

# FleetNews

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# THE BIG PICTURE

Anyone expecting climate-changing agreements from COP26 would've been left sorely disappointed.

Yes, there was a commitment by 28 fleet operators to go zero-emission by 2030, while 11 manufacturers pledged that all their new car and vans sales would be zero emission by 2040 (and by 2035 in major economies), but there were many others who opted out, notably Volkswagen, Toyota, Kia, BMW and Stellantis.

As for global leaders, there was plenty of hot air, but nothing of substance.

In the UK, the 2035/2040 ban on petrol and diesel HGVs (deadline dependent on weight) was confirmed, but we saw very little real progress to tackle the climate crisis.

And any pledges that were made did not include the world's biggest polluters, China, USA and Russia.

It was all a bit gloomy, to be honest. Nevertheless, fleets and the public continue to surge towards electric vehicles (EVs), with another big spike in registrations in October.

Year-to-date, full electric, PHEV and hybrid combined account for a quarter of new car registrations, up from around 16% in 2020, with full electric alone at almost 10% – pretty much double this time last year. In October, alternative fuels further tightened their grip to capture 32%, with electric at 15%.

However, concerns are growing about the ability of dealers to service and repair cars, with the Institute of the Motor Industry claiming there will be a shortfall of around 37,500 EV specialist technicians by 2030.

COP26 wasn't the only recent disappointment; we also had the Budget. No mention of BIK rates past 2025, no talk about consulting over road pricing alternatives to the current tax regime – the fleet sector was left feeling short-changed.

But I'll end on a positive note with congratulations to Arval UK, Gordon Stephen and Peter Eldridge. Arval UK was the winner of our inaugural Wellbeing Awards while Gordon and Peter entered the Fleet News Hall of Fame. Details on page 14.



**Stephen Briers,**  
editor-in-chief,  
*Fleet News*



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Testing the latest cars – most pleasing

**Photos** Istock, Chris Lowndes

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**MANAGING COLLISION IMPACTS**  
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# Budget fails to give certainty to businesses intending to go electric

Lack of detail on future plug-in grants and BIK rates may hold back transition to EVs

**£620m**

for plug-in grant and charging infrastructure confirmed

**£7.85bn**

cost to the Treasury of fuel duty freeze over the next five years

By Gareth Roberts

**A** lack of clarity around future tax policy and Government support for electric vehicles (EVs) will leave some businesses unable to commit to electrifying their fleets, industry experts say.

The warning comes in the wake of COP26 and a Budget thin on detail for those operating cars and vans.

The Chancellor did not reveal company car tax rates beyond 2025 or explain how £620 million for the plug-in grant and charging infrastructure, announced in the recent Net Zero Strategy, would be spent.

Spencer Halil, chief commercial officer at Alphabet (GB), says the switch to electric cars and vans is crucial to cutting transport emissions and achieving net zero.

However, he told *Fleet News*: "The Government has not capitalised on recent opportunities to provide the clarity and certainty needed around electrification to enable companies to make this important step.

"With no update on future tax rates for customers, nor a clear path for how long electric vehicle incentives will remain in place, businesses are unable to plan for an electric future with any confidence."

## LONG-TERM VIEW REQUIRED

Low company car tax rates for EVs have helped secure record registra-

tions for plug-in vehicles – more will join Britain's roads in 2021 than during the whole of the last decade, according to the latest forecast from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT).

But to maintain that fleet momentum away from internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles towards electric cars and vans, requires further detail which has yet to be published.

Zenith CEO Tim Buchan says the industry needs to understand what the Government's long-term plan is for decarbonising vehicles via taxation, grants and incentivisation.

He explained: "A more comprehensive roadmap is needed so the fleet industry can fully understand the role it

plays in supporting the Government to meet its targets and can effectively prepare for a lower-carbon future."

There was hope that the Government would announce a review of road taxation to investigate the merits of alternatives

such as road pricing, but, again, the industry was left disappointed.

"Businesses urgently need better long-term certainty from the Government across all these areas to enable them to commit to sustainability investments for their fleets and support wider UK climate targets," said Halil.

Budget 2021 did confirm benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax rates for battery electric vehicles (BEVs) would be frozen at 2% after this financial year up to 2024/25.

But, Paul Hollick, chairman of the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP), said he was 'disappointed' by the absence of company car tax tables beyond that date, for which the AFP, alongside the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA) and *Fleet News*, has been campaigning.

He explained: "For some time, we've been calling for the Government to make BIK taxation tables for EVs available through to the end of the decade.



