets for the future," says Ian Johnston, CEO of Osprey Charging. "Not just the highest volume of assets, not just the biggest sites – those days have gone now."

Zapmap analysis has shown charging hubs are the fastest-growing type of facility in the UK, as they are popular with drivers and offer fast charging times, an increased focus on sustainable energy systems and locations which deliver enhanced amenities.

Figures show 136 charging hubs were installed in the first half of 2025, bringing the total across the UK to 673.

There are now 944 more rapid charge points, with a power rating of 50kW-149kW, than at the same time last year, bringing the total across the UK to 8,079 – a year-on-year increase of 13%.

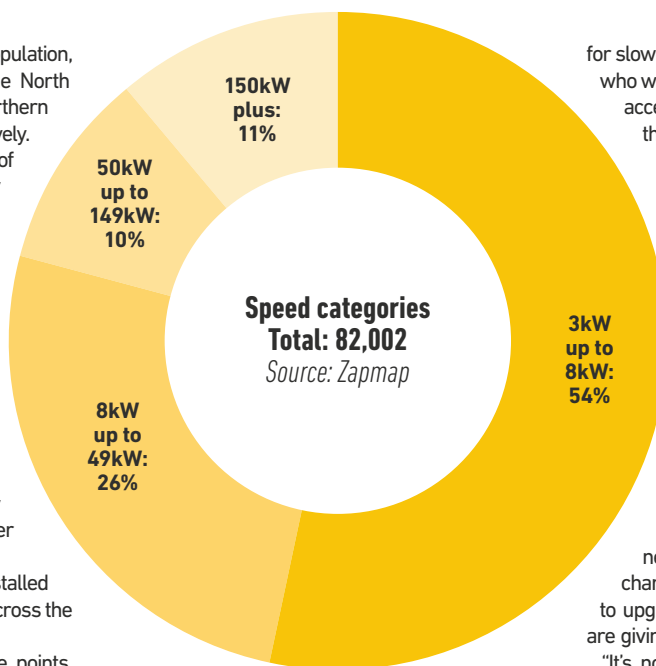
During the same period, the number of ultra-rapid devices, with a power rating of 150kW-plus, rose 59% to 8,619. Overall, ultra-rapid devices accounted for 18% of all installations in the first half of the year and for the first time outnumber rapid devices.

Zapmap says rapid and ultra-rapid charging points are increasingly found in destination locations, such as gyms and supermarkets, with ultra-rapid charge points becoming the default choice for en route charging sites.

Lower powered charging devices continue to represent the largest tranche of the infrastructure, providing charging for longer stops and top-ups, such as in car parks and at popular tourist attractions.

Some 65,671 charge points are currently defined as low-powered (slow/fast charge points rated at less than 50kW), representing just less than 80% of the total.

Provision of on-street charging devices, designed



for slower overnight charging and aimed at drivers who wish to charge close to home but do not have access to off-road parking, has also grown in the first six months of the year.

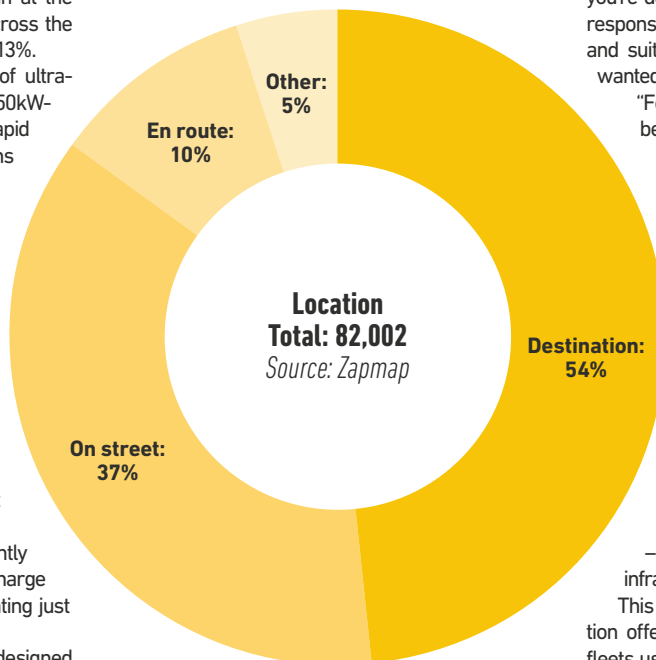
These charge points have seen 3,709 new additions in H1, bringing the total to 29,227.

"These latest statistics are highlighting what we can expect to see in the next stage of the infrastructure's evolution, in terms of the emergence of innovative solutions, a focus on more powerful chargers and therefore decreased charging times and additional announcements around LEVI," says Melanie Shufflebotham, co-founder and chief operating officer at Zapmap.

While much of the focus is on building new facilities, Asif Ghafoor, CEO of national charging network BeEV, says CPOs also need to upgrade the old charge points which he says are giving the industry a "bad rep".

"It's not a case of installing chargers and then you're done," he adds. "Charging providers have a responsibility to make sure chargers are upgraded and suit what drivers want today, not what they wanted three years ago."

"For example, contactless payment should be a given at all chargers, which it isn't currently. This will greatly improve the driver experience."



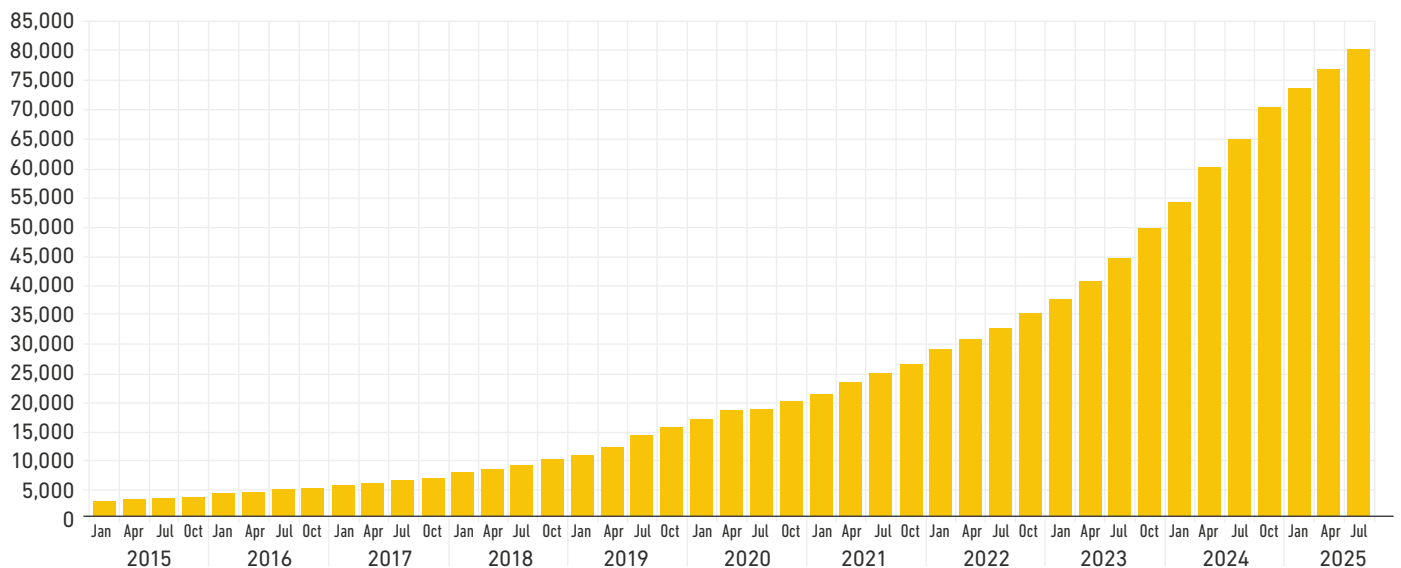
#### FLEETS LOOK TO SHARED CHARGING

A further issue, particularly for commercial vehicle fleets, is the accessibility and cost (see boxout, P34) of public charge points.

Often they are situated in areas which are inaccessible to commercial vehicles, or the spaces are too small to accommodate anything other than a car. One solution which a number of major fleets have adopted is private rapid charging – also known as shared charging – where an organisation uses the charging infrastructure already installed by another fleet.

This has multiple benefits for both the organisation offering access to its charge points and the fleets using them. ➡

**Total devices** Source: Zapmap



☺ The host organisation will create an extra revenue stream by charging fleets to use its infrastructure, while visiting fleets benefit from the convenience of the charge points, as well as reducing the capital expenditure and operational costs associated with developing and maintaining their own workplace charging.

It also helps mitigate capacity constraints, both in terms of available space and energy demand, at their own depots.

One of the pioneers of depot charging partnerships is First Bus, which currently has nine depots with 150kW chargers throughout the UK which can be accessed by fleets when its buses are away – typically between 6am and 10pm.

Faizan Ahmad, decarbonisation programme director at First Bus, says the response from fleets has been “overwhelmingly positive”, as they have

“Contactless payment should be a given at all chargers, which it isn’t”

**ASIF GHAFOOR, BeEV**

been drawn to the high availability, large bays and competitive pricing. Major fleets using First Bus’s shared infrastructure include Centrica, Openreach, DPD and Police Scotland.

Research by the AFP (Association of Fleet Professionals) found 58% of van fleets would consider sharing their depot or public charging with others to make electrification more practical.

Following the launch of a committee last year designed to promote shared charging between its members, the AFP in May introduced a white-labelled platform allowing depots to share charging facilities with fleet users.

The platform, created by technology start-up Evata, will be made available for AFP members through an online portal, while drivers will be given a self-serve mobile app for use when accessing shared infrastructure.

**COST OF PUBLIC CHARGING**

As well as charge point location and accessibility, the cost of charging on the public network is also an oft-raised issue.

In the UK, off-peak home electricity costs range from 7-10p per kWh, while public charging can cost more than 80p per kWh on the faster chargers.

This means that EVs which rely on the public network are much more expensive to operate, severely affecting their total cost of ownership (TCO) proposition.

The costs of charging have also increased noticeably in recent years as the sector has matured, with initiatives such as ChargePlace Scotland offering free charging on its AC network coming to an end.

But Ian Johnston says substantial cost reductions are unlikely unless significant structural changes are made.

“A sign of the charging sector being immature before now was that there were pricing behaviours in our market which were long-term unhelpful and destructive, because

I think some people got hooked on a drug that wasn’t realistic in terms of some of the pricing that went into the market early,” he adds.

“The actual cost of the electricity is a very small element of the pricing – it’s about 23% – so shifts in the global energy markets won’t have an impact on pricing in the main.

“You’re seeing the CPOs who are now established needing to either maintain profitability or to show a clear path to profitability, and that is the over-riding determinant on pricing.

“For everyone who would like to see the sub-60p per kW prices of 2021 and before, that would need structural changes in either UK grid costs, UK VAT, or we would need the UK to get into some of the RTFO (Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation) subsidy carbon credit schemes that some of our European peers enjoy.”

The VAT rate charged on electricity has long been a bone of contention. People who currently use a public charge point pay 20% VAT on the electricity consumed, compared

with the 5% rate for those plugging in at home.

Numerous organisations, including the AFP and BVRLA (British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association), have called for this to be equalised to the domestic rate to cut the cost of operating EVs, but this has so far not been taken up by the Government.

“I don’t think there is the political will currently for this to change and it’s not going to be as popular as freezing fuel duty, which is automatically seen as putting money back into people’s pockets,” says Paul Hollick, chair of the AFP.



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As a leading vehicle fleet solutions provider, Northgate is proud of its award-winning, industry leading emission reduction programme, Drive to Zero, which provides customers with a full suite of tools and consultancy solutions to aid the transition to electric LCVs.



**With the industry's ongoing commitment to Drive to Zero, when it comes to making decisions about decarbonisation and the process of transitioning to an electric future, supportive solutions are needed across the whole spectrum of fleet management to ensure that business needs are understood and met.**

## THE CASE FOR DECARBONISATION

In talking to our customers, carbon reduction is the primary reason LCV fleets start their transition from diesel and petrol to electric vehicles. This is increasingly needed to meet customer requirements for tenders and contracts.

Northgate Vehicle Hire has launched its new Drive to Zero Consultancy, which is dedicated to supporting businesses in planning and implementing their transition to electric vehicles, including both LCVs and cars.

This initiative is tailored to businesses operating 20 or more vehicles, providing fully independent and impartial hands-on EV-focused consultancy through specialist consultants, empowering companies to make the right decisions for their fleets.

It forms an integral, in-depth first step as part of Northgate's wider Drive to Zero proposition, which has supported customers from planning through to solution and delivery for the past three years.

## FLEET ANALYSIS

As a bespoke offering, the Drive to Zero Consultancy can work with fleets and their existing driver data or generate new insights through telematics and tailored driver surveys. It can also identify suitable

vehicles and charging strategies, ultimately building a robust case for electric adoption, either partially or in full, based on a company's unique operational requirements.

With sustainability now high on the agenda for fleet managers and ESG leaders alike, Northgate's Drive to Zero Consultancy provides the insight needed to secure internal approval for investment in a low-emission transport roll-out strategy.

Alongside assessing fleets on their readiness for EV adoption and home charging feasibility, the Drive to Zero Consultancy can also carry out workplace charging assessments, forecast potential cost and carbon savings, and create a bespoke consultancy report with actionable recommendations aligned to business objectives.

While the service is ideally suited to larger fleets, smaller operators can still benefit from a scaled-down suitability analysis or opt into the full consultancy package.

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Our proposition is designed to let fleets focus on their business, whilst Northgate focuses on running their vehicles.

The transition to electric vehicles can feel complex, particularly for larger fleets with diverse operational needs. That's why Northgate has launched Drive to Zero Consultancy, designed to provide businesses with the data-led insight they need to make confident decisions. Whether fleets are at the start of their EV journey or ready to scale up, our team can provide support every step of the way. Northgate customers know they can rely on our dependability and flexibility, as we help more companies to meet their own Drive to Zero emissions targets.

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# Fagan & Whalley builds on a century of driver safety with Samsara installation

Cementing a centenary with safety-first logistics

Approaching 100 years of operations, Fagan & Whalley is something of an unsung hero of logistics for customers relying on its expertise.

Founded in 1927 in East Lancashire to initially transport coal via horse and cart, the firm today boasts a large vehicle fleet, several depots enabling nationwide delivery and logistics services, and an international customer base which spans sectors including food and manufacturing, warehousing and contract logistics.

Going from strength to strength, Fagan & Whalley has enjoyed consistent growth in its core business while also acquiring Alan R Jones & Sons, a Newport-based transport specialist which recently celebrated an anniversary of its own, clocking up 50 years of business in 2021.

As a growing family of firms Fagan & Whalley places great emphasis on shared values – not least putting driver safety front and centre at all times.

“Safety has always been at the forefront of whatever we do,” explains Olivia Fagan, Compliance Officer, Fagan & Whalley. “We take telematics seriously and that’s reflected in our excellent driver scores. We also have a unique ethos: ‘If in doubt, brew up.’ Drivers are given time to stop, report problems, relax and do everything they can to maintain or improve their safety.”

Operations Managing Director Daniel Fagan adds: “What we’ve achieved with the integration of Samsara’s cutting-edge telematics system is a significant step for us. It’s more than just technology; it’s a

**68%**  
reduction in  
avoidable  
incidents

commitment to upholding the highest standards of safety and operational excellence.”

Having consistently high driver performance scores at Fagan & Whalley, with Alan R Jones eager to achieve the same quality standards, presented a key challenge. How could the entire, unified workforce attain industry-leading levels of safety and service?

#### Platform for building on a legacy to be proud of

Telematics isn’t a new tool for Fagan & Whalley, having used the technology for a number of years to continue to build on an already impressive record of driver excellence. Dron Kyle, Motor Risk Engineer at HDI – Fagan & Whalley’s insurance provider – talks about the company’s approach to telematics: “They are doing pretty much everything you can do with telematics. They’ve embraced telematics, they have a great relationship with their drivers, and they engage with the data, which ticks a big box for insurers such as HDI.”

While telematics and driver performance monitoring have long been possible for Fagan & Whalley, the technology it was using effectively became a victim of the firm’s success. Such was the efficiency of the firm’s operations, that it was hungry for even more data and the opportunity to take real-time actions.

“It was only when we started investigating alternatives that we discovered Samsara’s AI-based

**52%**  
reduction in  
following  
distance  
incidents

technology,” reveals Olivia. “We soon realised it was the perfect fit for us, providing information we needed in real time.”

Olivia states the features of Samsara’s products which Fagan & Whalley already uses have been a “turning point” for the business. Managers now have a more rounded picture of driver distraction and possess the ability to alert them and offer constructive support in real time.

‘Anticipation’ monitoring is just one additional benefit of Samsara’s technology. For example, head office can assess how aware a driver is of an obstacle on the road ahead – such as a junction or roundabout – including whether the person behind the wheel approached it smoothly or resorted to harsh braking.

Olivia says: “Are they relaxed or planning ahead? We want to continually improve our driver education and safety standards. That’s a big part of our wider commitment to making UK roads safer, and of our mission of continued improvement. Samsara has given us extra leverage for improvement in performance – it lets us delve deeper to tailor our driver training.”

Six categories of ‘avoidable incidents’ are used by insurers such as HDI as a metric for their customers’ safety record, tracking these month-on-month using claims data. Kyle notes that “a large percentage of avoidable incidents are down to driver distraction. How do we solve this? The technology is there. Using

**44%**  
reduction in  
harsh turns

**38%**  
reduction in  
moderate  
speeding

**33%**  
reduction in  
severe  
speeding

**11%**  
improvement  
in safety  
score in six  
months



the dual-facing cameras as a coaching tool and alerting the driver to the distraction gives them an opportunity in real time to rectify the situation and continue safely on their journey”.

#### **Driver competition is key to continued improvement**

Not only is Samsara supporting incremental gains at Fagan & Whalley’s long-standing operations, but it’s also fuelling the drive to boost success at Alan R Jones. When the business was acquired in 2022, it didn’t have the same history of telematics and driver performance monitoring, so Fagan & Whalley sought to bring it quickly up to its level.

Using Samsara data and analytics the firm can quickly create a ‘leaderboard’ of driver performance, which can be viewed by the team on the app. It’s intended for feedback and training, but has also added a valuable element of friendly rivalry as part of the company’s ongoing integration.

“The scores at Alan R Jones have already improved dramatically. The drivers have really embraced what the telematics can provide,” says Olivia. “They even print out the leaderboard and pin it up in the office so they can discuss it, which is both beneficial for the wider business, and our customers.”

**“We couldn’t have wished for a better relationship with a telematics partner. Samsara’s team understands what we need and what we’d like to achieve”**

**Olivia Fagan, Compliance Officer,  
Fagan & Whalley**

This has created greater visibility throughout the organisation, with every team member being able to see how others are performing.

One of Fagan & Whalley’s drivers, Joe Grzebieniowski, talks about how he has benefited from the partnership: “Since we switched to Samsara, my workday has become much more streamlined. The real-time data helps us to improve our driving habits and creates safer roads for everyone.”

#### **Focus on the future with Samsara partnership**

In the short time since Fagan & Whalley installed Samsara with minimal disruption and downtime, the business

feels the technology has added value to its USPs – from boosting driver safety to offering market-leading telematics that make driver hours visible via one dashboard – making life much easier for operations planners.

And there’s more to come. Chris comments: “Our five-year plan is for continued growth, not just for Fagan & Whalley, but our customers too. We want the technology to help us expand our national network but think at a local level so we can support all our drivers. We’d also like to tackle issues such as reducing empty running, which will help our customers cut their carbon footprint.”

A burgeoning partnership with Samsara is key to this, Olivia concludes: “They’ve been great at listening to us, so we’ll keep giving our feedback. The more features Samsara can develop for us – from improving driver style and behaviour to helping them calmly anticipate potential incidents such as bridge strikes, weight limits and other obstacles – the better our business can be.”

**To learn how Samsara can improve performance and training for your drivers, contact a member of our team today on 020 3965 2700 or email us at: [sales-uk@samsara.com](mailto:sales-uk@samsara.com).**

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# Embrace tech to cut risk

Targeted data insights and developments such as AI-powered cameras can have huge benefits for fleet operators. *Ben Rooth* reports

**T**elematics has become the go-to technology for large numbers of fleet decision-makers when it comes to improving driver behaviour. It generates a huge amount of data about how a vehicle is being driven which can be used to identify issues and areas of improvement to safety, as well as make operational gains such as increased efficiency.