**“A MORE COMPREHENSIVE ROADMAP IS NEEDED SO THAT THE FLEET INDUSTRY CAN FULLY UNDERSTAND THE ROLE IT PLAYS”**

TIM BUCHAN, ZENITH





"Currently, information has only been published up until 2024-25, leaving businesses and employees now entering into four-year cycles with no indication of what the benefit-in-kind rate will be for 2025-26."

Gerry Keaney, chief executive at the BVRLA said the silence around BIK was "deafening".

"The Chancellor has missed an opportunity to give the industry essential clarity when it is most needed," he added. "This only grows fears that rates will be drastically increased down the line."

#### DWINDLING TAX TAKE

The fleet and leasing industry can be excused for fearing what may happen to BIK beyond 2025.

It was only 10 years ago company car drivers were incentivised to drive diesel company cars.

"That seems crazy now," said Harvey Perkins, co-founder of tax

## NICs INCREASE STRENGTHENS SALARY SACRIFICE APPEAL

Budget 2021 confirmed the introduction of the Health and Social Care Levy – a 1.25% tax on earnings for employees, the self-employed and employers.

It will tax earnings in the same way as National Insurance contributions (NICs), except that it will also apply to the earnings of those over state pension age. It will come into force from April 2023.

Before the levy is introduced, all three rates of NICs will increase by 1.25 percentage points, in April 2022. NICs rates will then return to their current levels in April 2023, when the levy comes into effect.

HRUX's Harvey Perkins suggests that the increase in NICs strengthens the appeal of salary sacrifice, which he says has the potential to be huge.

"We're talking to so many businesses about it and I think everybody is aware of the opportunity that salary sacrifice presents," he said.

Arval UK recently reported growth of 280% for vehicles operated under its Ignition salary sacrifice scheme over the past 12 months.

The vehicle leasing company has also seen a 129% increase in the number of individual companies taking part in the employee benefit scheme.

Figures from Arval suggest that for a £40,000 ICE

car, the monthly increase in employers' NI paid on BIK taxation will be £11.67, whereas for a £45,000 petrol hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV), it will be £5.62, and for a £50,000 electric EV, just £1.04.

As a general principle, the biggest impact of the NI increase for employers and employees is on salaries, where there is a combined 2.5% increased tax charge. In contrast, for company cars the rate is half of that at 1.25%, because employees do not pay NI on benefits.

#### 'EVEN MORE ATTRACTIVE'

Arval consultant, Richard Cox, says the NI increase makes salary sacrifice schemes based around EVs "even more attractive" for both employers and employees. He explained: "Employers will save on NI payments on salaries alongside a much lower charge on the BIK element, while employees will save more NI although there is no corresponding NI charge on the BIK."

Perkins added: "The amounts aren't enormous so on something like a Mercedes EQC it's maybe worth £10-15 a month more to the employee, but every little helps."

consultancy firm HRUX, "and just goes to show why some can be cynical."

Considering Treasury has never given company car tax rates more than three to four years in advance, Perkins says it is quite possible that the fleet and leasing industry may have to wait until the year after next to see rates published post-2025.

However, he stressed: "Logically, these rates will have to go up."

The Treasury collected around £2 billion in company car tax in the past financial year.

"We know there are getting on for 300,000 EVs on the roads in the UK," continued Perkins. "I'm guessing a lot of those are company cars so a lot of that £2bn is evaporating quickly."

### REGISTRATION PROJECTIONS

With the sale of new ICE cars and vans ending from 2030 and hybrids from 2035, and new HGVs having to be zero-emission from 2035 or 2040 (dependent on weight), the number of plug-in vehicle registrations is estimated to rise rapidly to around three million by 2025, 10 million by 2030 and 25 million by 2035.

KPMG's Mobility 2030 team expects the sale of zero-emission cars and vans to reach 98% of sales in 2031 and 27% of the parc by 2030.

As well as putting pressure on company car tax revenues, the shift to electric leaves the Treasury needing a plan to plug a potential £40bn shortfall from road taxes, including fuel duty.

At £28.4bn in 2019-2020 (excluding VAT), tax revenues from fuel duty account for a significant 2% of GDP (gross domestic product), while vehicle excise duty (VED) receipts were estimated to account for £6.5bn.

### FUEL DUTY FREEZE

With record prices at the pumps, the Chancellor cancelled a planned 2.8p rise in fuel duty. Petrol exceeded the 142.48p a litre all-time peak set on April 16, 2012, by reaching 142.94p on October 24, and diesel hit a new high of 147.94p surpassing its previous record price of 147.93p on April 12, 2012.