The above is the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the technology. Telematics is evolving rapidly to provide much more than just post-driving analysis.

"Telematics isn't just about identifying problems," says Philip van der Wilt, vice-president for Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA) at Samsara.

"With in-cab alerts and artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled dashcams, it now intervenes in real-time to address critical issues such as distracted driving or driver fatigue.

"By detecting risks as they happen and delivering immediate feedback – in the form of alerts or warnings – telematics actively prevents dangerous behaviours from escalating into incidents and that makes the roads safer for everyone."

## EFFECTIVE TELEMATICS

Traditionally, telematics has been used to measure metrics such as harsh braking, rapid acceleration, speeding and seatbelt use. The data can then be used to gain the clearest possible understanding of where potential safety gaps exist.

"The key is turning the data into actionable insights," says Oliver Holt, Geotab's EMEA sales manager.

"For example, identifying trends such as frequent hard braking can indicate a need for driver training. By employing data to provide proactive coaching, fleets can create safer driving habits and reduce incidents. The data must serve as a guide for ongoing improvement."

Real-time feedback – delivered to drivers through in-vehicle devices – can also empower drivers to self-correct immediately which reinforces safer driving habits, says Annick Renoux, vice-president of Webfleet Europe.

"Performance benchmarks can be set and progress tracked over time – and this approach fosters long-term behavioural change and creates a culture of safety," she adds.

"Enhanced safety standards contribute to fewer accidents, lower repair costs and reduced insurance premiums, illustrating the symbiotic relationship between safety and cost management.

"Ultimately, telematics platforms allow fleets to transition from reactive to proactive risk management, ensuring that driver safety is an integral part of wider health and safety strategies."

The experts we spoke to agree that communication is key when it comes to implementing any remedial action identified by telematics data.



Telematics reports can be used to illustrate specific areas for improvement and frame subsequent conversations around mutual benefits, while consistently highlighting how safer driving protects both the driver and the business.

"It's about giving drivers visibility of the information and making them aware of where improvements can be made," says Vernon Bonser, UK sales director at Queclink Wireless Solutions. "Let them see how they are performing, backed by the data, and then benchmark this against their peers."

Many fleets choose to follow up these conversations with tailored training – such as one-on-one coaching sessions or e-learning modules – in addition to positive reinforcement measures such as gamification or rewards for improved performance.

## INTEGRATED CAMERAS AND AI

Integrated camera systems can provide fleet managers with invaluable insights into driver behaviour and road risks.

By pairing video footage with telematics data, cameras can identify risky behaviours such as

distracted driving, or fatigue, while real-time alerts can encourage drivers to self-correct before an incident occurs. They can also provide evidence for harsh braking which may exonerate or, indeed, implicate a driver.

The potential to help improve safety is clear.

"Cameras, particularly those integrated with telematics systems, provide essential context that raw data alone cannot, capturing the 'why' behind incidents," says Holt.

"For example, an event flagged as harsh braking might have been caused by a pedestrian stepping into the road, something a camera can confirm.

"Cameras also enable real-time feedback, such as alerts for distracted driving or following too closely, allowing drivers to correct their behaviours immediately."

Sam Footer, partnership director at SureCam, stressed the mounting importance of these intelligent dashcams – frequently powered by AI – as a tool for managing risk.

"There are a growing number of intelligent dashcams that can not only capture footage, but also



engage directly with drivers regarding distraction and fatigue, detect nearby vulnerable road users and understand fleet risk like never before," adds Footer.

"Organisations can now identify risk-generating events behind the wheel and automatically prompt the driver to change their behaviour with real-time voice instructions.

"If the driver doesn't correct their behaviour, event alerts with video are then sent back to base to ensure coaching and training is focused and relevant to their drivers.

"This approach means that the fleet manager isn't inundated with too many alerts."

JJX Logistics uses telematics and dual-facing dashcams to monitor the vehicle and driver while on the road.

When the AI-powered camera detects a pre-determined safety violation, the footage is sent to JJX Logistic's operations team, which reviews the incident and sends

digital coaching alerts to the driver prior to them starting their next shift.

When a driver shows a particular underlying problem with their standards, they are brought in for an awareness briefing and coaching session with the operations team, with video footage used in certain scenarios where required.

When initiating remedial action based on camera footage, it's crucial to approach the conversation constructively, says Renoux.

"Begin by sharing the footage with the driver to establish transparency and mutual understanding," she adds.

"Discuss the specific behaviours observed and explain the potential risks or consequences. Collaborate on a plan for improvement, which could include targeted coaching or adjustments to work schedules to address fatigue."

Chris Horbowj, commercial director of Targa UK, stresses the need for a focused approach to any training that is subsequently provided.

"In some cases, sharing videos or images of specific incidents can be enough to raise awareness about the impact of unsafe behaviours, while coaching sessions help address these behavioural gaps and discuss preventive strategies," he adds.

"Progress should be tracked and milestones celebrated to reinforce consistent adherence to safety practices and foster long-term improvement."

Steve Thomas, managing director of Ctrack UK, says an increasing number of operators are looking to explore the full potential of video telematics.

"For example, by extending the recording time after the ignition is turned off, the cameras can monitor whether a vehicle is being loaded or unloaded safely, or whether the correct safety procedures are being followed," he explains.

"We are seeing video telematics integrated with other apps, systems and tools, which is enabling fleets to gain greater levels of visibility, control and insight through added connectivity and seamless sharing of data.

"This now covers a growing range of solutions including lone worker protection, accident and



risk management as well as driver training.”

And the camera technology companies are constantly innovating to give fleet managers even greater control and oversight.

For example, Blackout Technologies, which specialises in addressing smartphone distraction, has recently teamed up with SureCam to develop a dashcam with mobile device blocking.

Mark Hadley, Blackout Technologies chief executive, explains: “Our integrated solution eliminates the illegal use of messaging apps, social media platforms, streaming and internet browsing behind the wheel, which is believed to contribute to as many as 40% of vehicle collisions.”

### HARNESSING AI'S POTENTIAL

According to Samsara's recent State of Connected Operations Report, nearly half (45%) of UK leaders are already leveraging AI, and 89% plan to increase investment in AI over the next year.

“In fleet management, AI-driven solutions are at the forefront of the transformation that's happening,” says van der Wilt.

“This newly-launched suite of AI offerings provides fleets with actionable insights, empowering managers to make smarter, safer decisions with confidence.

“It's now possible to seamlessly integrate AI-powered insights, recommendations and actions across platforms.

“By delivering tailored visualisations, coaching and training tools, organisations are being enabled

to foster safer driving practices and elevate operational efficiency.”

The consensus is that the potential of AI-enabled dashcams is currently in its infancy.

AI-powered analysis – coupled with the increasing roll-out of the 5G mobile network – will enable telematics to utilise an ever-greater range of data and video sources.

Thomas explains: “Details such as points on licence, speeding fines, completed training and driving experience could be considered alongside behaviour, incidents, near misses, fuel usage, speed limits, road type, driving time and weather conditions. By making sense of these numerous risk elements, fleets can create a complete picture of driver performance, which leads to highly accurate risk scoring and supports enhanced gamification, incentivisation and engagement strategies.”

Bonser continues: “Continued advancements in edge-based computing – where the data processing takes place on the in-vehicle device – and AI algorithms will lead to enhanced decision-making capabilities and the provision of highly accurate real-time driver insight. With improved object detection, better understanding of driving scenarios and sophisticated behaviour analysis, driver communication and management are going to take a massive step forward.”

### OVERCOMING DRIVER AND UNION CONCERNS

Communication and transparency are both key when it comes to addressing any driver – and union

– concerns surrounding the introduction of new risk management technology.

Driver-facing cameras hit the headlines earlier this year when Asda “indefinitely halted” plans to install the technology in its home delivery vans following opposition from the GMB union, which had concerns that the use of the cameras amounted to a severe breach of privacy and unnecessary intrusion on a driver while at work.

The supermarket giant had intended to introduce the technology to improve safety, with the AI-equipped cameras able to identify areas of risk such as driver tiredness and distracted driving.

Footer adds: “Driver concerns can be a challenge, especially if handled badly.


“Not everyone is supportive of change or greater use of technology, but the biggest pushback from drivers is normally around privacy issues and a belief that they are being watched all the time.”

Consequently, colleagues should be kept informed from the start about exactly what data is being collected and how it will be used.

It's equally important to emphasise the role of telematics and camera systems in improving safety and operational efficiency.

“Usually, pushback is just down to a lack of understanding,” says Edward Martin, head of marketing and business growth at JJX Logistics.

“We make it clear that we're not watching them – we haven't got time to. That's not what the devices are there for; they are there for the drivers' safety.”

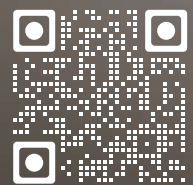
Wheatley Group won over its drivers' union by 



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“demonstrating its determination to improve driver safety and desire to ensure staff are given high-quality, well-equipped vans with the latest safety technology.”

“We re-wrote our safe driving handbook and sat down with the unions and our health and safety people to explain why we needed telematics and what we were going to use it for,” says Jenny Dolan, group fleet manager at Wheatley Group.

“The drivers had that peace of mind that the processes are in place.”

Anonymising data whenever possible and maintaining strict data security measures also go a long way when it comes to building trust.

“To address privacy concerns, prioritising data protection is fundamental, this includes measures such as blurring driver images and ensuring data is only accessible to authorised personnel,” says Horbowyj.

“Engaging drivers and unions early in the process is another important step, allowing their input to be considered and their concerns addressed.”

Horbowyj adds that the use of clear and legally-compliant policies on data collection, storage and usage also help build trust with the driver.

There are a number of strict data regulations that organisations need to comply with when cameras are introduced. These include the 2018 Data Protection Act, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Human Rights Act.

The Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) provides specific guidance on dashcams and GDPR,

and fleet operators should review this guidance for additional clarity.

“It doesn’t need to be all or nothing,” says an ICO spokesperson. “If you decide to install a camera that has audio capability, switch this feature off by default and use it only in exceptional circumstances.”

“It’s intrusive, which means you need strong justification for using it, for example, if there’s a threat to personal safety.”

“Similarly, if your business vehicles are used for personal journeys, the cameras should be switched off during non-working hours.”

“This also applies if you install a camera in an employee’s personal vehicle that they’re using for business journeys.”

Kelly Group introduced AI-powered driver-facing cameras to tackle driver distraction and has set its system up to provide notifications when an incident has been detected, such as not using a seatbelt, smoking, use of mobile phones or fatigue.

“We only look at the footage when the system sends us a notification,” says Dermot Coughlan, fleet director at Kelly Fleet Services. “We use it purely for safety. When we’re sitting down with the ops guys, the board or whoever we need to talk to, we explain that the vans are work tools and we need to make these tools as safe as possible for whoever is driving them – and not hurt anybody else while they’re at it.”

Kelly Fleet Services has turned off the microphones on its system so any personal conversation is not recorded.

“We may lose some information there but, at the end of the day, if someone is driving into someone else you can tell whose fault it is, so you don’t really need to know what was being said,” adds Coughlan.

#### RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Telematics and camera solutions offer a substantial return on investment by delivering tangible benefits across multiple areas.

In short, fewer incidents mean reduced insurance premiums, legal costs and vehicle downtime.

Operationally, better route optimisation, fuel savings and predictive maintenance can lead to significant cost reductions.

“Fleets also see gains in driver retention by creating a safer, more supportive work environment,” explains Holt.

“Many fleets report seeing returns on investment within the first year, but the long-term benefits – such as lower risk, higher efficiency and improved reputation – are invaluable.”

Horbowyj concludes that compliance with regulatory standards and fostering a “safety-first” culture also strengthens a company’s reputation.

“The impact of these systems is clear: 80% of incidents stem from distracted driving, highlighting the need for proactive measures, while insurance claims increase by 50% in the absence of video safety solutions. Moreover, 84% of poor driving incidents negatively affect businesses, further reinforcing the financial, operational and reputational value of telematics and video integration.”

# Samsara customers prevent 250,000 accidents with real-time AI insights



With modern artificial intelligence-powered tools, fleet operators can spot problems before they happen, helping to save lives and cut costs

**S**amsara customers prevented 250,000 accidents in the year to January 2025, thanks to the company's AI-powered safety platform and a growing culture of proactive coaching among operators.

This sobering data – which spans all the regions where Samsara operates, including the UK and Ireland – highlights how real-time driver alerts and video-based insights are helping fleets take preventative action before incidents occur.

Pivotal to fleet safety are AI dashcams that don't just record what happens on the roads but intervene in real-time to detect drowsiness, driver distraction, phone use and seatbelt non-compliance.

And, when technology is coupled with a programme of targeted coaching and positive reinforcement, it can combine to create a new level of safety awareness.

#### Everyone benefits from smarter safety systems

One example is Vp Brandon Hire Station, which operates 500 vehicles across 125

locations in the UK. They're also the winner of Samsara's 2025 Connected Operations Award for Safest Operator.

Facing high accident costs and limited visibility into driver behaviour, they implemented Samsara AI Dash Cams, Vehicle Telematics and the Driver App, transforming their safety programme and moving from a reactive to a proactive approach backed by data.

As a result, they saw a 93% cut in mobile phone usage while driving, an 88% reduction in speeding incidents, a 63% fall in harsh driving events and a 10-point improvement in average driver safety score (83 to 93) and all within eight months. And thanks to AI detection and personalised driver coaching, the company saw a 78% reduction in inattentive driving and a 90% drop in following distance violations.

"Samsara has totally transformed the way in which occupational road risk is managed within our business," said Antony Draper, Director of HSEQ, Vp Brandon Hire Station.

He added: "The difference between this system and the previous one is night and day. We wanted the absolute truth about our safety performance. When you know where you stand, you can achieve more tangible, long-term benefits."

#### Good safety is good business

Not only did the investment in Samsara boost safety, it also made a big impact on the bottom line. As a result, third-party accident costs plummeted from £522,000 in 2023 to £330,000 in 2024, a 40% reduction that saved Vp Brandon Hire Station £192,000 in just one year.

The overall fall in safety events has played a key role in minimising incidents and associated costs.

"What we've learned is that when you have trusted data, you can make confident decisions," said Draper. "Samsara is the enabling tool that highlights inefficiencies, areas of focus, and priorities moving forward. It's transformed how we approach safety across our entire operation."

By combining intelligent technology with a structured coaching culture, fleet operators can shift from reactive damage control to proactive risk prevention. To find out more, contact Samsara on 020 3965 2700 or email us at: [sales-uk@samsara.com](mailto:sales-uk@samsara.com). You can also see more at our website: [www.samsara.com/uk](http://www.samsara.com/uk)



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# Richard Guy

## THE TRANSITION TO ELECTRIC 'ENCOURAGE, NOT MANDATE'

*Stephen Briers discovers how Amey chose to be persuaders, not dictators, when looking to electrify its fleet. It's paid off dramatically*

**T**wo years ago, just 5% of the company cars on Amey's fleet were full electric. Today, that figure sits at 92%.

The infrastructure support service provider breathed new life into its electrification strategy – across cars and vans – after developing a policy that would elevate it to leadership status in its sector, as well as supporting its clients' own decarbonisation aspirations by leading by example.

However, far from forcing staff to accept an electric car, Amey decided to adopt a policy of persuasion – “encourage, not mandate”, according to its fleet & plant director Richard Guy.

A 25-year Amey veteran, Guy assumed his current position 18 months ago when the former incumbent moved into a new role.

Managing a fleet of almost 4,000 vehicles (1,500 cars, 1,600 vans and just less than 1,000 trucks and specialist assets), Guy was handed the challenge of meeting a five-year roadmap of transitioning to full electric 92% of the car fleet and 66% of the van fleet by 2028.

He says: “We have had electric cars on the choice list for six years, but we had very low take-up – just 5% up until two years ago.”

In a remarkable transformation, Amey will achieve the car goal this year; vans, although a tougher prospect, remain on plan, with a target of 32% this year rising to 53% in 2026.

The new ‘EV-first’ policy was launched mid-2023 and was part-funded by savings on business mileage that emerged during the Covid clampdown on travel.

“We took advantage of the lack of travel during the pandemic and a subsequent reduction in mileage which saw our typical cycle reduce from 20,000 miles over four years to 12,000,” Guy tells *Fleet News*.

“We rescheduled our company car leases and that generated cash to reinvest in our electric car policy.”

The pot was topped up by Amey's decarbonisation fund, a sum set aside to ensure the policy was successful.

This is used to fund home charger installation up to £1,000, which is paid up front rather than reclaimed by the employee (70% of car drivers can charge at home). “The home charger pays for itself on fuel savings, so we see it as an opportunity rather than a cost,” Guy adds.

Meanwhile, business mileage reimbursement switched from the universally maligned advisory electric rate to actual cost, using fuel/charge cards, which countered issues from those with no choice but to charge on the public network.

Amey now pays for the electric and the employee refunds the company for personal use.

At the same time, the job-need car choice scheme was reduced from eight manufacturers with up to 12 model options to five makers and up

to six models per band. This enabled Amey to negotiate better discounts and thereby be able to offer high-spec cars.

Job-need (classified as travelling 8,000 business miles per year or 12 business trips per month) accounts for 85% of the 1,500 company cars. However, employees can still trade up and down, so there is flexibility.

Guy also negotiated non-fee early terminations with leasing partner Novuna Vehicle Solutions, a crucial piece in the jigsaw which enabled Amey to accelerate the transition process.

With the foundations in place, Guy turned his attention to raising employee awareness with the creation of a dedicated section on the company intranet to highlight the personal experiences of Amey's 60 battery electric vehicle (BEV) early adopters.

“We got them to share their real-life experiences with the cars, their usage, home charger installations and be the ambassadors and a point of contact for queries,” Guy says. “Their feedback helped us to develop the policy.”

The site includes a tool where drivers fill in details about their journeys and travel patterns

and it recommends the right electric car for them, and how often (and where) they would typically need to charge, to give a clear and practical understanding about the ownership experience.

This links to the Novuna driver hub which provides information on real-world range implications of driving in the cold or at different speeds and in various conditions.

Guy explains: “Our aim was to take away barriers such as financial constraints and cost concerns. And then we could focus on tackling driver reluctance through behaviour change, a lot of which is down to uncertainty about the technology.”

“Our aim was to take away barriers such as financial constraints and cost concerns”

RICHARD GUY

☐ The engagement plan included webinars, articles on internal web pages and speaking to staff about the realities of electric cars and myth busting.

"The change is not as significant as people think," Guy says. "We found that a lot of people wanted to do it, and we quickly reached 80%. Offering more help and support got us to 90%. Now we just need to tackle the final 10%."

Shortly after the policy was introduced, Amey pre-ordered around 200 electric cars from BMW and Volvo which enabled it to get people in the cars quickly to build traction and change mindsets.

Hurdles to resolve to get the final 10% over the line include towing constraints and the higher mileage drivers for whom Guy has devised a surprising solution.

"We thought about PHEVs under a 50g/km emissions cap but with the re-testing rules we don't know where they will sit from a benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax and total cost of ownership (TCO) point of view," he says.

"For these people, we are going down a hybrid route, although we are finding it difficult to get models into our bands because the manufacturers are focusing their discounts on full electric. We are also conscious about how the BIK rates will increase during the lease term."

With this in mind – and following Government confirmation that hybrid cars can be sold until 2035 – Amey has set a target of becoming a zero-emission fleet by 2030.

Transition has been reinforced by tightening the car allowance policy to prevent people from opting out of company cars. This has seen an emission cap implemented at 50g/km, effectively ruling out everything apart from BEVs and PHEVs for any private cars used for business purposes.

In fact, Amey's car policy is having the opposite affect, with around 200 cash-takers choosing to rejoin the scheme over the past 18 months. Just 250 remain.

"The policy is top-down from the chief executive," Guy says. "Environmental, social and governance (ESG) is high on the agenda: we have an ESG committee, chaired by the group chairman, which reports on performance."

### FOCUS ON VANS

With the car box ticked, Guy is now turning his attention to the challenges facing the van fleet.

Just 10% are full electric, around 150 vans, although a further 100 are due for imminent delivery and 150 are on order. It is ramping up quickly, with an end-of-year target of 500 (c30% of the LCV fleet) either on order or delivered.

The majority – 80% – are for four local government contracts, which are depot-based and operate within confined areas, making them ideal for full electric. The rest of the fleet has a very different operating model.

"We tendered in 2023 to see what the market offered and Novuna (Amey's existing funder) won, which meant we extended our lease partnership into workplace charging infrastructure and installation," Guy says.

"We can pick and mix the services we need from Novuna – for example, on some sites we can do the civils ourselves."

Amey's Polmadie site in Scotland is the company's blueprint for depot charging after the installation of 26 chargers two years ago.

As the overnight destination for vans covering a huge territory from the borders in the east to Stranraer in the far south-west, it became the testbed that proved large scale electrification of the van fleet was possible.

However, Guy hasn't ruled out revising the operational model to ensure Amey fulfils its contractual obligations.


He says: "We've already made changes in Scotland. We moved some engineers from vans to cars to give better range, and re-planned some of our inspections routes to minimise the need for public charging/downtime."

Amey faces potential daily fines of £5,000 if its Trunk Road Incident Support Service vehicles are off the road. Consequently, it already runs a surplus fleet to ensure it always has vehicles available.

"We haven't started to decarbonise those yet, but the concept of having additional vehicles to provide resilience will need to be discussed," Guy says.

"The main message we're trying to get across to end users is the need to change working practices in line with the change of technology."

By the end of the year, Amey will have 150 charge points installed at 40 locations across the UK, with more installations planned during



“You have to look at what you can do, not what you can't. That's why we started with cars”

**RICHARD GUY**



2026, accommodating the needs of the 40% of vans that are depot-based.

Most are on a plug-and-charge system run by Novuna's charge point management system which removes the need for apps. The vehicle becomes the mode of identification, which is one of the reasons why Amey partners with Ford which supports this type of charging.

Novuna played a crucial role in identifying the charging solutions, which took into consideration minimising downtime, interoperability plus grid connectivity and difficult deployments.

"We have a mix of long-term sites and others where we are there for just three-to-six months," Guy says.

A mobile solution is used for the latter, where Amey leases moveable Kempower DC chargers via Novuna which are plugged into commander sockets at the depot. They offer charging speeds up to 50kW with good back-end communication protocols for reporting purposes.

"We have a couple now with more on order – it's an emerging technology," says Guy. "They also help us with contracts that we know will expire in a few months. They tend to be reluctant to invest, but mobile chargers will mean we can continue to decarbonise the fleet."

A crucial part of the depot charging solution is to create a network that can handle Amey's needs both today and tomorrow. Novuna analysed dwell times and the energy capabilities at each site to establish use cases.

Consequently, a mix of AC chargers from 7kW to 22kW and DC chargers at 25kW or 50kW have been deployed.

"We have aligned the infrastructure to the vehicle to ensure optimal performance," Guy says.



**COMPANY:** Amey  
**FLEET & PLANT DIRECTOR:** Richard Guy  
**TIME IN ROLE:** 18 months  
**FLEET SIZE:** 4,000 vehicles (1,500 cars; 1,600 vans; <1,000 trucks and specialist assets)  
**FUNDING:** leased with maintenance via Novuna Vehicle Solutions  
**OPERATING CYCLE:** cars 4yrs; vans 3-6yrs dependent on mileage (typically 5yrs); trucks 7-9yrs

This is not straightforward, according to Novuna head of decarbonisation innovation Jonny Berry, who provides consultancy support to Guy.

Berry explains: "Things do go wrong, the most likely of which is the vehicle architecture doesn't match the DC charger. The amps, voltage and speed of charger on the van need to match the depot charger to get optimal performance. That's why vehicles often don't pull the full charging speed."

Guy adds: "It's important to have this type of partnership with Novuna because they do a lot of the background work. We need their expertise."

Amey's LCV electrification roadmap prioritises the depot-based fleet before tackling home-based vans which could have driveway charging. It concludes with vehicles that will have to be charged on the public network.

#### COLLABORATIONS WITH CLIENTS

Guy is assessing a range of options to ease the transition journey. "We are working with Network Rail and other customers via Novuna to share or jointly invest in a charging network using Novuna's charge point management system that would bill each company separately," he says. "Working with clients will support everyone's journey."

The plan considers vehicle size and product availability. Some 60% of the LCV fleet is two-tonne vans which are well served by manufacturers and, therefore, were first to be swept onto the electric-first policy. "We are focusing on these; they now need a reason why they can't change," Guy says.

Another 20% are mid-size three-tonne vans which also have good product availability and are coming under consideration at renewal. The balance are 3.5 tonnes and those are on hold until the product catches up.

"We need 250-to-300-mile real-world range and good payload – we are full laden," Guy says. "We also need clarity on the legislation for 4.25-tonne electric vans regarding driving licences and tachos, and a public charging network with bays that can fit these large vehicles."

One of the biggest challenges is addressing the TCO on contracts that will be replacing cheap diesel vans on leasing deals negotiated six or seven years ago.

Some of it is education: simply replacing them with diesel vans would see a cost increase in today's market, albeit not as high as switching to electric.

Guy also undertakes TCO modelling, with calculations based on individual usage of charging infrastructure, to move attention away from the high list price. Volume agreements with Ford also help with front end discounts.

The final piece in the road fleet puzzle is the trucks. They tend to be low mileage and low utilisation, making them a good fit for electric. Amey is trialling four 7.2-tonne Iveco chassis for refuse contracts, but is also looking at hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) as an interim measure. Hydrogen, meanwhile, is seen as a possible solution only for plant and logistics.

With the fleet decarbonisation strategy now firmly embedded within Amey, Guy offers sage advice to those companies still prevaricating about beginning their shift to electric.

"You have to look at what you can do, not what you can't. That's why we started with cars; we took those learnings on education and behaviours and that made it easier to start transitioning our vans," he says.

"Remove the barriers so you can shine the spotlight on behavioural change. Pick a place to start – and start."

# FLEET & MOBILITY

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## Don't miss Europe's largest fleet event to learn, connect and discover

**S**ome of the UK's biggest fleets have signed up for this year's Fleet & Mobility Live which returns to the NEC, Birmingham, in just a couple of weeks.

The event, brought to you by *Fleet News*, brings the UK fleet industry together and offers the opportunity to network, share advice and hear the latest guidance across three seminar theatres.

These sessions are built around interactive discussions that give visitors the chance to bring questions and leave with solutions.

### THE THEATRES

**Strategy and Leadership Theatre** – explore big-picture challenges and transformative strategies that impact how fleets operate, including transferable leadership skills and long-term policy design.

**Fleet Management Theatre** – focused on the operational essentials of running a safe, compliant, and efficient fleet – with particular attention to vehicle electrification.

**HR, Finance and Procurement Theatre** – designed for professionals managing fleet alongside broader responsibilities. Key topics will include total cost of ownership (TCO), salary sacrifice schemes, and how procurement, HR and finance functions can work more effectively with fleet teams.

Beyond the theatres, visitors will explore live zones showcasing vans, micromobility and electrification, with the AFP Hub and EV Café providing space to connect with peers.



*Fleet News* group editor Stephen Briers said: "We've curated the show to focus on the biggest challenges facing fleets today and in the future.

"As usual, we have worked closely with our visitor advisory board of fleet professionals to create the sessions and secure the best speakers. Securing your free place will enable you to learn and collaborate with like-minded peers.

"It also provides the perfect opportunity to engage and benchmark the latest innovations across the exhibition hall at the NEC with the 100-plus innovative suppliers that are supporting the show."

In addition, Fleet & Mobility Live will have a record number of manufacturers in attendance to showcase their latest cars and vans as well as a dedicated hub for Empowering Women in Fleet.

Visit [www.fleetandmobilitylive.co.uk](http://www.fleetandmobilitylive.co.uk) to register for this year's free-to-attend event

# Session agenda

Theatre	Day	Start time	Length	Session title	Synopsis
Strategy & Leadership	TUES	10:30	45 mins	Fleet News Live at 10.30	Topical discussions about the issues of great importance to fleet decision-makers
		11:30	45 mins	Electrifying your fleet	How energy management and a durable charging policy underpin a robust EV strategy for working fleets
		13:00	45 mins	From outsider to trailblazer – my fleet journey	Focusing on the transferable 'new' skills they bring to fleet; their strategic vision, how the role is evolving; the soft skills; etc.
		14:00	45 mins	Leasing panel	The UK's leading leasing companies discuss future trends, current challenges and new initiatives
	WED	10:30	45 mins	Fleet News Live at 10.30	Topical discussions about the issues of great importance to fleet decision-makers
		11:30	45 mins	Electrifying your fleet	How energy management and a durable charging policy underpin a robust EV strategy for working fleets
		13:00	45 mins	From outsider to trailblazer – my fleet journey	Focusing on the transferable 'new' skills they bring to fleet; their strategic vision, how the role is evolving; the soft skills; etc.
		14:00	45 mins	Leasing Panel	The UK's leading leasing companies discuss future trends, current challenges and new initiatives
Fleet Management	TUES	10:30	45 mins	Preparing for the unthinkable: managing serious road incidents	A panel of experts guide fleet managers through the best practices for protecting drivers on the road and navigating the aftermath of serious incidents
		11:30	45 mins	Amey: a fleet electrification journey	Amey fleet and plant director Richard Guy provides practical and insightful advice about how the company went from zero to 50% electrification
		13:00	45 mins	Electrification - overcoming the hurdles to fleet transition	What is preventing EV take up and what can fleets do about it?
		14:00	45 mins	AI: a vision of the future	How artificial intelligence will help fleets
	WED	10:00	45 mins	Safety – risk management	Proactive and preventative measures to mitigate incidents
		11:00	45 mins	Minimise your in-life fleet management costs	How fleets can robustly manage in-life fleet performance
		13:00	45 mins	New to fleet: an introduction to fleet management	AFP's Fleet Academy provides an overview of the basic skills and core principles needed by a modern fleet manager
		14:00	45 mins	EV Café	
HR, Finance & Procurement	TUES	10:30	45 mins	How to launch a successful sal/sac scheme	Why not all salary sacrifice schemes are equal
		11:30	45 mins	Procurement & supply chain management: how to extract best value when buying products and services in fleet	How procurement and fleet need to work together when tendering for new suppliers and executing the contract
		14:00	45 mins	Understanding TCO – how to keep fleet costs under control	Cradle to grave insight into the cost of running a vehicle fleet
	WED	10:30	45 mins	Learnings from an established sal/sac fleet	18 months on from launch: learnings and pitfalls to avoid
		12:00	45 mins	Negotiating value: a guide to best practice procurement	How public sector fleets can negotiate greater value from suppliers when tendering for new partners

# Get the most out of vehicle rental

The products offered by rental companies have evolved dramatically in recent years. *Ben Rooth* looks at how fleets can maximise their use

**T**he need for fleet decision-makers to ensure operational efficiency and cost control is ever-present.

Regardless of the number of vehicles in use, fleets' budgets are being stretched and scrutinised to maximise efficiency and profitability.

Consequently, decision-makers must opt for the right type of rental for their organisations' specific needs every time.

But with these products evolving rapidly in recent years, how can fleets get the most out of rental?

To maximise value and minimise cost when renting vehicles, experts advise that fleets should start at the end, not the beginning, by implementing a clear plan to ensure end-of-rental costs, such as damage, are kept to a minimum.

"A consultative approach, based on a knowledge of the business and how the vehicles are used, will help suppliers build solutions with customers as to how end-of-rental charges are agreed," says Andy Bland, head of business rental development, UK and Ireland, at Enterprise Mobility.

"It's something we build over time and that our strategic account managers work with their customers to develop.

"The solution could involve a fixed fee that covers damage within a certain threshold and saves significantly on administration costs on all sides involved in handling the damage."

Enterprise Mobility has created a handheld damage evaluator to assist with this process.

"To give the renter peace of mind, we only charge for damage that exceeds a certain size and this simple tool empowers the branches to make decisions meaning only major repairs are escalated, while the little stuff is just part of wear and tear," adds Bland.

"By setting the parameters upfront, there are no surprises and account management time is spent on driving broader improvements rather than chasing up or discussing charges."

Paul McNeice, commercial director at Europcar Mobility Group UK & Ireland, says driver education must be at the heart of the end-of-rental process.

"Drivers need to take responsibility for the condition of the vehicle they are using – just as they would if it was their own car or van," he adds.

"Drivers ought to bear in mind clean air and ultra-low emission zones, toll roads and speed limits, all

of which can add to end-of-rental charges.

"However, we all know that accidents can happen which is why we have invested in the technology to provide clarity around any additional costs that might be incurred.

"Handheld tech used by our delivery and collection agents captures all the necessary vehicle information in one place as well as enabling customers to provide their electronic signature to accept the information collected.

"At the end of the rental, the images are recalled and matched to the vehicle condition.

"We know this provides fleet managers with the insight they need to manage end-of-rental charges."

All Europcar vehicles are now connected and SMS messages for CAZ, ULEZ, Dartford Crossing and Tyne and Mersey tunnels are sent automatically to drivers to remind them to pay tolls and charges, says McNeice.

Neil McCrossan, managing director at Northgate, stressed the importance of companies making clear to drivers precisely what is expected of them.

"Our vehicle inspection app can be used not only for daily checks, but as a tool to monitor vehicles throughout the hire period," he explains.

"We also offer a 'Safe Driver' programme, which provides expert online courses to both drivers and fleet managers on how they can reduce risks while out on the road.

"Because Northgate maintains customer vehicles through its in-house workshop network, their condition is monitored throughout the rental period.

"This will also help us work with customers to ensure their vehicles are in good condition, mileage is monitored versus the contract to ensure that they don't incur a large end-of-contract bill."

## CHOOSE THE RIGHT TYPE OF RENTAL

Rental can play an important role in an organisation's mobility strategy, when correctly implemented.

All types of rental – from hourly and daily to long-term – can be pivotal. But there are also potential repercussions to making incorrect choices.

Phill Bye, sales director for Switch, says it is important to understand what's available to make an informed decision about the best fit for your fleet.

"The different rental durations are hourly, daily and long-term," he says. "However, there can be some nuances. For example, daily rates are typically set out as one-to-two, three-to-six, >



seven-to-27, and 28 days-plus where the price reduces dependent on the duration of the hire.

“Long-term – or flexi – has a minimum commitment of 28 days and the booking requirements can be more specific such as providing make, model, P11D and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

“Hourly rental is best suited to those who will only require the vehicle for the period they have booked and flexibility is not required as cost can be excessive to extend beyond the initial period.

“Daily rental provides greater flexibility and is perfectly suited for ‘stress purchases’ such as in the event of an accident or a servicing requirement when a replacement is needed.”

Bye adds that long-term – or flexi – is perfect for new employees throughout their probationary period so fleets are not contracted to vehicles on a three-year lease.

This approach is clearly beneficial should the new starter not pass their probation.

“This type of rental is also great for surge requirements such as new contracts that are going live quickly, short-term contracts and as a top-up to existing fleet giving the ability to increase and decrease fleet with ease,” he says.

Bland agrees there will be a different answer for each business.

“It comes down to having detailed knowledge of who needs which vehicles, where, when and for what,” he says.

“A mobility consultant will always be asking questions or wanting more detailed information.

“This curiosity about your business objectives means mobility solutions can be designed with broader company goals in mind, ensuring it

# “it’s only when aggregating data across the business that opportunities start to come to light”

**ANDY BLAND,  
ENTERPRISE MOBILITY**

evolves with the business needs over time.

“Mobility consultants should also bring data to the customer to show if moving from hourly to daily to long-term – or vice versa – might bring a better result for the business and for the employee.”

## **CONSEQUENCES OF GETTING RENTAL WRONG**

There can be cost, employee convenience and carbon emission implications of making ill-informed choices.

“Hourly rental can be considered attractive due to a preconception that it will be more affordable than

short-term rental that bills in 24-hour increments,” says Bye. “However, care should be taken as often extending an hourly rental by even a modest period will increase charges beyond the traditional 24-hour rental cost.

“The trend for hourly rental has dipped due to this and because business user demands are typically for longer durations.

“Renters should consider their needs and book accordingly as not doing so may lead to additional charges, including ‘out-of-hours’ charges.”

Bye says a good quality supplier that accepts bookings starting at 8am – the earliest time booked where an out of hours charge doesn’t apply – will pre-deliver the vehicle so it is in situ for the employee, giving them peace of mind that their travel plans will not be affected.

Where the period of hire needed is 28 days or longer, many rental companies will offer products that reward longer durations with more attractive pricing where drivers can commit to this period from the outset.

Bland adds: “Many businesses only look at user data by department, division or site, but it’s only when aggregating data across the business that opportunities start to come to light.

“Improvement can take many forms. For example, organisations starting to migrate users to EVs can introduce a small number of rentals as part of that process, for the right journeys and the right employees.”

## **GREY FLEET MANAGEMENT**

Rental is widely feted as an ideal way to remove the need for employees to use their own vehicles on





work journeys. But this requires an approach that is as convenient for drivers as is using their own vehicle or a clear travel plan that prioritises rental.

McNeice says Europcar has discovered that four-in-five businesses (81%) still rely on 'grey fleet'. "This presents a range of challenges for businesses, including employee duty of care," he adds.

"The other risk of relying on grey fleet is in the area of sustainability. By relying on typically older grey fleet vehicles, companies are undermining sustainability goals.

"Unfortunately, employers are already facing rising mobility costs so many cannot afford to upgrade or expand their entire fleet to remove the need for grey fleet vehicles.

"In recent years we have seen many of our business customers take a very successful transitional approach, steadily reducing emissions through limiting journeys, alongside testing hybrid and electric alternatives through rental."

Bland says proximity to a branch or car club vehicle is essential to encourage employees to use rental instead of their own car.

"This means the mobility partner must be able to quickly mobilise the right vehicles to get them where they're needed," he adds.

"We always want to understand why a business has grey fleet on its travel policy and why employees choose grey fleet over other options.

"Often, it's a default solution or a habit and something that happens because no one has ever questioned it.

"Convenience is a key factor, but this is offset by growing maintenance costs, fluctuating residual values and a mileage recharge rate that has not changed in line with inflation."

#### RENTAL – AND DECARBONISATION

Rental firms are proactively seeking to support fleets on their wider sustainability journeys.

Quite apart from tailpipe emissions, they are also actively helping businesses move from ownership to usership to reduce environmental impact.

According to the BVRLA's Vehicle Rental

Credentials report, Europcar Mobility Group UK's electrified fleet share is now 14%, which exceeds the rental industry average.

McNeice adds: "We ensure there's the greatest flexibility for businesses that want to get on the EV path. Earlier this year, we launched Flex Model Choice which gives businesses the flexibility of rental with the vehicle model certainty of leasing.

"Specific makes and models from Europcar's comprehensive BEV and PHEV fleet can be booked for rental for a minimum of three months and up to 12 months at a fixed monthly rate, eliminating the long-term commitments and early penalties of leasing. It also means employers can accurately allocate vehicles and forecast benefit-in-kind expenses."

**“Flexible rental is ideal for businesses that need to adapt quickly to changing workloads, contracts, or customer requirements”**

**NEIL MCCROSSAN,  
NORTHGATE**

The commitment Europcar has made to EVs in the past year has resulted in a significant increase in low and zero emissions rentals, from 228,000 rental days in 2023 to more than 1,241,000 in 2024.

Northgate's McCrossan adds that its recently-launched 'Drive to Zero Consultancy' helps fleets identify where EVs can be deployed effectively and affordably.

"We assess things like routes taken, charging feasibility and costs to recommend the right approach, whether that's for a few vehicles or a full fleet transition," he adds.

"We also offer a Drive to Zero suitability analysis – a diagnostic tool that supports moving vehicles across to EV alternatives."

Northgate now offers nearly 20 different types of electric cars, vans and micro mobility vehicles across its network.

#### FLEXIBLE RENTAL

Some fleets have switched from contract hire for their commercial vehicle fleets to flexible rental for the ability to take and return vehicles without having to pay early-termination charges.

So, what are the benefits of this approach? "Flexible rental is ideal for businesses that need to adapt quickly to changing workloads, contracts, or customer requirements," says McCrossan.

"Unlike contract hire, where you're tied into a fixed term, flexible hire allows customers to rent vehicles for as little as one month and return them when no longer needed, without penalties. This reduces the risk of overcommitting to long-term contracts and helps businesses to remain agile.

"Fleets can add or remove vehicles as demand changes, get vehicles on the road quickly, and have all the costs included under one monthly fee."