The fuel duty freeze is expected to cost the Chancellor £7.85bn over the next five years, but, despite the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) taking into account an increasing number of EVs, the figures do not suggest a dramatic decline in revenues.

Appearing alongside Perkins at a BVRLA event, HRUX director Chris Sewell explained that Treasury forecasts still suggest annual receipts of £32bn for fuel duty in a few years' time.

"It's probably not an unreasonable assumption," said Sewell. "There's 30 million cars on the road, plus LCVs, plus HGVs and, until they all go electric, there is still going to be a huge amount of revenue in fuel duty."

However, despite the Government's figures not suggesting a dramatic decline in duty, Thomas McLennan, head of policy and public affairs at the BVRLA, says that given the complexity of designing and implementing a new road tax regime, Treasury does not have the "luxury" of time on its side.

He warned: "I don't think we can realistically say we're going to completely overhaul our road tax system and not give ourselves almost a decade to do it."

"That's when we really get into trouble, because I don't think those fuel duty receipts are going to survive towards the end of this decade."

## Government cannot postpone giving answers to taxing questions indefinitely



**MATTHEW WALTERS**, HEAD OF CONSULTANCY SERVICES AT LEASEPLAN UK

In some respects, the 2021 Autumn Budget and the accompanying Spending Review were significant documents.

They gave Government departments billions of pounds more to spend each year. They upped the level of the National Living Wage. And they introduced new fiscal rules for the Government to abide by.

But, from the perspective of fleets and motorists, this Budget was relatively slender when compared to immediate predecessors, and certainly not as significant as it might have been.

There are a lot of big questions hovering over Britain's roads at the moment, as we collectively make the transition to electric vehicles. Very few – if any – of them were answered by the Chancellor.

The Budget didn't contain any new tax measures to help hasten our transition to electric, but it did do some further spending; £620 million has been made available for public charging in residential areas and targeted plug-in vehicle grants. And a separate £817m has been set aside to support investment in zero-emission vehicle manufacturing, gigafactories and the electric vehicle supply chain.

Disappointingly though, the Chancellor didn't confirm what "targeted plug-in vehicle grants" will benefit from the extra money. That said, the wording of that passage does reflect the text of a report that the Government published in the summer, called Transitioning to zero emission cars and vans: 2035 delivery plan.

That document suggested that the Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme, the main grant for residential chargers, will next year be refocused on "renters, leaseholders and those living in flats". A positive move, but communication around this lacked true clarity.

Additionally, the Budget contained a scattering of announcements on motoring taxation. There was the fuel duty freeze, of course, as well as confirmation that vehicle excise duty (VED) rates for cars and vans will increase in line with RPI inflation next year. The Chancellor also froze VED for HGVs and suspended the HGV road user levy for another 12 months.

But fleets and motorists might have expected a lot more. As we pointed out in our preview of the Budget, there are currently a lot of big reviews into motoring taxation – including on the overall VED systems for both cars and vans – that have passed through consultation. But, during the Budget, nothing.

We're still waiting for the actual policy announcements, including Company Car Tax rates for 2025-26 and beyond, which Sunak's predecessors have been much more forthcoming with.

What's more, in advance of the Budget, the Government had talked about fuel duty – and how, as more of us move into electric vehicles, that tax might not be a suitable way of raising revenue for the Exchequer.

There had been speculation that the Budget would kickstart a long-term review of alternative revenue-raising measures to cover both fossil-fuelled and electric vehicles, such as some form of road pricing. However, again, nothing.

Of course, there are many more Budgets to come, starting with next year's Spring Budget. But the Government cannot postpone all these questions indefinitely. If fleets – and, indeed, all drivers – are to prepare for the future, then it would help to know what that future looks like.



Chancellor Rishi Sunak's red box was thin on detail regarding the Government's plans to support electric uptake



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# LeasePlan and ALD Automotive in non-committal merger discussions

Fourth- and fifth-largest UK lease companies stress talks do not guarantee deal is in the offing

By Gareth Roberts

**L**ex Autolease could be overhauled as the UK's largest vehicle leasing company if LeasePlan and ALD Automotive merge.

The pair are in discussions about a possible tie up, which would create a leasing and mobility powerhouse, with a total UK risk fleet of more than 316,000 vehicles and 3.6 million globally.

LeasePlan is one of the world's largest leasing companies, with approximately 1.9 million vehicles in more than 30 countries.

It is ranked the fourth largest leasing company in the UK, according to FN50 2021, with a risk fleet of almost 174,000 cars and vans.

ALD Automotive operates in 43 countries, with a global fleet of 1.7 million vehicles. It is ranked fifth in FN50 2021, with a risk fleet of more than 142,000 cars and vans.