Bland concludes: "Flexible rental offers financial and balance sheet benefits, liberating capital for other priorities where funds may be required. Speed is another advantage as our flexible solutions are rooted in our daily rental model. It brings all the benefits of short-term hire with the financial value of long-term hire."

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# 'CHANGING PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION HAS BEEN REALLY KEY'

*Renault's taste for nostalgia and a new customer-centric approach is helping to drive up fleet registrations. Gareth Roberts reports*

**T**he return of iconic names from yesteryear, transformed for a new electric age, coupled with a focus on key fleet relationships, have put Renault Group firmly back in the fleet spotlight. The group scooped the title of 'Most Improved Fleet Manufacturer of the Year' for its Renault, Dacia and Alpine brands at this year's Fleet News Awards.

The Renault Mégane E-Tech electric was also named Best Compact Car at the awards, while the Renault Scenic E-Tech electric was 'highly commended' in the Best Mid-Size SUV category.

Plaudits have become the norm, with the reimagined Renault 5 and the Alpine A290 named this year's 'European Car of the Year', following up last year's accolades for the Renault Scenic E-Tech electric.

Success in fleet, meanwhile, has been measured in growing registrations. In 2023, its then newly appointed head of fleet, Justin Costello, declared the ambition to double Renault's 6,000 true fleet sales within 18 months. That goal looks likely to be realised by this year-end.

Costello had outlined his targets for the manufacturer, when he spoke to *Fleet News* three months into the role, in June last year.

Now, after 18 months at the helm, Costello explains that success for Renault's fleet offering has been driven, in part, by a focus on building and strengthening relationships.

"We've really benefited from strong relationships with our leasing partners," he says. "We've got some great relationships with customers, and we've really broadened that by investing in a wider team."

## CUSTOMER FOCUS DRIVES CHANGE

Costello explains it's been about making sure that the fleet team is "fit for the customer and fit for purpose".

Demos have been doubled to help increase brand awareness and Renault has invested in new leasing and dealer portals to enable more effective communications with its customers.

Operations have also been streamlined. He says: "If it's not needed and the customer is not getting benefit from it, why are we doing it?"

Renault has looked at customer feedback and shaped its fleet offering accordingly. "It's not rocket science," Costello continues. "It's real simple things like updating the way in which we share lead times."



Information on individual product has also been condensed from a brochure into a single page of what details fleets, and their drivers, really want and need to know.

Furthermore, customers are presented with product from all of the Group's brands – Renault, Dacia and Alpine – with one point of contact. "It's nothing revolutionary," says Costello. "It's just trying to listen to your customers, tailor what you're doing to their needs and doing it quickly."

There has also been a focus on its dealer network, with Costello highlighting how the manufacturer has been "working closely with key fleet dealer partners". "That's been the glue that's tied everything together," he says.

#### NEW MODELS GIVE RENAULT 11-CAR LINE-UP

The changes have enabled Costello's fleet team to take advantage of an extensive line-up from the Renault, Dacia and Alpine brands.

He explains: "We've managed to leverage a phenomenal product line-up that we've been gifted from Paris – we've really tried to make the most of it."

A string of new launches means the Renault car line-up has been completely refreshed over the past 18 months, with the return of reinvented models plus new additions.

"Mégane, which is still a cracking car, is actually the oldest model in our range," says Costello. "Everything else has been renewed since, which is phenomenal."

He explains: "We've essentially benefited from an entirely new electric vehicle range. All of our hybrids have been refreshed, and we've gone into segments we've never been in before."

Entry-level hybrid in the range is Renault's supermini, the Clio, which Costello says is popular with corporate and public sector customers, followed by Captur, which is on the same platform, then Symbioz and Austral, both mid-size SUVs, and Rafale, an SUV coupé targeting the D-segment, which also comes as a plug-in hybrid with an electric-only range of up to 65 miles and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 12g/km.

"The plug-in hybrid (Rafale) has been really popular in corporate for taxation reasons," says Costello.

An all-new Clio, meanwhile, which was first launched 35 years ago, was unveiled in Munich earlier this month (September).

In terms of its fully electric offering, the reinvented all-electric Renault 5 is currently the brand's smallest electric car, with another of its retro winners, the Renault 4, the slightly bigger and more practical car.

"It's historic," says Costello. "The Renault 4 was always a bigger car... it will confuse customers, and we'll have to educate them – 4 is bigger than 5."

Next in the electric line-up is Mégane and Scenic, while the manufacturer will re-launch the Twingo as a battery electric vehicle (BEV) in the UK next year.

Enthused by the city car's return in fully electric guise, Costello says: "You can expect great driving dynamics, great technology and great value. You can essentially expect what we delivered in 5, but in a smaller package."

Renault's head of fleet is particularly excited how the low price point of the Twingo will give lower paid workers an option through salary sacrifice schemes.

#### RE-INVENTED MODELS CREATE HALO EFFECT

Costello says that the biggest challenge has been brand perception. "People had a view of Renault from the past," he explains.

"They perceived us as a small car brand with Clio, and they might remember Mégane as a petrol.

"Our technology has completely changed since those times. The driver experience, the comfort, the driving dynamics and the range. The fact is that we now go from Dacia Spring all the way up to Renault Master and everything in between.

"Changing people's perception has been really key for us."

It is also about ensuring fleet decision-makers are aware of all the models available. "If you look at our line-up, half of our names are ↻

“like heritage icons,” he continues. “Everyone knows 5 and everyone knows 4, everyone knows Mégane, and everyone knows Scenic.”

“Half of our range are names that people don’t recognise. Most people will not recognise Symbioz. They will not recognise Austral, they will not recognise Rafale. A big job for me and our marketing team is to raise awareness.”

Nevertheless, the re-emergence of models such as the Renault 5, are creating a buzz around the brand and have the potential to have a halo-type effect.

“We’re so excited about (the Renault 5),” says Costello. “Most of our customer feedback is that it’s a great car, not that it’s a great EV; they just say it’s a great car. They almost forget the fact it’s an EV.”

#### ONE-IN-FOUR RENAULT REGISTRATIONS TRUE FLEET

January to September new registration figures for Renault show the manufacturer with overall sales of just more than 39,000 units, a year-on-year increase of 11.7%, equating to a market share of 3.09% – up from 2.8% this time last year.

In fleet, before last March, Costello says Renault was less than 1% market share. “At the moment, we’re on track for 2.5%,” he adds.

“Dacia has got 1%-plus; it used to be 0.5%. We’re now 1%-to-1.5% some months, which is phenomenal.

“And, Alpine has just launched (the A290), but last month, we took more orders and sold more vehicles in fleet than we did in retail.”

Figures for the first half of the year, show that a quarter of its new car sales were true fleet, while private registrations accounted for 40% – two-in-five Renault new car sales. Motability was responsible for around one-in-five (22%) registrations, while rental accounted for almost 10% of Renault’s new car sales.

Symbioz was Renault’s most popular car in true fleet, with more than 2,000 units registered, followed by Scenic (1,759), Traffic Passenger (1,486) and Clio (1,190), which accounted for more than three-quarters of the brand’s 8,300-plus true fleet registrations.

Clio and Captur drove private sales over the same period, accounting for more than half of the 13,000-plus cars Renault registered in this sector.

One-in-four pure fleet registrations were for BEVs, compared with just 3% of retail sales.



Vans due to launch next year. From left: the Estafette, the Golette and the Traffic



Justin Costello (centre) collected the trophy for ‘Most Improved Manufacturer’ at this year’s Fleet News Awards

## Key fleet models

**Renault 5**  
**P11D from** £22,930  
**Emissions** 0%  
 Electric only  
**BIK** 3% (2025/26)  
**Range** up to 250 miles (WLTP)

**Renault 4**  
**P11D from** £26,930  
**Emissions** 0%  
 Electric only  
**BIK** 3% (2025/26)  
**Range** up to 247 miles (WLTP)

**Renault Rafale**  
**P11D from** £37,750 (hybrid)  
**Emissions** from 12g/km (PHEV)  
 Petrol hybrid and plug-in hybrid  
**BIK** 9% (PHEV) (2025/26)  
**Range** up to 564mpg (PHEV) (WLTP)

**Alpine A390**  
**P11D from** unknown  
**Emissions** 0%  
 Electric only  
**BIK** 3% (2025/26)  
**Range** up to 345 miles



## Vans helps drive fleet volume

In terms of Renault Group's overall fleet volume this year, vans will be responsible for half of its registrations.

Its three van line-up, consisting of Kangoo (small), Trafic (medium) and Master (large) all have petrol, diesel or fully electric versions available. "It's a massive part of what we do," says Justin Costello.

However, this will be enhanced further with three new electric vans joining its line-up based on platforms developed by Flexis, including next-generation Trafic.

The Estafette, Goelette and new Trafic are due to launch from next year. Flexis, which is a joint venture between Renault and Volvo, created a skateboard platform to underpin the new vans.

Renault says the new platform represents a "significant advance" in the design of intelligent vehicles, offering flexibility, ergonomics and connectivity, with "virtually infinite" possibilities for customisation.

With a driving range of up to 279 miles, Costello believes that the new Trafic will be a "game-changer".

"We're expecting it to have the same impact on the medium van sector as new Master had on large vans," he says.

Renault Goelette is the chassis-cab version of the new Trafic. With a range of factory conversions and a network of Renault Pro+ certified body shops, it can be adapted to any application.

Renault Estafette, meanwhile, is suited to urban environments. Sliding side doors and a vertical rear curtain make loading easy and safe. Its height allows a 1.90m tall driver to stand upright.

Costello says that Renault has "no concerns" about reaching this year's zero emission vehicle (ZEV) target, requiring 28% of new car sales to be electric, with Renault 5, Mégane and Scenic expected to drive a greater electric mix.

He predicts a "revival" in Scenic, with a new pricing structure bringing the fully electric car underneath the £40,000 expensive car allowance threshold, meaning it escapes the annual VED surcharge – currently £425 – that applies from years two to six after purchase.

Renault Group models have also been approved for the Government's new electric car grant, with the Mégane, 5, 4 and Scenic alongside the Alpine A290, qualifying for the lower of the two discounts available, worth £1,500 of the recommended retail price (RRP).

### DACIA GOING FROM 'STRENGTH-TO-STRENGTH IN FLEET'

Dacia's line-up of Bigster, Duster, Jogger, Sandero and Spring is also gaining traction in fleet. "The step up in quality, dynamics and technology has been huge," says Costello. "Customers are amazed by what Dacia can do along with the value and the quality it delivers.

"The seven-seat Jogger is a cracking product, and the Duster offers both corporate and public sector a 4x4, mid-size SUV at great value."

Dacia launched a commercial vehicle variant of its Spring compact electric car last year, priced from £14,995 (ex VAT).

With the rear seats removed and a mesh bulkhead fitted, the Cargo has a payload of 370kg with 1,085 litres of load space.

### ALPINE CARS MAKING FLEET IMPRESSION

After Alpine entered its electric era with the introduction of the A290 hatchback at the start of the year, it followed up by unveiling the A390.

A new five-door fastback that's set to go on sale before the end of the year, the A390 is billed as a "racing car in a suit".

Fleets were able to get their first glimpse of the BEV with a static display at Company Car in Action (CCIA) in June, while they were able to drive the A290.

"The feedback and the excitement around that car (the A390 at CCIA) was phenomenal," says Costello.

It has similar dimensions to a Polestar 2, providing space for five occupants and a 532-litre boot, while battery capacity is 82kWh – enough for a 345-mile range.

### BUILDING BRANDS AND MOMENTUM

Sales success and new product aside, Costello is clear that having only been in the job 18 months, it's "just the start of the journey".

"It takes longer than that to build brands and build momentum," he says. "We're getting the performance from a sales point of view and from a relationship point of view, but there's a lot more to be done.

"People have not driven 4 yet. They've not driven A390 yet. They've not driven Twingo yet.

"We've got so many more new products to bring to them, to try out and to even further broaden our range."

### NO ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL

He adds: "We'll also continue listening to customers and understanding their differences. Public sector, leasing, corporate, SME, salary sacrifice, they all need different things.

"You cannot go to market as 'fleet'. You have to go to market as those segments, as those categories. There's not a one-size-fits-all approach."

# Driving fleet value:

## How intelligent operations deliver cost control and strategic advantage

Fleet Operations' David Forbes explains how a people-first approach, powered by data and independent thinking, is helping fleets cut costs, manage risk and embrace electrification with confidence

**Fleet managers are under increasing pressure to control costs in today's challenging market. What's your view on how businesses should approach this?**

Fleet cost pressures continue to rise – from volatile residual values and supply chain disruptions to tightening budgets and evolving legislative demands.

But cost control today is no longer just about finding savings in one area. True cost optimisation means reviewing every component of the fleet – from funding and maintenance to downtime and compliance – while still meeting the needs of the wider business.

That's no easy task. Fleet managers must balance cost discipline with the expectations of drivers, HR teams, operational leads and the wider business, while also meeting operational and logistical requirements, particularly when managing van fleets. It's about reducing spend without reducing service.

This is where a joined-up strategy comes in – one that considers total cost of ownership (TCO) over the full vehicle lifecycle.

By combining independent expertise with data-led insights, we help customers pinpoint cost-saving opportunities that align with their operational goals. This might include extending replacement cycles, refining maintenance strategies or exploring unbundled servicing models to release short-term capital.

Risk management also plays a key role. By identifying and addressing issues early – whether compliance gaps, inefficient vehicle use or driver risk – we help customers avoid unexpected costs and operate with greater confidence.

**How is Fleet Operations using data and technology to support clients in achieving cost and efficiency goals?**

Data and technology are at the heart of proactive fleet management. Using our MOVE platform, which incorporates our Driver App, enables drivers and stakeholders to manage their day-to-day fleet activity, while capturing critical data such as vehicle checks and risk information. The data can be transformed into intelligent, timely interventions which

reduces cost and significantly increases operational efficiencies.

Our focus is on using automation to remove the administrative burden from fleet teams, enabling faster, more accurate decision-making. However, while automation and the emergence of AI offer powerful tools, fleet management will always be a people business. Technology should handle the heavy lifting of repetitive tasks, but it's our people's knowledge, relationships and problem-solving expertise that deliver real-world benefits.

We're not using automation to replace people, we're using it to empower them and our customers. Whether that involves flagging cost-saving opportunities or identifying risks before they escalate, we're ensuring our customers are always a step ahead.

**The transition to electric vehicles (EVs) remains a key challenge for many fleets. What role does Fleet Operations play in supporting this journey?**

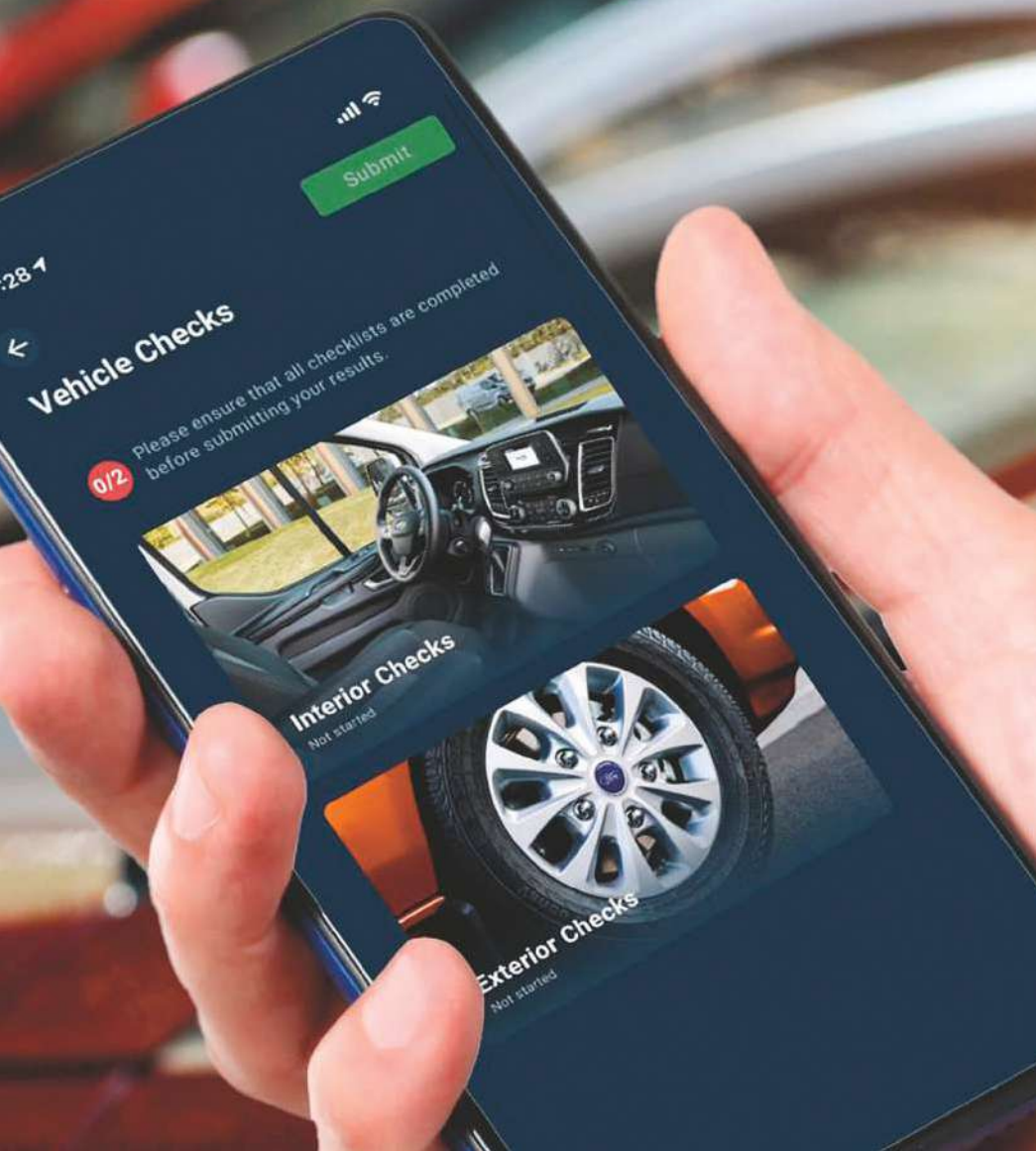
Electrification is one of the most disruptive shifts fleet has faced, and it brings a host of operational and financial challenges.

From managing charging infrastructure and understanding real-world range limitations to navigating the evolving tax landscape, businesses need expert guidance. Our role is to provide that independent, consultative support.

We help customers evaluate when and where EVs are operationally and financially viable, using real data to inform decision-making.

For some fleets, extending vehicle replacement cycles while they wait for technology to mature may be the right strategy. In these cases, we focus on managing costs and mitigating risks associated with vehicles that remain beyond the expected contract period.





We're also seeing a move towards unbundling service and maintenance packages, with pay-as-you-go models delivering significant upfront cashflow benefits. We recently helped a customer implement this strategy across a 170-van order, unlocking more than £150,000 in working capital in the first two years alone. For many businesses this type of financial planning, backed by tangible data, is proving to be vital as they seek ways to optimise costs to support investment in core activities.

**Independence is a core value for Fleet Operations. Why is that so important for your clients?**

Independence is the foundation of everything we do. Working with a wide panel of leasing providers

and manufacturers, our customers can trust our recommendations.

Many businesses remain in long-term supplier relationships. To complement this approach we're increasingly working with organisations that want an independent view on the key financial and operational elements of their fleet – businesses that recognise fresh thinking and objective insights can reveal opportunities and efficiencies which, when applied, can enhance the value of existing sole-supplier relationship.

As fleets face mounting cost pressures and operational complexity, access to independent and unbiased expertise becomes even more critical. We're here to challenge the status quo, simplify complexity and deliver solutions that work for the customer – and the supplier.



Find out more about our range of services, please visit our website [www.fleetoperations.co.uk](http://www.fleetoperations.co.uk)

## MEET THE TEAM BEHIND FLEET OPERATIONS



**David Forbes**  
Operations Director,  
Fleet Operations

David Forbes heads Fleet Operations' 70-strong operations team, overseeing the delivery of award-winning fleet and mobility management services.

Having joined the business more than 12 years ago, his career progression reflects Fleet Operations' commitment to nurturing talent from within. His hands-on experience at every operational level gives him a deep understanding of the day-to-day challenges fleet managers face.

David plays a pivotal role in shaping the company's strategic direction. He has been instrumental in expanding the technical services division and driving service innovations, scaling operations to meet growing customer demand while safeguarding the company's independence and bespoke consultative approach.

A firm advocate of data-driven decision-making, David champions the intelligent use of automation to reduce administrative burdens and unlock actionable insights.

"While automation is key to enhancing efficiency and mining data for deeper insights, fleet management is, at its core, a people-first industry," he says. "Technology should lift the burden of repetitive tasks, empowering our team and our customers to focus on business priorities. But, ultimately, it's our people's knowledge, relationships and problem-solving expertise that delivers real value to our customers."

David's vision centres on simplifying complexity for customers, whether through technology, robust cost control strategies, multi-bid leasing, or navigating EV transition.

His leadership ensures Fleet Operations remains at the forefront of innovation, delivering outcomes that matter – reducing cost, mitigating risk and delivering value-driven solutions.

# ARVAL ON TARGET TO HIT 200,000 FUNDED FLEET THIS YEAR

*Annual growth of 3% to continue as company diversifies into new products/services, according to UK MD Lakshmi Moorthy.*  
**Stephen Briers** reports

**C**hange is the new normal. But we are getting used to handling this.” Amid relentless growth, expansion into multiple mobility products and the impending conclusion of a five-year global strategy, Arval UK managing director Lakshmi Moorthy is also juggling myriad macro and micro geopolitical, regulatory and economic influences that threaten to derail the market.

Trump tariffs on vehicles, the recent Supreme Court ruling on mis-sold car finance and imminent redress scheme, and a cost-of-living crisis are just some of the challenges which require close attention by all leasing companies, while Arval also continues to concentrate on helping customers decarbonise their fleets in a smooth and orderly manner.

Moorthy adds: “Some things do stay the same: customer service, focusing on what’s good for them and also what’s good for employees – that is the constant.”

Five years ago, Arval launched Arval & Beyond, an ambitious global strategic plan to transition from an automotive leasing company to a sustainable mobility specialist. It centred on key themes and performance targets, including electrification, connectivity, flexibility and alternative mobility.

It was due to conclude at the end of 2025, with Arval targeting a global funded fleet of two million; in the UK, that equated to 200,000 vehicles.

Arval UK currently sits at 198,000, up from the 191,000 reported in the November 2025 FN50, putting the goal well within reach.

“We have seen good commercial momentum this year. Corporate fleets are buoyant, aided by salary sacrifice and electrification, as well as cross business opportunities with (parent) BNP Bank,” Moorthy tells *Fleet News* at Arval’s Windmill Hill head office in Swindon.

“We have also signed a lot of white label deals with pure EV manufacturers, which is supporting our growth.”

This includes some of the Chinese new entrants, which are making an immediate impact on the market with their combination of competitive total cost of ownership (partially underpinned by generous discounts), high specification, advanced technology and build quality.

“Fleets are open to new makes and models. The (post-Covid) supply

shortages helped; people were forced to try other brands and that has opened their minds,” Moorthy says.

Arval & Beyond has since been extended by two years with an interim bridging plan, ahead of a new roadmap due to be introduced in 2027.

A key pillar is ‘Good for you, good for all’, focusing on sustainability and electrification.

The UK is one of Arval’s leading markets for the uptake of pure electric cars; they account for more than 35% of its order take this year compared with less than 22% for the entire new car market (SMMT figures).

Its true fleet orders are even higher, at almost 75% (Arval’s fleet-to-private mix is 3:1), compared with 10-15% for retail orders.

“Our focus is to be an enabler, looking at charging solutions for workplace and home by providing infrastructure support and consultancy,” Moorthy adds.

“We are also looking at energy tariffs and a payment card through partnerships with other companies which we will make available through a simple bundled package.”

Against a global target of 25%, almost 30% of Arval’s total fleet of cars and vans are pure electric, although orders for the latter remain in single digits.

## THE LCV SHARE

Light commercial vehicles make up around one third of the fleet, but just 15% of them are full electric. While that is ahead of the market, which lags at 9% year-to-date, Moorthy acknowledges that the figure is “skewed by one large customer”.

She points to three factors that need to “come together” to boost demand for eLCVs.

- Improved supply and diversity of range, something that is starting to happen with new Chinese entrants such as Farizon, and new launches from the likes of Kia.

- Real-world testing of van payloads to dispel myths and provide fleets with all the facts required to make an educated decision. Arval carried out some testing four years ago at Millbrook Proving Ground and is deliberating whether to do another trial with the latest models.

- Incentives such as the plug-in van grant.

“It feels like the market has now stabilised at a new low point, but it can still get spooked”

LAKSHMI MOORTHY





“As well as these three, we also need home, workplace and on-street charging,” Moorthy adds.

Like its leasing rivals, Arval has been challenged by the used market for electric cars, with demand stifled by poor awareness, misconceptions and low incentives. Buyers lack the confidence and motivation to switch.

Consequently, residual values have taken a hit, affecting all leasing company profits.

“It’s a period we need to go through,” says Moorthy. “But we have more information now to write (values) for the future.”

“It feels like the market has now stabilised at a new low point, but it can still get spooked, especially with new EV pricing. We are better placed today because of the diversified mix of models and prices, which will help to protect us.”

Arval was one of the first leasing companies to push into the insurance market via its Arval Total Care proposition, launched a decade ago.

After an initial slow start, the all-in-one package is now building traction with more than a quarter of corporate fleets now opting for the service. It equates to a 400% growth rate over the past four years, with Moorthy claiming a 100% retention rate over that period.

### CONNECTED AND FLEXIBLE

Arval reports varied results with another strand of its Beyond strategy: Connected and Flexible.

The flexible portion, based around mid-term rental, saw strong demand during the post-Covid vehicle supply shortages, but has since eased and is not expected to see much growth.

Connectivity is rising, though, with almost 30% of the Arval fleet connected. The data is now being rolled into Arval Total Care (ATC) with a pilot underway with three large corporate fleets called Connected ATC. A full roll-out is expected next year.

“We take the data coupled with driver safety to influence behaviour in partnership with the fleet manager,” Moorthy says.

“This will drive down costs and increase discounts for Arval Total Care in the future.”

“This is just an example of what we can do with connected data.”

Another example is a downtime reporting tool which launched internally last year, but is not yet available on customer portals.

It collates data from multiple sources and analyses it for themes and learnings; for example, model types, drivers, behaviours, locations, types of work and mileage profiles. The subsequent reports are arming Arval’s consultancy team with the knowledge to enable more informed conversations with major corporate accounts.

Moorthy believes artificial intelligence (AI) will offer an additional edge to fast-track insight from this data.

“AI for LLM (large language model) will be able to process large amounts of data to identify root cause analysis and trends,” she says.

With transition to a mobility provider underpinning the Arval & Beyond strategy, progress has varied by market. The UK has trialled and tested various concepts under the 360 Mobility pillar with mixed results.

The most successful has been the introduction of salary sacrifice, a popular benefits option in the UK. Arval has 12,000 cars on its scheme, with another 2,000 in the order bank.

### INSTANT ACCESS

It has invested in a customer portal for employees to place orders, approved by their employer, offering a retail experience. It is about to make manufacturer retail offers available via the portal, uploaded automatically to instantly give access to the latest deals.

Moorthy describes salary sacrifice as “good for recruitment and retention” and expects to hit 15,000 units this year.

She adds: “Employees have trust via their employer to adopt electric in a way they possibly don’t when going by themselves to a dealer.”

Arval has gone much further than simply offering funding variations for cars; by prioritising last mile, it has several alternative options available, including eCargo bikes and micromobility assets.

An e-commerce company has been piloting a fleet of 100 eCargo bikes based at city hubs across five UK locations and is now expected to expand the fleet with another 30-40 bikes. Other companies are also interested in trialling the bikes, offered on a lease with maintenance contract.

“They are happy with it; it’s working for them,” Moorthy says. “But demand for alternative mobility has been lower than expected in the UK, and lower than other European countries.”

“UK fleets are dabbling with new types of vehicles, but demand is not huge; we will scale at their pace.”

She adds: “I’m confident there will be a tipping point. Government regulation may play a role in helping the market to mature.”

Arval also offers keyless car sharing via an app, whereby a pool of nominated drivers can access the vehicles. Built for an e-commerce provider, it currently offers 300 vehicles, but will be scaled to between 1,000 and 2,000 this year.

One option that will not be taken forward is mobility cards. Widespread in Europe, Arval considered it for the UK, but it was shelved due to lack of interest.

“Perhaps they are all focused on the electric transition,” suggests Moorthy.

Another slow burner is Arval ReLease, its second life leasing product which has now rebranded as AutoSelect. Demand from fleets has been low, likely because of the aggressive level of discounting for new cars, but there is growing interest from the retail market.

There were also complications to resolve, particularly on the logistics front.

“We are set up for new, but ReLease requires a different process on logistics,” Moorthy says. “We had complaints, so we had to slow down and address those issues. Brokers and dealers had to get comfortable selling it.”

### HOLDING OFF ON VANS

Around 4,000 ex-fleet cars have gone through the books, offered as lease or purchase, with interest picking up.

“We’re not doing vans yet,” says Moorthy. “That would be a step-change because of downtime and also the quality of the vans, which are typically older and with higher mileages due to the early supply shortages.”

Since Covid, Arval has outpaced FN50 growth with an annual compound rate of 3%. Moorthy says that, captives aside, only one other leasing company can claim that level of consistent growth.

“Our goal is to maintain and increase our market share with growth in the region of 3-3.5%, possibly 4%,” she says.

Key to this is the empowerment of Arval employees to solve customer issues. Every member of staff has been trained on protecting vulnerable customers, whether retail or corporate, an example of Arval ensuring its culture and ethos is spread across the business.

It has also evaluated service performance and in some instances, such as accident management, brought the service in-house.

“We did root cause analysis and customer journey management and found that accident management was a key moment of truth, but it was the lowest customer satisfaction area in the business,” Moorthy says.

“We had to take action to increase the level of quality.”

## Shining a spotlight on diversity

Lakshmi Moorthy is a strong proponent of diversity, inclusion and equity. She believes the UK is “quite good at this compared with other countries” but also suggests ways in which employers and the media can further improve conditions.

“You need to shine a spotlight on the wonderful people we have in fleet,” she says. “There are lots of strong women – let them tell their stories.”

Moorthy also points to common ‘drop-off’ points which result in women leaving employment.

1. Maternity policies: make return to work easier and have a structured return to work programme with support on how to navigate it. Arval has refreshed its policies for women and men.



2. Understand the impact of the menopause and ensure there is adequate knowledge and support, including peri- and early menopause.
3. Introduce flexible and hybrid working which makes work more accessible and welcoming to more people.
4. Introduce affinity groups where people can feel more comfortable talking about their experiences.

However, above all, “diversity doesn’t happen by chance so write it into your HR policies”, she adds.

“Communicate the policies, train managers on how to handle them and hold people accountable.”

# 5 mins with...

## Claire Evans, Consultancy Director at Zenith

Claire Evans leads the consultancy function and public affairs activities within Zenith, the UK's leading independent leasing, fleet management and vehicle outsourcing business. With a career in the industry spanning 20 years, and as a passionate driver of Zenith's ESG agenda, Claire works actively within the industry to position the role fleet can play in delivering the net zero agenda along with assisting operators of fleets to navigate and reap the benefits of an increasingly dynamic environment.

### What are the biggest industry topics you and your team are discussing right now?

The pace of change has never been faster, take the impact of the recently announced electric car grant and introduction of an Advisory Electric Rate for public charging. Both of these involve working through the detail and understanding and sharing the impact they will have on lease costs and customer policies. While it's positive to see initiatives like these being launched to support the transition, we're closely monitoring how the market responds and what influence it will have on driver choice.

I'm also working with the BVRLA on its budget asks, focusing on ways to support the used market. This includes a suggested improvement to the way benefit-in-kind is calculated for used cars. The current system does not distinguish a new or used car benefit. This means anyone choosing a used EV pays as much tax as someone in a new model. Moving to a targeted discount in benefit value for used EVs would be fairer, as well as making zero-emission vehicles more affordable to a wider population of drivers.

### What are the challenges currently facing fleet managers?

Again, there are so many areas of focus for fleet managers, but the electrification



"There are so many areas of focus for fleet managers, but the electrification of fleets is a constant"

of fleets is a constant. While we know the majority of new BEV sales are through fleets, there's increasing demand from our corporate customers to support them with greater adoption and finding ways to make EVs more affordable. Improving access to electric through used salary sacrifice schemes achieves these aims along with establishing a healthy used market which benefits both new and used EV drivers so we're excited to be launching our own used salary sacrifice scheme.

For drivers who are concerned about safety, reliability and practicality of a used EV over petrol and diesel, leasing provides a risk averse way to make the switch. By including maintenance, servicing, and tyre replacements, as well as insurance and breakdown cover, along with the benefits of affordable shorter-term contracts, drivers have more confidence in the quality of a used EV.

### Your role also covers commercial fleets – how are customers approaching the transition?

Whilst there is interest from customers to transition their large commercial vehicles to a more sustainable option the reality is that we are yet to see zero emission vehicles in the market that tick all the boxes of being affordable and practical to operate at scale.

While there are less viable zero-emission vehicles available to commercial fleets, the conversation with these customers is still very proactive, looking for ways to explore new technologies and utilise renewable fuels. We maintain a dialogue with many bodies, sharing our data and insight, and working collaboratively on solutions that can help to eliminate risk from operators and ignite the transition.

# Coastr sets sights on 100,000-vehicle milestone

The 'real opportunity' lies with vehicle-as-a-service technology, says company founder.  
*Tom Seymour* reports

**E**dinburgh-based mobility technology business Coastr is accelerating plans to scale its platform to manage more than 100,000 vehicles, as it targets rapid growth with leasing companies, rental providers and automotive partners.

Coastr began life in 2018 as a rental software start-up before evolving into a software as a service (SaaS) mobility platform.

Its software enables businesses to manage mobility services from a single system, covering everything from daily rental and flex fleet to courtesy cars and subscription-style models.

Founder and chief executive Biswajit Kundu Roy says the company was borne out of frustration with outdated technology in the sector and his own experiences with travel.

"When I looked at the rental fleet management space in 2018, the technology was archaic," he explains.

"Seven years on, many of our competitors are still operating with legacy systems that make it hard to innovate. We saw the opportunity to create something cloud-based, modular and integrated from the ground up."

Initially targeting independent operators who were underserved by existing platforms, Coastr has since expanded its operations into the corporate fleet and leasing market.

The company now works with more than 100 customers worldwide, including automotive technology solutions provider Epyx, as well as a top five UK leasing company.

Fleet volumes are rising quickly. A year ago, the platform managed around 20,000 vehicles. Now, with larger customers coming on board, Coastr expects to reach between 60,000 and 70,000 vehicles in the next 12 months, with the potential to pass the 100,000 mark.

Coastr operates with a small team of around 40, including a 10-strong UK team and a larger product engineering and support base in India.

Roy says this technology-first approach and retaining a start-up mentality has allowed Coastr to compete with much larger rivals while expanding into more than 10 countries.

## BREAK FLEET SOFTWARE SILOS

Roy claims that many existing fleet technology providers have grown by bolting on piecemeal solutions, leading to fragmented operations.

He says: "Most platforms have been built in silos, which creates complexity and manual work.

"We made a conscious choice to be the core platform that integrates everything, with a curated marketplace of partners who fit naturally into a fleet operator's ecosystem."

This approach has enabled Coastr to move beyond operational management into full asset lifecycle control.

Its asset lifecycle management module supports the journey from procurement to de-fleeting, integrating with remarketing platforms and using artificial intelligence (AI) to optimise fleet planning, predict purchasing needs and automate damage detection and cost estimation.

## LEVERAGING CONNECTED VEHICLES

From its earliest days, Coastr has invested in connected car technology, integrating directly with original equipment manufacturer (OEM) application programming interfaces (APIs) to enable digital, contactless rental experiences without hardware retrofits. This capability has been a key differentiator in winning business, with leasing companies and rental providers using Coastr as a white label solution to augment their own offerings to fleet customers.

Roy sees connected data, automation and AI as central to the next phase of fleet management.

He says: "Our goal is to give operators real-time insight into utilisation and cost so they can make better decisions about when to retain or release assets. That is the kind of intelligence the market has been missing."

## SUPPORTING CHANGING BUSINESS MODELS

While the hype around consumer car subscriptions has faded, Roy believes flexible access models remain highly relevant, particularly for corporates.

"Subscription as it started was really just flexible leasing, often targeted at retail customers who were unwilling to pay the premium.

"The real opportunity is vehicle as a service, giving customers access for any duration they need at a price that reflects that period. That is what our platform enables, whether it is daily rental, flex fleet or subscription."

This flexibility also supports the industry's transition to electrification.

Although EV adoption has been uneven in rental and commercial fleets, Roy believes technology can help operators target the right segments, match vehicles to demand and improve utilisation so fewer assets are needed overall.

"The climate agenda means electrification is non-negotiable. But it is not just about replacing petrol cars with electric ones. We have to change habits and focus on asset sharing, utilisation and circularity."



Coastr founder  
and chief executive  
Biswajit Kundu Roy

# Women *wanted*

Women remain under-represented in fleet decision-maker roles because often they don't realise they have the transferable skills needed or what a rewarding career it could be. *Sarah Tooze* reports

Imagine if a job advert for a fleet-decision-maker asked potential candidates: do you want a role where you can help reduce air pollution for future generations? Or: do you want to make the roads safer and help people get home to their loved ones each night?

What if the role also promised variety, that you could flex your hours, and that, in time, you could earn a high salary (experienced fleet-decision-makers, responsible for major fleets, can potentially earn more than £100,000)?

What if the business was looking for you to be a people person, organised, good at multi-tasking, and with the ability to think on your feet and flex your plans?

And they don't expect you to know the ins and outs of how a gearbox works.

That's the kind of job advert that might make more women consider becoming a fleet decision-maker.

At the moment, many women think they don't have the right skillset or don't find the automotive industry appealing or don't even realise the role exists.

As a result, only a quarter of fleet decision-makers on the *Fleet News* database are women.

Yet there are prominent female fleet leaders who are responsible for hundreds or, in some cases, thousands of vehicles and who say they "love" working in fleet. Often they have moved into the role from a different department and, once they've made the switch to fleet, they haven't looked back.

## FLEET MANAGERS DON'T NEED A MECHANICAL BACKGROUND

Sarah Gilding, head of joint vehicle fleet management at South Yorkshire Police (SYP) and South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue, has been a fleet manager since 2006 after moving from SYP's criminal justice department. She says: "I haven't got a mechanical background and, when I started, I worried about my lack of technical knowledge. But I've brought other skills to the job. You have to run a fleet like a business – you need to be cost-effective."

What Gilding appreciates most about fleet is that it enables the police and fire crew to do their jobs.

"You can see the direct impact you're having

when you see the vehicles out on the road, responding to an emergency," she says.

Gilding overcame her initial worries about the mechanical side by having experts for different areas within her team, and she has developed her fleet knowledge by obtaining a diploma in car fleet management from the ICFM (now the Association of Fleet Professionals – AFP).

She has also gained from reading *Fleet News* and networking with other fleet managers through the National Association of Police Fleet Managers (NAPFM) and the Fleet200.

She is a founding member of the *Fleet News* Empowering Women in Fleet (EWiF) initiative, which launched this year to champion, celebrate and elevate the achievements of women working across every part of the fleet sector.

"There is a huge 'family' out there – I've never met another fleet manager who hasn't been willing to offer advice," she says.

Lucy Stuart, head of fleet and logistics at energy distribution company Cadent and another founding member of EWiF, did not set out to have a fleet career either. Her background was in project management, transition and risk management. She initially only accepted the fleet role on an interim basis at the start of 2024.

"Originally, my biggest challenge was thinking I needed to know everything, especially the acronyms and abbreviations," she says.

"The first week I thought 'oh no, what have I done?' But now I absolutely love it! You don't need to know everything, you just need to know 'enough' and to have a good team that can support you with the answers."

## 'NO TWO DAYS ARE THE SAME'

What Stuart, and so many others, enjoy about working in fleet is that "no two days are the same".

For example, one day you could be working out your future energy requirements based on when you are replacing diesel vehicles with electric ones, the next you could be meeting with company car and van drivers to discuss driver wellbeing.