Current top of the FN50 2021 is Lex Autolease which funds 282,720 cars and vans.

Rumours of a possible sale of LeasePlan started circulating shortly after its decision to cancel an initial public offering (IPO) in 2018, due to market conditions.

At the time, London's market for IPOs had faltered, with listings suffering hefty falls in their share price after their market debut, such as Aston Martin Lagonda.

LeasePlan, which sought to tap into growing demand for car leasing services across continental Europe, had been expected to achieve a similar valuation to ALD, which listed to an implied total valuation of €5.78 billion (£5bn) in 2017.

**3.6m**  
combined global fleet of  
LeasePlan and ALD

LeasePlan's listing ambitions were revealed two years after it was bought by a consortium of investors led by London-based private equity group TDR Capital as well as

Danish pension fund ATP, the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, pension fund PGGM and Singaporean sovereign wealth fund GIC (fleetnews.co.uk, July 23, 2015).

LeasePlan planned to offer only secondary shares, with the current owners maintaining a majority stake.

Reports that both ALD and Santander, the Spanish banking giant, were separately interested in acquiring LeasePlan emerged in April, but were neither confirmed nor denied by those involved.

In a statement released at the end of October, ALD's owners Société Générale said: "There can be no certainty at this stage that these discussions will result in any agreement or transaction."

"Further announcements will be made when appropriate according to applicable laws."

In August, LeasePlan announced financial results for Q2 showing underlying profit before tax of €247.8 million (£212m), an 82.6% increase on the €135.7m (£116m) achieved in Q2 2020.

CEO of LeasePlan Tex Gunning said the record result in the second quarter was due to "excellent" used-car prices and a "strong performance" from its core leasing business.

"Our Q2 2021 order book reached a record high, partially driven by the



**ALD**  
**Automotive**

semiconductor shortage which has delayed new car deliveries," he added. "In line with our strategic assumptions, we see an acceleration in the demand for car-as-a-service (CaaS) and for clean, private mobility across all our markets."

ALD's Q3 financial results, released in the past two weeks, showed profit before tax had increased

86.6% compared with Q3 2020, from €418.7m (£358m) to €781.1m (£668m).

ALD CEO Tim Albertsen said: "We have again posted strong remarketing results this quarter, profiting from our solid supply position and our leading digital platform in a red-hot market for used cars."

"With margins outpacing operating expenses and a low cost of risk, ALD has realised a record performance so far this year, putting us in a good position to deliver the investments anticipated in our strategic plan, Move 2025."

ALD revealed its five-year strategic

plan – Move 2025 – in November 2020, highlighting its ambition to become a major mobility provider.

The leasing company aims to develop mobility products and services by growing its digital capabilities and developing new mobility partnerships, while growing its new and used vehicle leasing fleet.

LeasePlan, meanwhile, has its sights set on becoming the first fully digital CaaS company.

The synergies are obvious, but the combination of such global operations could face pressure from regulators through anti-competition laws.

In the Nordics and in some southern European countries, for example, the combined businesses would have a market share of up to 70%.

A statement from LeasePlan said: "Any potential transaction would be subject to various conditions precedent, including receipt of all necessary regulatory approvals."

**316,000**  
combined car and van risk  
fleet in the UK



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ACCELERATION  
IN THE DEMAND  
FOR CAR-AS-A-  
SERVICE**

**TEX GUNNING, LEASEPLAN**



# Government provides £240k funding to support small fleet electric switch

Phone app will enable companies to decide which vehicles are most suitable to go electric

By Gareth Roberts

**A** new, Government-backed total cost of ownership (TCO) app that tracks business journeys is aiming to help small fleet operators switch to electric vehicles (EVs).

The Go to Zero project is looking for up to 250 businesses to take part in a trial phase from January 2022, before the free-to-use app and dashboard is launched into the wider market.

By assessing individual journeys and likely charging patterns using the app, which is downloaded on to the driver's phone, Go to Zero's dashboard highlights the most cost-effective replacement vehicle to the fleet decision-maker.

"Electric vans can help businesses save money without affecting the way they work," explained Mat Thomson, co-founder of Love My EV and Go to Zero's project manager.

"For SMEs (small- to medium-sized enterprises), the hard bit is seeing that the total cost is lower even when the price tag can be higher.

"Small businesses also need to be confident that they are picking the right vehicle for their needs."

The pressure is on fleet operations



The Go to Zero tracking app is loaded to the driver's mobile and acts in a similar way to a telematics device

of all sizes to begin transitioning their company vehicles to electric ahead of a ban on the sale of new internal combustion engine (ICE) cars and vans from 2030.