Leah Lindsay, fleet and employee benefits







“Originally, my biggest challenge was thinking I needed to know everything”

LUCY STEWART



“When I started, I worried about my lack of technical knowledge”

SARAH GILDING



“It’s important to showcase different women in fleet to inspire others to join”

RACHEL BABB



manager at MWH Treatment and a founding member of EWiF, who has been in fleet management for the past 20 years, says: “Fleet is one of those roles that flies under the radar, but it’s actually really rewarding and full of variety. You get to work with people across the whole business, solve real problems every day, and make a big impact on how things run behind the scenes.

“It’s definitely not just about vehicles, it’s about planning, budgeting, sustainability and people. There’s a lot of responsibility, but also a lot of opportunities to grow and learn. And with the shift toward electric vehicles (EVs) and greener transport, it’s becoming an even more exciting space to be in.”

Unusually, Lindsay consciously chose a fleet career in her 20s. She was selling vehicle accessories to manufacturers, large dealership groups and a wide range of fleet managers with sizeable fleets when she realised that fleet management was the direction she wanted to pursue.

“The work/life balance in sales wasn’t ideal, and I was looking for a bit more stability. A client I had been working with approached me and asked if I would consider helping them manage their small fleet. I took the opportunity and I’ve been in fleet management ever since,” she says.

Similarly, Laura Holloway, category buyer – fleet at National Grid, has a sales background, including working in advertising sales at *Fleet News* and as a fleet sales manager at Polestar.

She was approached by former client, Lorna McAtear, head of fleet

at National Grid, to join her procurement team.

Holloway says: “I don’t have procurement qualifications, but Lorna identified my transferable skills. I already had relationships with car manufacturers, leasing companies and other fleet suppliers, which stand me in good stead for the role.”

McAtear adds: “The recruitment pool for fleet roles is bigger than some people might think.”

#### WHY NOW IS THE TIME TO JOIN FLEET

McAtear, also a founding member of EWiF, has been in fleet since 2008, having initially worked as an IT project manager. She believes now is the best time to become a fleet decision-maker because the role is evolving.

“Even those of us who started on the zero emission vehicle journey years ago are still learning because it’s constantly changing, and that’s what makes it easier for people who have never done fleet to get into fleet,” she says.

“If you’ve got the right attitude and you can matrix manage or project manage or you’ve got a passion for sustainability or digital there’s a fleet role for you because fleet teams need to get bigger – we need data analysts because of AI and the data we use, for example.”

National Grid’s UK fleet department is made up of seven women and six men. Encouragingly, two female graduates, Hind Ballali and Rachel Babb, actively chose to work in fleet, having completed placements in the department as part of National Grid’s procurement graduate scheme. Both have been inspired by McAtear.

Ballali sees fleet as a great career because of the transition to EVs and net zero.

“You feel like you’re part of something mean-



“You feel like you’re part of something meaningful”

**HIND BALLALI**



“I don’t have procurement qualifications, but Lorna identified my transferable skills”

**LAURA HOLLOWAY**



“The recruitment pool for fleet roles is bigger than some people might think”

**LORNA McATEAR**

ingful; fleet is so much more than administration,” she says.

Babb says: “It’s important to showcase different women in fleet to inspire others to join and see how they might have a similar career path.”

Stuart agrees, having seen more women apply for operational roles at Cadent following its Shattering Stereotypes campaign, which filmed women doing stereotypical ‘male’ roles, such as frontline engineers.

Both McAtear and Gilding have made presentations to school or college students to show that there are roles beyond the mechanical side.

At a SYP recruitment event held last year the fleet department showcased both police and fire service fleet roles.

This, combined with Gilding’s talk at Barnsley College, has led to an uplift in female applicants.

#### **SUPPORTING WOMEN ALREADY IN FLEET**

Equally as important as attracting women to fleet is supporting women already working in the sector to develop their careers.

Deloitte’s Industry study *2025: Driving diversity and inclusion for women in the automotive industry* identifies the need for women to have a sponsor – a

senior leader who uses their influence to create opportunities for an individual. This is seen as the main factor that could help women reach leadership positions in automotive.

This is where men in the fleet industry could have a big impact as male sponsors can be women’s biggest allies.

Organisations also need to have family-friendly policies and support groups to help women at different stages of their life.

Cadent, for example, is an accredited menopause-friendly employer.

It has a menopause support group set up by Stuart, which provides a safe space to talk about how they are feeling, all line managers undergo menopause e-learning plus private consultations with a doctor trained in menopause are available on a salary sacrifice scheme.

“There are so many factors that can happen during working women’s lives, so having the right support is key to retaining and also recruiting the best women,” Stuart says.



## **Empowering women in fleet**

*Fleet News* launched EWiF earlier this year to champion, support and celebrate the achievements of women in the fleet sector. Sponsored by Novuna Vehicle Solutions, Sortimo and Volvo, EWiF is based around four annual networking and learning events, including one at Fleet & Mobility Live. To join EWiF, go to [www.ewif.uk](http://www.ewif.uk)

# The AFP Fleet Academy guide to people

Working with colleagues is a fundamental part of fleet management. Here, the AFP Fleet Academy shares its thinking on engaging stakeholders effectively

It's tempting to focus on the vehicles. That is, after all, a fleet manager's job. Get them running like clockwork and you've cracked it.

As well as being a rather huge oversimplification of the role, that approach skips over an enormous aspect of it: people – specifically, drivers and stakeholders. Even the most efficient manager can only expect to get so far if they ignore the human element, and effective communication and engagement with colleagues are central tools in a good operator's arsenal.

#### FROM STARTER TO CEO: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION FOR ALL

"Whether you're a CEO or a bricklayer, you need to be able to understand whatever information the fleet sends you, so we need to talk to both of them," explains Matt Neale, AFP board director, AFP Fleet Academy trainer – and the 2025 Fleet News Fleet Manager of the Year.

A 2024 survey by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) claimed 18% of adults in England had literacy levels at or below those of a five-to-seven-year-old and those people need support in the workplace.

It's easy to baulk at such statistics, but they are reminders to fleets that information needs to be presented in a clearly digestible form that's appropriate for its audience – however broad.

"It's about making it accessible and easily understandable," adds Neale. "When you're putting out information or requests for information, people switch off if you make it unreadable. It might mean you need to add more diagrams and pictures than words. You can write a comprehensive fleet policy, get sign off by the board and everybody thinks it's great, but can people actually read, digest and understand it? That's why we've started to break ours down into bite-sized snippets and videos."

#### KNOW YOUR DRIVERS: ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

E-mails or the company intranet might work well for office-based employees, but there is no guarantee they are as effective a means of disseminating information to field-based drivers.

"We stick all the information on our intranet, because everybody puts everything on there," says



Neale of his own fleet, Platform Housing Group. "But the thing is, the driver jumps in their van – and they might be an electrician, a carpenter or whatever their trade is – and the only access they have to the business is reading an iPad, so the intranet is probably not the most easily accessible place for them.

"All of our drivers have access to a driver app, so we convert any information they need into little PDFs and load them onto that, so it's all in one place. It's like a one-stop shop for them."

Neale concedes that apps and digital communication don't suit everyone, particularly in a multi-generational blue-collar environment.

"We've got such a diverse range of drivers," he explains. "Some are young, coming into the business as apprentices, some are in their 60s and they might be, say, bricklayers. You shouldn't assume or categorise people, but you should ask yourself how you communicate with all effectively.

"I've had first-hand experience with this. A brickie came up to me with his app, and said, 'can you just sort this thing out? I'm a bricklayer, I'm close to retirement, I don't know what to do with it and you're asking me to click all these buttons. I don't understand it'.

"I sat down with him and explained it, and he was so grateful. We obviously hadn't made it easy – for

## Information needs to be presented in a clearly digestible form that's appropriate for its audience

him – even though we thought we had. You need to ask yourself: is it really clear, is it accessible enough and can everybody actually read it and digest it?"

### STAKEHOLDERS: ADAPTABILITY IS KEY

Effective communication and engagement apply just as much to stakeholders as to drivers and, in

addition to their core management role, fleet operators may increasingly find themselves in leadership positions. AFP Fleet Academy training consultant, Peter Eldridge, is a big advocate of situational leadership, which comprises four approaches designed to support colleagues based on the task at hand and their level of skill.

"The fundamentals are directing, coaching, supporting and delegating," he explains. "If you think of somebody new going into fleet, maybe straight out of university, they don't know too much at that point, but they might be high on commitment, so you've got to adapt your leadership style to match where they are. They'll need to be motivated, and they'll need guidance and steerage, so a directing style would work with that kind of employee.

"But there's a time limit on that, because they're going to move up to the next level and gain more competence and experience. Potentially, they might have a bit less commitment, because that initial excitement of, 'I've got a new job; I want to do well,' is beginning to wear off. If you get through all four stages, and they're very high on competence and on commitment, they're probably not going to take too kindly to a directing style. What they'll want is much more of a delegation style, because they'll want to be trusted."

Join Peter Eldridge at Fleet & Mobility Live on 8 October for an exclusive guide to the fundamentals of fleet management

## The five best – and worst – listening habits, by the AFP's Peter Eldridge

### BEST

- **Eye contact:** it proves you're paying attention.
- **Pause:** give people time to absorb what's been said.
- **Observe reactions:** what are your colleagues' body language and facial expressions saying?
- **Control the pace:** too slow, and they'll lose interest; too quick, and they'll get lost.
- **Talk the same language:** meeting people on their level makes them comfortable.

### WORST

- **Daydreaming:** you get a lot of this on virtual calls.
- **Undervaluing:** assuming the person you're talking to doesn't have a clue or is saying things of no importance.
- **Mind reading:** how can you know what someone thinks if you haven't asked them?
- **Thinking ahead:** skipping to the next topic overlooks what a colleague is telling you now.
- **Point scoring:** this is, quite simply, the worst of them all.



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A SPECIAL REPORT BROUGHT TO YOU BY **FleetNews**



# THE AA – A 120-YEAR HERITAGE OF INNOVATION

How The AA is innovating to assist fleet customers in decarbonising and achieving zero emissions, ensuring a high standard of driver behaviour and maximising their overall value and performance

In association with



# Key milestones of The AA



1905

1906

1912

1920s

1920

1951

## Founding of The AA

Formed on 29 June 1905 by a group of motorists to help drivers avoid police speed traps. Originally called the Motorists' Mutual Association, it quickly became The Automobile Association

## The AA salute and speed trap warnings

AA patrols used a salute system to discreetly warn members of police speed traps. This practice became iconic and symbolised The AA's early advocacy for motorists

## Introduction of The AA hotel star ratings

The AA began inspecting and classifying hotels, introducing the now-famous star rating system, which remains a trusted standard in UK hospitality

## Deployment of The AA sentry boxes

More than 600 sentry boxes were installed across the UK, offering members shelter, supplies and a direct line to The AA's headquarters. These became a symbol of roadside assistance

## First roadside petrol pumps

The AA pioneered the installation of roadside petrol pumps, making refuelling more accessible for early motorists

## Royal endorsement and presidency

HRH The Duke of Edinburgh became president of the AA, marking the beginning of a long-standing relationship with the Royal family. The AA-owned BSM driving school even taught Queen Elizabeth II to drive





1961

1973

1986

1999

2020

2024

**Introduction of four-wheeled patrol vans**

The iconic yellow AA minivans replaced motorcycles, enhancing the efficiency and comfort of roadside patrols

**Launch of The AA Relay service**

A major innovation in breakdown recovery, the Relay service allowed vehicles to be transported anywhere in the UK, not just repaired on the spot

**Command and control centre goes paperless**

Breakdown calls taken at The AA operation centre begin digital transition as computers help improve the speed of patrol attendance. System is a precursor to the 'AAHELP' systems used today

**Online route planner launch**

The AA brought its route planning services online, revolutionising how drivers navigated the UK. It served more than a million routes within six months

**Support during the Covid-19 pandemic**

The AA's patrols supported ambulance services across the UK, ensuring emergency vehicles stayed operational during a national crisis

**Launch of electric vehicle fleet**

The AA's breakdown services and driving schools begin using electric vehicles across the fleet to help rescue drivers at the roadside, while preparing new drivers for the changing automotive landscape



# Innovating to be Always Ahead with support for modern fleets

**M**odern fleets are experiencing a period of unprecedented change. In an already unpredictable business environment, fleet managers are facing a sector-wide shift away from internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles amid calls for greater sustainability, along with a need for proactive and more insightful vehicle and driver management.

In the face of such challenges, The AA combines 120 years of experience in fleet management and technological development with its 'Always Ahead' approach to deliver a range of innovative solutions.

*Fleet News* spoke to Paul Kirby, managing director of EV Essentials, commercial vehicle expert and founder of the EV Café, about how The AA has established itself as a trusted presence in fleet for more than a century, and how this heritage informs its current strategy of leading through innovation.

## A WEALTH OF EXPERTISE

As of 2025, The AA has been campaigning for drivers for 120 years. The organisation runs more than 2,600 patrols on UK roads and offers end-to-end services for businesses on a 24/7 basis, all year-round. This level of experience and engagement puts The AA in a prime position to understand the current priorities of fleets across the UK.

Kirby says: "The AA is able to serve fleets really well because it is a fleet in its own right. There is such variety and diversity across The AA's fleet that it is able to fully understand what's going on in the fleet world."

The AA's approach is summed up in two words: 'Always Ahead'.

Rather than simply providing services for existing issues, the organisation leverages insights from fleets across the UK to identify where the sector is headed and then develop innovations that prioritise customers and their upcoming needs.

## TRANSITION TO ZERO-EMISSIONS

Fleets are experiencing a paradigm shift towards decarbonisation as customers and regulations – such as the government's Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Mandate – are increasingly calling for an industry-wide transition to zero-emission vehicles.

Kirby comments: "Over the next 10 years, we are going to change everything we've been doing for well in excess of 100 years. We have been used to relying on ICE for many a year. But now we are changing, and the scale of change is something we've never seen before in the transport sector."

The AA supports fleets as they decarbonise and transition away from ICE vehicles, offering insights and practical solutions to reduce emissions.

"Transport doesn't necessarily need to be electric," Kirby notes.

"It most likely will be electric, but we are going to be moving to a different way of doing things."

The AA has adopted an innovative approach of 'test, learn and scale' with electric vehicles (EVs) and alternative fuel sources, such as hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO).

Kirby says: "It has HVO and EV in its fleet, has tested hydrogen; and it's starting to utilise AI to support fleets and their breakdowns. The reality is that The AA is leading and others can look at where it gets the wins."

The testing processes also benefits The AA's fleet customers in a more academic sense.

Any insights are captured and compiled, before being made available as specialised yellow papers.

This strategy enables greater confidence from The AA's fleet customers as they can act on real-world data that demonstrates the impact of any recommended solutions.



### FLEET MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

Vehicle management and maintenance are familiar concerns for any modern fleet and are passed on to fleet service providers. The ideal for any fleet manager would be a service that can identify problems before they could happen.

Kirby comments: "Many people talked about being able to do this. But nobody actually delivered on it."

The AA has developed a new solution that incorporates cutting-edge artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning to deliver predictive and proactive vehicle insights.

The solution provides fleet managers with a unified platform for managing fuel and vehicle health, with alerts for potential issues that enable significant reduction in vehicle downtime, and behavioural insights that allow for greater management of driver performance.

Kirby says: "It's able to understand what's going on in a vehicle based on different sensors, incorporate different elements that have gone wrong in the past, and bring all of that together to the point where you can predict where something's going to happen with that vehicle. You can begin to identify trends and things that happen, and then you can intervene with confidence."

By developing innovations that incorporate AI and automation, The AA empowers its fleet customers to make strategic decisions – based on accurate and real-time data – that maximise driver performance and vehicle management.

"It's very forward-thinking," Kirby says.

"To be able to deliver a solution that keeps vehicles on the road even more than they do today. Not being reactive but instead, proactive."

### UNLOCKING DEVELOPMENT FOR FLEET DRIVERS WITH DRIVETECH AND HALO

Drivers, already crucial to any fleet's operations as vehicle operators, are also relied upon to be public-facing representatives for their fleets. This requires a high standard of work and behaviour, which must be maintained – both on the road and in an ever-shifting business environment with frequently evolving regulations and equipment.

Drivetech, a driver training solution from The AA, provides drivers and fleet managers with a suite of products and services designed to reduce risk and ensure safer driving.

Kirby comments: "I think Drivetech is able to support drivers in improving, adopting new technology and new practices to really think about how they're driving."

The AA is further innovating its Drivetech service with new resources for eco-driver training and sustainability practices, and the HALO platform – a centralised source of data, products and services.

Kirby explains: "HALO is really about getting under the skin of the driver behaviour, providing insights to fleet managers and drivers, so they can confidently introduce changes that make everybody safer."

### DELIVERING CONFIDENCE THROUGH FORWARD-FACING INNOVATION

With its focus on innovation, guided by a 120-year heritage of supporting drivers and their vehicles, The AA is always working to develop the latest solutions and strategies for the fleet sector.

"The AA has proven that it is looking at every option," Kirby notes.

"It has HVO in its fleet, hydrogen, and EV; it's starting to utilise AI to support fleets and their breakdowns. The reality is that The AA is leading and others can look at where it gets the wins."

With its willingness to innovate and trial new practices or technologies, The AA does a great deal to raise the confidence of developing fleets – particularly in areas of modernisation or decarbonisation – while also establishing a robust fleet strategy that can serve as a template for the wider market.



**"We have been used to relying on the internal combustion engine for many a year. But now we are changing, and the scale of change is something we've never seen before in the transport sector"**

Paul Kirby, MD of EV Essentials

**[www.theaa.com/business](http://www.theaa.com/business)**  
**[www.drivetech.co.uk](http://www.drivetech.co.uk)**

# Healthy competition: How telematics-based driver reward programmes are driving fleet performance

**I**mproving driver behaviour is one of the biggest levers for enhancing safety and efficiency in fleet operations. Of course, vehicle technology, compliance checks and maintenance schedules all play their part, but the way a driver handles a van or truck on the road has a direct impact on costs, risk and company reputation.

This is where telematics-based driver reward programmes are proving invaluable, using telematics data not only as a monitoring tool – but as a way to actively engage drivers and incentivise better performance.

## From policing to positive reinforcement

Telematics is often been viewed as a “big brother” system by drivers, in that it monitors and flags up instances of speeding, harsh braking, or excessive idling. While these insights are essential, relying on them purely for discipline and additional mandatory training can fuel the negative perception and create driver resistance to the technology.

Increasingly, however, forward-thinking fleets are using the same telematics data to recognise and reward positive driving behaviours through driver reward programmes, and this is certainly something we’re seeing adopted by fleet operators partnering with Trakm8. When safe driving behaviours, economical fuel use, or consistent compliance is highlighted, drivers see that their professionalism is valued.



## Measuring and incentivising good driver behaviour

One effective approach is the use of driver scorecards, turning complex data into clear, easy-to-understand dashboards for the drivers. Trakm8 Insight's driver scoring system, powered by our RH600 4G dashcam with integrated telematics and ACC750 driver feedback device, enables drivers to instantly understand their performance. It also allows fleet managers to effortlessly identify and reward top-performing drivers.

These rewards can be anything from simply recognition of best performing drivers in front of their peers, to prize vouchers, additional annual leave or cash bonuses. The transparency of the data ensures drivers trust that rewards are fair and earned.

## Evolve driver behaviour metrics with fleet priorities

What's more, having a wealth of different performance data at their fingertips within Trakm8 Insight allows fleet managers to tweak incentives as fleet priorities evolve. For example, when first implementing the system if your biggest challenge is a high accident rate, you

might focus the incentives entirely around safety scores.

But, after some time, if accident rates become consistently low, you might tweak the incentives to focus more on engine idling and/or harsh acceleration events to drive down fuel costs.

## Gamification and healthy competition

Trakm8 Insight allows fleet managers to create automatically updated leaderboards and league tables to share with drivers, so they can see how they are performing against their peers. This promotes transparency and fosters a fun, competitive environment – motivating all drivers to improve their scores and, ultimately, fleet performance.

## Driving lasting behavioural change

Of course, safety compliance will always require some level of top-down discipline if drivers are not complying. But, by shifting from a purely discipline-based mindset to one focused on recognition and incentives, fleet managers can use data to drive lasting behavioural change. The result? A safer, more efficient fleet, motivated drivers, reduced driver turnover and measurable improvements to the bottom line.

## Ready to take your fleet performance to the next level?

Discover driver incentivisation and gamification powered by **Trakm8 Insight**. Visit: [www.trakm8.com](http://www.trakm8.com)  
Email: [info@trakm8.com](mailto:info@trakm8.com)

# Fleet Choices

Helping you to select the best car and van models to meet your fleet requirements

Group test

**Kia EV9, Peugeot E-2008,  
Volvo XC90, VW ID Buzz** p92



**10 of  
the best...**

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coming soon** p90

**400 is the magic  
number** p100

How far does an electric car  
need to be able to travel?



# New cars and vans coming soon

## Chery Tiggo 8

Chery will make its brand debut in late summer, with the arrival of the Chery Tiggo 8. The Chery International brand will launch alongside existing Jaecoo and Omoda marques.

The Tiggo 8 is a large seven-seat SUV and will be available with a petrol or a plug-in hybrid engine. Prices start at £28,545, for the petrol model, and £33,545 for the plug-in hybrid.

Chery says the plug-in hybrid car's Super Hybrid System provides a range of 745 miles, including 56 EV-only miles. It has a self-charging capability, along with DC fast charging.

Using Chery's latest-generation Super Hybrid powertrain - a dual-motor full-hybrid set-up mated to a 1.5-litre turbocharged petrol engine - it delivers a combined system output of 204PS and 365Nm of torque, while offering electric-only driving at urban speeds and low fuel consumption over longer distances.

The Tiggo 8 will be joined by a smaller Tiggo 7 model, with five seats, that uses the same powertrains.



## Citroën e-C5 Aircross

Following the launches of the Peugeot 3008 and Vauxhall Grandland, it's Citroën's turn to introduce a model based on the Stellantis STLA Medium platform.

Hybrid, plug-in hybrid and fully electric powertrains are supported. For now, it's the hybrid and electric models that are on sale.

Prices start from £30,495 for the C5 Aircross Hybrid, powered by a 1.2-litre petrol engine, and £34,065 for the electric e-C5 Aircross.

The e-C5 Aircross Standard Range uses a 210PS motor and a 73kWh battery, giving a maximum range of 323 miles. The e-C5 Aircross Extended Range will come later and has a 97kWh battery and 230PS. It achieves 422 miles between charges.

The new C5 Aircross is larger than its predecessor and offers more space inside. It debuts a new interior layout for the brand, which utilises a large portrait-mounted touchscreen.

## Jeep Compass

Jeep has unveiled the next-generation Compass, which moves to a platform shared with the Citroën e-C5 Aircross, Peugeot 3008 and Vauxhall Grandland.

The new model is set to arrive later in 2025, with electric, hybrid and plug-in hybrid powertrain options.

Development was shared between teams in the USA and Europe, resulting in a car that blends "rugged off-road capability and seamless daily usability".

The new Compass is larger than its predecessor, yet it retains a smaller footprint than its stablemates.

Jeep quotes a boot volume of 550 litres and says passengers will have more legroom.

The Compass has a distinctive design, with numerous 'traditional Jeep' styling touches.

The powertrain line-up includes a 145PS Hybrid; a 195PS Plug-in Hybrid and three full-electric versions, ranging from a 213PS front-wheel drive version up to a 375PS all-wheel drive model.

The electric version has a range of up to 310 miles.



## Key models that will be available to order in the coming months



### Kia EV4

Sitting between the EV3 and EV5 SUVs, the new Kia EV4 takes the form of a more conventional hatchback.

It is set to rival the Renault Mégane E-Tech and VW ID3, as well as the Tesla Model 3, when it arrives later this year. Prices start at £34,695.

The EV4 uses Kia's E-GMP platform, like the EV3 and EV6. It will be offered with a 58kWh or an 81kWh battery, paired with a 204PS motor.

The smaller battery offers a range of up to 273 miles, while the larger one provides up to 388 miles.

DC fast-charging enables either unit to be charged from 10%-80% in around 30 minutes.

The EV4 integrates a 30-inch digital cockpit made up of three displays. The central infotainment touchscreen, climate control panel and digital instrument cluster are seamlessly integrated into a floating panel.

A Fastback version of the EV4 will also be available with a 380-mile range, priced from £40,895.

### Mercedes-Benz CLA

The all-new Mercedes CLA may not look too dissimilar to its predecessor, but, under the skin, it's very different. An electric powertrain is available, for the first time, together with a host of new features and technology. Initially, the CLA is offered as the CLA 250+, equipped with an 85kWh battery and a 272PS motor mounted on the rear-axle. The CLA 250+ can accelerate from zero to 62mph in 6.7 seconds and reach a top speed of 130mph.

The car has a range of up to 484 miles, in Sport Edition specification, and can be recharged at up to 320kW – meaning more than 200 miles of range can be added in just 10 minutes at a compatible charger.

The CLA 350 will join the range later and incorporates a second motor on the front axle, boosting total power to 353PS. A third model, with a smaller 58kWh battery, will also join the line-up later.

Prices for the new CLA start at £45,615.



### Nissan Micra

Nissan has confirmed the new Micra will be priced from £22,995, when it goes on sale in September.

The Micra, whose styling harks back to previous iterations of the model, will be available in two battery options – 40kWh and 52kWh – with ranges of 198 miles and 260 miles respectively.

It shares a platform with the recently launched Renault 5.

The 40kWh models offer 122PS and 225Nm of torque, and these increase to 150PS and 245Nm for the bigger battery cars.

The Micra begins the manufacturer's product offensive in Europe which will see four new fully-electric models by 2027 as part of its push towards electrification.

These include the Micra, followed by a new Leaf, Juke and an A-segment city car, as well as rolling out the upgraded third generation of Nissan's e-Power technology to the Qashqai.

# ROOM FOR TWO MORE?

**We test the most practical electric seven-seaters**



Company car choice lists might be lacking variety when it comes to seven-seat options but we've assembled a selection of the most interesting ones to see which is the best.

**Matt de Prez**  
investigates

**E**lectric powertrains are finding their way into a broader range of vehicles, giving drivers more choice and greater flexibility. In the previous edition of *Fleet News IQ*, we looked at some of the latest in a growing list of electric estate cars – a segment which consisted of just one model a couple of years ago.

For those who need seven seats, a bigger conundrum exists. There are plenty of models with third row seating, but many are token items, crammed into the boot of SUVs, and are only suitable for occasional use.

The days of the large family 'bread van' are largely gone. Only a handful of proper MPVs are still sold and most are reaching the end of their lifecycles.

Company car drivers get an even rougher deal, as electric or plug-in hybrid options are both limited and pricey. For some, the only option may be a van-derived passenger carrier. While these are plentiful, they don't offer the same performance and range as a 'proper' car.

Thankfully, there are options out there that fall into the 2% benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax band, can carry seven in comfort and won't leave you stranded due to a poor range. We've selected four seven-seat electric cars that suit different budgets, to see which is the best.

To really put them through their paces we took them on a typical family day out, departing from our Peterborough office and heading to Withernsea, close to Hull. Not only did this give us a chance to really test the range and efficiency of the cars, but also their capabilities at handling different road types.

We'll kick things off with the Peugeot E-5008 – the cheapest car in this group. In fact, it costs almost half that of our priciest model, the Volvo EX90. Sitting between them are the Kia EV9 and the VW ID Buzz. ➔





## Peugeot E-5008

The E-5008 is the first and, so far, only seven-seater to use Stellantis' all-new electric car platform. It's a stretched version of the underpinnings used in the Peugeot E-3008 and the Vauxhall Grandland. You can have it in a variety of flavours, including a dual motor all-wheel drive variant.

It's a fairly anonymous-looking thing, especially in this company, but its boxy stature does make good use of a modest footprint.

We've opted for the entry-level powertrain, which uses a single 211PS motor and a relatively small 73kWh battery. Peugeot claims the car is still capable of 310 miles between charges and, at £51,975, it's a budget-friendly option. The Long Range variant, with a 97kWh battery, costs an extra £2,850 and promises 400 miles between charges.

Even in sporty GT trim, the E-5008 is the cheapest car of the group and it feels it. The interior doesn't feel as premium as the other SUVs in our test, but you can probably accept that for a £23k saving compared with the Kia EV9.

It uses Peugeot's divisive i-cockpit arrangement,

which places the instrument cluster above a small, oval steering wheel. It's meant to give a sportier driving experience, which is great in a small hatchback, but less appealing a large family car.

Finding a comfortable driving position is tricky. If you manage to find one, you'll likely either not be able to see the instruments or the end of the bonnet.

The small steering wheel gives a more nimble and darty feel to the steering, but the E-5008's chassis is set up, predominantly, for comfort. It flops around on bendy roads, but does, at least, give a decent ride. At motorway speeds the steering lends to a less settled, and ultimately less relaxing, drive than the other cars in this test offer.

Throttle response is woefully slow, too. You have to floor the pedal to get it moving and even then, it's not rapid at all. Zero to 62mph takes almost 10 seconds and, because it's front-wheel drive, you get the sense the computer is really limiting that output to mitigate wheelspin.

In other tests we've completed, Stellantis EVs seem to really fall flat for efficiency, but in this test the E-5008 was the most frugal; managing 3.5mi/kWh on our test loop and 3.0mi/kWh after

the full day of testing. I still have concerns about its range though. On a brisk run that took us over the Humber Bridge, after we'd wrapped up at the seaside, the E-5008 was losing range at a rate of about five miles for every mile travelled.

Despite being the smallest car in our test, the E-5008 is roomy enough for seven passengers. Admittedly, you're only going to want to put kids in the third row, but it's easy to fold the middle seats forward for access and the Peugeot offers the largest boot when all seven seats are in use.

## Kia EV9

There's no shortage of positive sentiments for Kia's EV9. It has won countless awards and been lauded as a must-have family car since its launch in 2023.

The model range starts at just less than £70,000, for the single motor EV9 Air. For this test we've got a top-spec dual motor GT Line S variant, which has a £76,000 price tag. That may seem a little obscene for a Kia, but the EV9 does pack a mighty punch.

For starters, it comes with just about every feature you could imagine. From heated and cooled



Outside and in (from left): the Peugeot E-5008; VW ID Buzz; Kia EV9; and Volvo EX90. Their rear seat interiors are shown in the same order at the head of the page



first- and second-row seats to blind spot cameras and a remote driverless parking capability.

It's the best-specced car here.

The powertrain serves up 380PS, giving the EV9 swift performance. It's punchy, hitting 62mph in around five seconds, but not crass. There's a sense of isolation on board that you usually only get from high-end luxury cars, yet the EV9 isn't detached in feel. You know exactly what it's doing and it's actually rather capable if you really lean on it, but, in most settings, it feels grown-up and refined.

The EV9's 96kWh battery pack should deliver up to 313 miles, according to WLTP, but with the aerodynamics of a medium-sized apartment block and a 2.6-tonne kerb weight, physics are going to make that a tough benchmark. We managed a respectable 2.8mi/kWh on our efficiency test loop but on the drive to Hull – a steady run at 70mph – it returned just 2.3mi/kWh. The journey ate up 55% of the battery to travel 127 miles, leaving 108 miles of predicted range remaining.

Thankfully, the Kia has rapid charging capability, owing to its 800-volt electrical system. We plugged in to a suitable charge point and were happily

pulling 175kW. It added 100 miles in just 12 minutes – enough time for a coffee and a comfort break.

Recharging to 90% cost £44, however. Of course, convenience must come at a price! But that's for 115 miles, which works out at about 16mpg in a petrol car.

Nonetheless, the Kia is a splendid thing to cover miles in. On the motorway the EV9 is near silent and it's not as intimidating to drive as the dimensions would suggest.

The infotainment system is the best of the bunch, although it's not a great bunch. At least Kia has included some physical buttons, along with a dedicated touch display for the climate controls.

As a passenger, it's also the best SUV with seven seats. While not as practical as the ID Buzz, the middle row does fold flat and is carpeted at the back mimicking a proper floor.

Entry to row three is easier on the offside, which is odd, but that seat (which is a 40 split) always reverts to an all-the-way-back position. The near-side second row seat (60 split) reverts to a more 'friendly position' for those in the third row.

Boot space is the second largest in our quartet, just behind the E-5008.

## Volvo EX90

Volvo is the latest carmaker to bring an electric seven-seater to market and the EX90 follows in the footsteps of its highly regarded combustion engine-powered sibling, the XC90.

Sadly, there's much to dislike about the EX90. Its interior and user-friendliness just aren't befitting of a car with an almost six-figure list price. The switchgear is too minimal (there aren't even switches for adjusting the door mirrors), the materials don't feel upmarket enough and the driving experience isn't quite as impressive as we'd hoped.

In Ultra guise, the EX90 costs £96,295. We tested the mid-range Twin Motor version with 407PS; you can also have it in Performance spec, with 517PS. An entry-level Single Motor model, with 279PS is also available for £82,660.

On our efficiency test loop, the EX90 was the worst performer at 2.8mi/kWh. However, after the full day of testing and an, admittedly, very brisk drive home it was sitting at 2.2mi/kWh, which is close to what the Kia managed on a steady motorway drive. ↻





Factor in the larger battery and the EX90's real-world range is the best of our group. It's also the only car that had a chance at exceeding 300 miles.

Performance is impressive for such a big car, with a sub six-second 0-62mph time, but the throttle response is really poor. There's a good second from flooring the throttle to it actually doing anything.

In the real world, the Kia feels quicker because it's throttle mapping is so much better.

The EX90 does ride very well, as a result of its adjustable air suspension, and it covers long-distances with minimal driver fatigue. You do have to deal with an over-sensitive steering rack, however. The seats are really comfortable and have a great massage function, oh and the Bowers and Wilkins audio system is incredible.

At night, I noticed the steering wheel buttons for the audio and cruise control don't light up. I didn't think that was a 'thing' since the early '90s, but it's another example of how Volvo have missed the mark with the EX90.

You'll also lose patience trying to find basic controls, such as headlights or settings for the driver assistance systems, as the user interface is too fiddly.

In seven-seat terms the rear row is the most cramped in our test, especially for foot room – a surprise given the Volvo is the longest car here. Even the Peugeot feels more spacious in the back, despite being dwarfed by the Volvo.

### VW ID Buzz

If you need a seven-seater then the ID Buzz is the only one that actually does the job properly. There's tonnes of space in every row and access to all the seats is the easiest of the bunch.

Following the car's initial launch as a five- or six-seat model, a long wheelbase (LWB) version was added to the range with seven seats. And that's what we've got here. It gets a larger 86kWh battery, while the shorter model uses a 79kWh unit.

VW hasn't quite got the interior layout as well sorted as it is in a Multivan, with three independent

middle seats, but the ID Buzz still works really well for carrying people. The sliding side doors, especially, make a big difference.

And you don't have to pay a huge premium, for the extra space either. The LWB model commands only £500 more than the entry-level five-seater.

There are two individual captain's chairs in the middle row and an easily accessible bench for three in the back. A removable shelf in the boot enables a flat loading area when the rear seats are folded, but overall practicality suffers as it can only carry four people in this configuration.

While not all testers agreed, in my experience the VW's infotainment system is perfectly adequate. The central display houses all the key functions, such as climate settings and seat heaters, but they're pretty easy to find. The windscreen demist controls on the light switch (to the right of the steering wheel) is a bit odd and the haptic slider for the audio volume is a bit silly, but I prefer the system to the one in the Peugeot.





	KIA EV9 AWD GT LINE S	PEUGEOT E-5008 GT	VOLVO EX90 AWD ULTRA	VW ID BUZZ LWB STYLE PRO
Price (P11D)	£75,970	£51,975	£96,295	£64,380
BIK annual %	3%	3%	3%	3%
BIK annual @ 20%	£455.82	£311.85	£577.77	£386.28
BIK annual @ 40%	£912	£624	£1,156	£773
VED (4yrs)	£1,870	£1,870	£1,870	£1,870
Residual value (4yrs/80k)	£26,850	£17,850	£32,925	£26,625
Depreciation	61.5ppm	43ppm	79ppm	47ppm
SMR	5.5ppm	4ppm	5.9ppm	4.6ppm
Fuel cost	3.2ppm	2.6ppm	3ppm	3ppm
Running cost	70.2ppm	49.3ppm	88.2ppm	54.8ppm
Battery useable	96kWh	73kWh	107kWh	86kWh
WLTP range	313mi	310mi	375mi	286mi
WLTP efficiency	2.7mi/kWh	3.9mi/kWh	3mi/kWh	3mi/kWh
FN test range	268mi	256mi	310mi	249mi
FN test efficiency	2.8mi/kWh	3.5mi/kWh	2.9mi/kWh	2.9mi/kWh
Max charge AC	11kW	11kW	11kW	11kW
Max Charge DC	209kW	160kW	250kW	200kW
Charge time 7.4kWh	15.25hrs	11.75hrs	17hrs	13.75hrs
Charge time 22kWh	10.5hrs	8hrs	11.5hrs	9.25hrs
Max DC Charge time 10-80%	22mins	36mins	32mins	26mins
Power	380PS	211PS	402PS	282PS
Torque	700Nm	344Nm	770Nm	560Nm
0-62mph	5.3s	9.7s	5.9s	7.9s
Max speed	124mph	106mph	112mph	99mph
Drivetrain	AWD	FWD	AWD	RWD
Length	5,015mm	4,791mm	5,037mm	4,962mm
Width	2,263mm	2,108mm	2,113mm	2,211mm
Height	1,780mm	1,694mm	1,744mm	1,937mm
Weight (unladen)	2,648kg	2,269kg	2,754kg	2,628kg
Boot volume seats up	333l	348l	310l	306l
Boot volume seats down	2,318l	2,232l	1,915l	2,469l
Towing capacity	2,500kg	1,000kg	2,200kg	1,000kg
Infotainment screen	12.3"	21"	14.5"	12.9"
Heat pump	Y	Opt	Y	Opt
Heated front seats	Y	Y	Y	Y
Adaptive cruise	Y	Y	Y	Y
Blind spot monitor	Y	Opt	Y	Y
Keyless entry	Y	Y	Y	Y
Apple Carplay/Android Auto	Y	Y	Y	Y







It is remarkably good to drive. The performance, handling and refinement are all surprisingly impressive. It's probably because the ID Buzz isn't a van-derived vehicle.

It's based on the VW MEB platform, like the rest of the brand's ID range. With rear-wheel drive it doesn't struggle to put down its power and will happily out-accelerate the E-5008.

Efficiency of 2.9mi/kWh in our test loop isn't amazing, but it did outperform both our heavy-weight SUVs; even if it only slightly bettered the Kia on the run to Hull with 2.4mi/kWh. With a smaller battery than the Kia, the ID Buzz's real-world range falls slightly shorter than the Kia's, at around 250 miles.

The Buzz has a strong residual value and low running costs compared with the Volvo and Kia.

The insurance group is lower too (41E). At £64,000, for our Style Pro version, it's going to be a push for drivers over the Peugeot, but it does carry people more effectively than the far more expensive Kia and Volvo.

## Verdict

In some ways this test is very clear cut. The ID Buzz is the only seven-seater that really fits bill for regularly carrying lots of passengers and items. That's because it's a proper people carrier and not an SUV.

So, if that's your primary objective then it's the one to have – and I doubt you'll be disappointed. Overall range, however, is lacking compared with others.

There's also a reason why manufacturers stopped making people carriers – people clearly weren't buying them any more. While the ID Buzz is, arguably, the most interesting and fashionable vehicle in our test, these days it's the SUVs that attract the bigger crowd of buyers.

With the Volvo, you get plenty of range, but its running costs are excessive and that list price puts it out of reach of most drivers. In truth, it's really no better than the EV9 – certainly not £20,000 better.

The E-5008 is a mixed bag. It has a compromised driving position and a poor infotainment system, but it returned the best efficiency and has a much lower price – so overall running costs are the best in the group.

That leaves the Kia. It's our favourite car to drive, it charges very quickly and it looks great. The overall dimensions do make it a tricker to park and if you mainly drive on the motorway, then it's not very efficient.

That said, along with the ID Buzz, it's the only other car that can be used properly as a seven-seater and it would be our pick.

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# 400

*is the magic number*

Range anxiety is becoming less of an issue for drivers, but how far does an electric car need to be capable of travelling? The Mercedes EQE helps *Matt de Prez* find out

**W**e've witnessed a rapid evolution in the range capability of electric cars. Just a few years ago the best models could manage 200 miles between charges and now there are plenty available on

the market that can cover 300 miles with ease.

As a result, the number of drivers worried about range anxiety has fallen considerably. Boosted by favourable company car tax rates, of course, EV sales have surged in the true fleet market.

While the progress is noteworthy – true fleet EV registrations are up by 26% in the first half of 2025, alone – pro-EV campaigners tend to gloss over the fact that the vast majority of people are still choosing petrol or diesel models.

It's much worse in the private retail market, which accounts for less than a quarter of EV sales, and if you spend just a few minutes reading tabloid newspapers and comments on certain social media platforms you'll find great swathes of people claiming an EV will never be able to replace their diesel Mondeo that miraculously covers thousands of miles per week using just £3.57 of fuel.

But how far does an electric car need to go before its range exceeds our ability as humans to continuously drive? To answer the question, we decided to take one of the longest-range cars currently available on a little road trip.

The car in question is the Mercedes EQE 350+. It has an official range of 429 miles, which is significantly more than the 19 miles an average UK driver covers in a single day.

Our goal was a little more ambitious. We wanted to crack 400 miles, and we wanted to be home by dinner time.

We deduced that the quickest way to complete our challenge was to stick to motorways and A roads, carrying higher speeds. Now, while the official range figure should make this test a doddle, let's be honest – very rarely do cars come close to their official range figures in real world driving,



especially at motorway speeds. To achieve our goal, we'd need the EQE to return almost 4.2mi/kWh.

In my experience that's the sort of efficiency you get from a small compact car, not a large executive saloon. As the EQE's trip computer only reads in watt-hours per mile (wh/mi), 240, then, is our target.

Thankfully, there's a rather distinctive landmark almost exactly 200 miles from our office in Peterborough: the Angel of the North. A return trip there was the perfect way to complete this test.

And the Angel of North carries more significance to the EQE and the evolution of electric cars than you might imagine. The artistic work of Anthony Gormley stands at 20 metres in height, overlooking the A1, just south of Newcastle. As one of the best known and most easily recognisable British Landmarks, the sculpture is built above a former coal ↻

mine and symbolises the difficult transition from the North East's once thriving fossil-fuel powered industrial age to more high-tech information-led future. Sound familiar?

With the EQE's battery brimmed, our day got off to a good start with the car's range estimator reading 415 miles. I selected the 'Eco' drive mode as group editor Stephen Briers, who has been running the car for the past few months as part of our long-term test fleet, told me it's the best way to extract the most miles from the car's battery.

With head of production Luke Neal in the passenger seat, we set off on the fairly simple route up the A1 with a degree of trepidation. Nonetheless, we had the aircon set to a comfortable 21-degrees, some suitable road trip worthy 90s music on the stereo and sunk into the EQE's armchair-like seats for the first leg of our journey.

After just 37 miles one of the many roadside coffee shops was calling our names so we made a brisk stop at Foston Services, noting our average efficiency was 230wh/mi (4.3mi/kWh). Whatever we were doing was working, so we pressed on. I didn't modify my driving style too much. We kept up with the traffic flow, which on a Wednesday morning was hovering between 60 and 70mph.

The steady journey gave us a chance to reflect on the EQE, which hasn't been an overwhelming success for Mercedes. It has faced criticism for being ugly, too big and too expensive. But, in this scenario it seemed like the perfect car for the job. The EQE is serenely quiet on the move, it rides gracefully and covers miles effortlessly. The driving position is, admittedly, a little odd. No matter how tall you are, you feel lost behind the giant dashboard and steering wheel. Oh, and while the aesthetic of the interior is neat, all those extruding plastic parts flex and creak if you give them a decent shake. It's not, perhaps, the build quality one might expect from Mercedes.

Underneath, the battery and electric motor were performing flawlessly. In fact, by the time the iconic landmark was casting a shadow on the EQE's svelte exterior, our battery level was still at 55%. After we spent a little time taking photos, we'd tipped over the 200-mile mark. And all in less than four hours. By this point the car was showing little signs of fatigue, but its passengers were desperate for some lunch. We found a suitable outlet and stopped for a bite to eat.

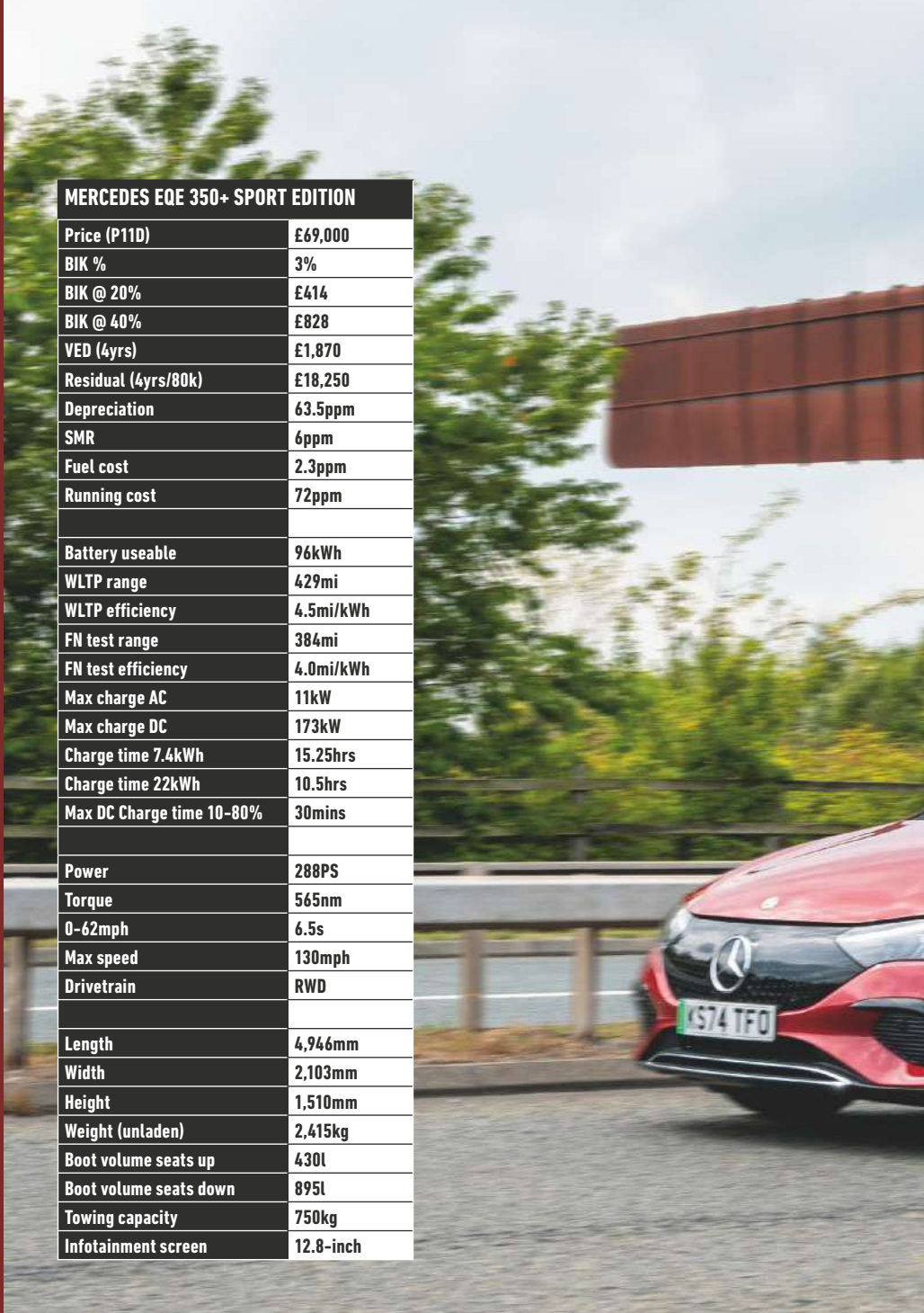
Luke took over for the return leg, so I punched in the office address to the EQE's sat-nav and we set off with the Angel of the North in our rear-view mirror.

Interestingly, the Mercedes calculated that we'd need to make a charging stop to make it home, even though it still had a projected range of 230 miles. After a bit of messing around with the settings, it was because the car had been configured to arrive with at least 15% charge remaining. I changed this setting to 0% and it swiftly removed the recommended stop. In normal circumstances, this route planning feature would be welcome.

Like the journey up, the return leg passed by swiftly. At no point did we really consider that the car wouldn't make it. And, of course, it did with 14 miles of range to spare. That's an astonishing result. Not only did we average 4.3mi/kWh, it's also exactly the range that the car predicted first thing in the morning.

So, what does that mean for drivers who are still unsure about range? Well, the Mercedes is not a

MERCEDES EQE 350+ SPORT EDITION	
Price (P11D)	£69,000
BIK %	3%
BIK @ 20%	£414
BIK @ 40%	£828
VED (4yrs)	£1,870
Residual (4yrs/80k)	£18,250
Depreciation	63.5ppm
SMR	6ppm
Fuel cost	2.3ppm
Running cost	72ppm
Battery useable	96kWh
WLTP range	429mi
WLTP efficiency	4.5mi/kWh
FN test range	384mi
FN test efficiency	4.0mi/kWh
Max charge AC	11kW
Max charge DC	173kW
Charge time 7.4kWh	15.25hrs
Charge time 22kWh	10.5hrs
Max DC Charge time 10-80%	30mins
Power	288PS
Torque	565nm
0-62mph	6.5s
Max speed	130mph
Drivetrain	RWD
Length	4,946mm
Width	2,103mm
Height	1,510mm
Weight (unladen)	2,415kg
Boot volume seats up	430l
Boot volume seats down	895l
Towing capacity	750kg
Infotainment screen	12.8-inch



All set to head off from our Peterborough base





cheap car. Our Sport Edition, which is the entry-level model, costs almost £70,000. The good news is that a much cheaper electric CLA is coming later this year, and it's even more capable than the EQE – all for £45,000.

At this pace of change, it's not going to be long before most EVs can crack 400 miles.

And here's the more pertinent point. Driving 400 miles in a day is draining. Even in a car as comfortable as the EQE, both Luke and I were thankful to finally get out after our eight-hour journey. As a solo driver, it would be irresponsible to try to cover this many miles as quickly.

We also stopped three times during the trip and discovered multiple rapid chargers at every location. Assuming that the car was parked up for at least an hour, in total, we worked out that we could've added up to another 290 miles of range, just by plugging in while parked, without adding any extra time to our journey.

This test has proved two things: an electric is capable of covering 400 miles in one hit and that is about as far as we'd want to be able to go in one.



# 10 of the best... ...COMPACT CROSSOVERS

The compact SUV segment is bulging at the seams with models from just about every carmaker. It's the UK's second most popular car type with more than 50,000 compact SUVs sold into the true fleet market last year.

We've assessed the running costs, practicality and drivability of some of the segment's most popular models to create our top 10 list.

## Cupra Formentor

Cupra offers smart and practical cars with a sporty edge. The Formentor embodies those principles perfectly as a compact SUV. It has sharp styling, while the interior is spacious and family friendly.

Two plug-in hybrid powertrains are offered, with either 204PS or 272PS. They both use the same basic hardware which consists of a 1.5-litre petrol engine and a 25.8kWh battery. With a zero-emission range of up to 77 miles, all versions sit in the 6% BIK band.

It's more characterful than rivals, with keener handling and more aggressive styling, yet it's also among the best in class on running costs.



## Ford Puma

The Puma is currently the UK's best-selling car and it takes a decent share of the true fleet market. Now six years old, the Puma has been given a new lease of life with the introduction of a fully electric version.

Exterior styling changes are limited to a revised spoiler, new front bumper and alloy wheel design.

Priced from £29,995, the Puma Gen-E is equipped with a 53kWh battery that provides a driving range of up to 233 miles.

It offers the same keen handling as the petrol-powered Puma, along with impressive practicality. The boot contains an additional 'gigabox' storage compartment beneath the floor, providing class-leading space of 523 litres.



## Hyundai Kona

Now in its second generation, the Kona has proven its versatility with a wide range of powertrain options to suit different needs. The electric version is an attractive company car, with low running costs and excellent range.

With a 65kWh battery, the Kona Electric has a range of up to 319 miles. It uses an efficient 218PS motor, giving ample performance. Charging speeds of 105kW gives a 10%-80% recharge time of around 30 minutes.

The Kona is packed with technology shared with models higher up in the Hyundai range. As such, it comes equipped with a wide array of driver assistance aids, impressive infotainment and lots of convenience features.



## Kia EV3

Using an all-new platform, the EV3 was designed to be electric from day one. It follows the precedent set by Kia's excellent EV6 and EV9 models, bringing high levels of technology and practicality at an affordable price.

The EV3 compares well against its rivals, offering more specification, more space and more range together with lower pricing.

Two battery sizes are available: the EV3 Standard Range (58.3kWh) has a 270-mile range, while the Long Range (81.4kWh) can cover 375 miles between charges. Both battery options are paired with a single 204PS electric motor.



## MG S5

Built to replace the popular ZS Electric, the new S5 shares MG's bespoke electric vehicle platform with the MG 4. It represents a major step up for the mid-size SUV, bringing more power, more range and more space.

The S5 retains a value-focused price point but is more premium and technologically advanced than its predecessor. There's a revised simple-to-use infotainment system and an uplift in material quality and comfort levels.

It's available with a 49kWh battery, giving a range of 211 miles, or a 64kWh battery that provides 298 miles of driving. The former has 170PS, while the latter has 231PS. Rapid charging capability enables a 10%-80% charge in less than 30 minutes.



## Vauxhall Frontera

Vauxhall has revived the Frontera nameplate for its new compact SUV, to replace the ageing Crossland. The Frontera is a stylish and modern offering, based on the new Stellantis 'Smart Car' platform.

It brings the choice of hybrid or electric powertrains, with the latter making most sense as it's the cheapest option. Prices for the Frontera Electric start at less than £24,000.

There's a Standard Range model that can cover 188 miles, or an Extended Range version that's good for 249 miles. Both use a modest 113PS motor.

The Frontera's interior is spacious and family friendly, with a large 460-litre boot and plenty of headroom for occupants, thanks to the raised roofline.



## Škoda Elroq

Škoda is known for producing practical cars that offer great value and the Elroq is no exception with its spacious and robust interior, easy-to-use infotainment and impressive line-up of electric powertrains. It provides a smooth drive and competent handling.

There are four versions, each with a different battery and power output. Entry-level '50' versions have a 50kWh battery, 170PS and a 233-mile range. The Elroq 60 uses a 59kWh battery, giving a range of 266 miles, and 204PS. '85' variants can travel up to 355 miles, thanks to a 77kWh battery, and have 285PS. There's also a range-topping vRS with all-wheel drive and 340PS.



## Volvo EX30

The EX30 has proven itself to be small, but mighty, since it launched. As Volvo's most compact and value-focused model, it was developed with sustainability and packaging in mind.

A stripped-back interior relies heavily on the central touchscreen in lieu of the buttons and controls you might expect, but it does maximise space.

All versions are rapid. The base model can reach 62mph in less than six seconds and has a 210-mile range. The Extended Range manages almost 300 miles and is even quicker. The Twin Motor Performance completes the line-up managing 62mph from rest in 3.6 seconds – and a 280-mile range.



## Toyota C-HR

The original C-HR broke the mould in the small C-SUV sector when it launched in 2017, with its eye-catching looks and fuel-efficient hybrid engine.

The second-generation C-HR offers higher quality, improved comfort and better driving dynamics.

While it retains a distinctive coupé silhouette and futuristic design, pioneered by its predecessor, the new car has a wider and more confident stance. The application of new technologies and a comprehensive upgrade of vehicle dynamics have helped deliver improved driving excitement.

There are two hybrid engine options, along with a plug-in hybrid (PHEV).



## Volkswagen T-Roc

It may be ageing and lacking an electric or even hybrid powertrain option, but the T-Roc is still one of the best-selling compact SUVs in fleet.

Based on the Golf, the T-Roc is a no-nonsense model with rugged styling, excellent durability and a spacious interior. It's not overburdened by technology and provides a simple user interface that includes plenty of 'proper' switchgear.

The T-Roc is available with a 1.0-litre or a 1.5-litre petrol engine, with CO<sub>2</sub> emissions ranging from 132g/km. Both powertrains are efficient, even if they fail to offer the company car tax savings hybrid and electric models offer.



# Joel Dublin

group fleet manager, The Jockey Club



## Why fleet?

Like many, I found myself in fleet management somewhat by accident. I began as a mechanic, which gave me a solid technical foundation and an understanding of vehicles from the inside out. However, over time, I realised I wanted a change in direction – something that would challenge me professionally while allowing for long-term growth. The prospect of being under the bonnet, stripping engines and gearboxes later in life wasn't appealing, so I started exploring opportunities beyond the workshop. Fleet management offered the perfect balance: it allowed me to stay connected to the automotive world while expanding into areas such as operations, strategy and leadership.

## How I got here

I didn't arrive overnight. My path has been shaped by hands-on experience, a commitment to continuous improvement. My current role as fleet manager at The Jockey Club is both dynamic and rewarding, largely due to the scale and diversity of operations across the group. I've always been drawn to roles that combine logistical complexity with real-world impact, and fleet management offers

exactly that. What's made this part of the journey especially fulfilling is the team I work with. I'm fortunate to be surrounded by highly skilled individuals whose technical expertise I rely on daily – particularly when it comes to the specialist equipment we operate. Their support has allowed me to focus on strategic planning, compliance and cost-efficiency, while continuously learning from the technical side of the operation.

## Latest products, developments and achievements

One of the most exciting developments I'm driving is the introduction of robotic mowers across the club. With vast areas to maintain, we're exploring how automation can enhance both efficiency and job satisfaction. By rolling out robotic mowing, the goal is to free up our skilled grounds teams to focus on the more specialist aspects of their work – the areas they've trained and studied for – rather than spending days operating tractors. It's about using technology smartly to improve team productivity while supporting professional development and engagement.

## My organisation in three words

Fun, encouraging, supportive.

## Career influence

My greatest influence has been my children – perhaps not the most conventional answer, but for me, it's deeply motivating. I want them to see that with hard work, resilience and integrity, you can build something meaningful. When I was invited to do this interview, it was more about showing my children that their dad is doing well and striving to be the best version of himself. I've been fortunate to cross paths with some incredibly supportive individuals. During times of uncertainty – whether facing redundancy or the end of a major project – there have been people who have pulled me aside and simply said: "You're going to be fine." In moments like those, having someone believe in you can make all the difference. Sometimes, others see potential in us before we see it ourselves, and that belief has been a powerful force in shaping my journey.

## What makes a good manager/leader?

A good manager or leader isn't just someone who gives direction – it's someone who listens, supports and brings out the best in their team. Leadership is about trust and consistency, creating an environment where people feel valued, where their

## The advice I would give to my 18-year-old self is:

The past is the past, look forward to the future and work hard to fulfil your dreams.

## The song I would have on my driving playlist is:

4 The Love – Code Red.

## My first memory associated with a car:

Buying a blue Mini Clubman with a friend when I was 14 or 15 for about £10 (yes, £10). It didn't run and so I used my (limited) mechanical knowledge to get it going. It did work in the end.

## My favourite movie quote:

That's my name, don't wear it out – Danny Zuko (Grease).

## If money was no object ...

A nice four-bed house in the country with a couple of acres.

## My hobbies and interests are:

Running, walking and music.

## My pet hate is:

People with no manners.

## If I were made transport minister for the day:

I'd reduce train fares.

strengths are recognised, and where they're given the confidence to grow. For me, a great manager leads by example. They stay calm under pressure, communicate clearly and take responsibility when things don't go to plan. They're approachable, fair and not afraid to admit when they don't have all the answers. And importantly, they recognise that success is rarely individual – it's built on the collective effort of the whole team.

## Advice to fleet newcomers

One of the most important skills in fleet management is the ability to listen – really listen – to your colleagues and stakeholders. Take the time to understand their needs, especially when introducing new technologies, vehicles, or equipment. Successful fleet management isn't just about making efficient decisions; it's about making the right decisions for the people using those assets every day. Resilience is also key. You won't get everything right the first time – and that's okay. Mistakes are part of the learning process. What matters is how you respond, adapt and grow from them. Stay open-minded, be willing to learn, and never underestimate the value of practical experience.

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