Also, with more clean air zones on the horizon and London's ultra-low emission zone expanded last week, older, more polluting vehicles could be facing charges.

Thomson said: "We set up Go to Zero to help SMEs see their best options. We use a journey-tracking app to find a vehicle that is practical and affordable. We can also check how each business can make savings by charging with cheap and green energy."

The project, which has been developed by consumer EV comparison website Love My EV and journey tracking app Eloy, has received £240,000 from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) and Innovate UK under the Government's Transitioning to Zero Emission Vehicles Programme to specifically target smaller fleet operators.

The initiative is also being supported by Energy Saving Trust. Project manager Will Minter-Kemp told *Fleet News*: "Go to Zero offers a zero-cost, easy to implement and thorough way for small businesses to understand

how they could incorporate electric vehicles into their operations – and what this would mean.

"Their services take the hard work out of realising the true potential of EVs as potentially low-cost and more convenient solutions."

Separate research appears to show an appetite among SMEs for making the switch to plug-in vehicles. More than a third (37%) of companies with fewer than 100 employees said they either already operated or plan to adopt an EV within the next three years, compared with less than a quarter (23%) in 2019, according to Arval Mobility Observatory research.

One of the first SMEs to sign up to the Go to Zero trial was Burton Computers, which provides IT support to other Staffordshire SMEs. Manager Emma Carruthers said that, while she wanted to reduce the company's carbon footprint, she was "overwhelmed" by the initial cost when looking at electric vans.

"We've signed up to Go to Zero to help us work out how to approach it, while we're busy focusing on growing and running a successful business," she explained.

It takes between five and 20 minutes to set up your business on the system,

with fleet decision-makers asked questions around the size and type of business, as well as the annual mileage of the vehicle, where it is usually stored overnight/when not in use and the typical payloads involved.

Drivers are invited to download the free journey tracking app that relays data during their working hours, much like a telematics device.

After a week or so, businesses can then check the potential for switching each vehicle and compare total cost for leasing or finance, based on charging patterns.



**THE HARD BIT IS SEEING THAT THE TOTAL COST IS LOWER EVEN WHEN THE PRICE TAG CAN BE HIGHER**

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# Mix of 'enthusiasm and caution' for climate commitments at COP26

Eleven manufacturers pledge to be zero-emission by 2040, but several opt out of deal

By Gareth Roberts

**A** pledge from 28 fleet operators to run zero-emission fleets by 2030 was the most significant outcome of an underwhelming Transport Day at COP26 in Glasgow. It also saw a commitment from 11 manufacturers for all new car and van sales to be zero emission globally by 2040 and no later than 2035 in leading markets.

The businesses making the fleet commitment included Astra Zeneca, BT, LeasePlan, National Grid, Sky, and Tesco.

But there were some major manufacturers that did not sign the zero-emission deal.

Those that did make the pledge, included Ford, General Motors, Mercedes-Benz, Jaguar Land Rover, BYD Auto and Volvo Cars. However, Stellantis (Fiat, Chrysler, Citroën, Peugeot, Vauxhall), Toyota, Nissan, Honda, BMW, Volkswagen and Toyota opted not to sign.

Volkswagen says the deal does not work for developing countries that lack renewable energy sources and charging infrastructure for electric vehicles (EVs). While it stressed it is "fully committed" to electrification, it said that the pace of this will differ from region to region dependent on "local political decisions driving



UK prime minister Boris Johnson addresses delegates at the Glasgow conference

EV and infrastructure investments".

Furthermore, it said: "We believe an accelerated shift to electro-mobility has to go in line with an energy transition towards 100% renewables."

Operating in more than 170 countries, Toyota says it has consistently achieved "industry-leading vehicle CO<sub>2</sub> reductions".

"This is based on developing and bringing to market a full line-up of electrified vehicles to expand the options for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> practically and sustainably – including hybrid, plug-in hybrid, battery electric and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles."

It added: "We will provide the most suitable vehicles, including zero-emission products, in response to the diverse economic environments, clean energy and charging infrastructure readiness, industrial policies and customer needs in each country and region."

The UK, Sweden, Norway, Poland, New Zealand and Canada also signed up to the COP26 car and van deal. Pledging to convert their car and van fleets to zero emission vehicles by 2035 at the latest (a date already announced by the UK Government), they also promised to introduce policies that will enable, accelerate and incentivise the transition to zero-emission vehicles.

However, like some carmakers,

many major economies failed to sign the deal, including big polluters such as the US, China, Germany and France.

Paul Hollick, chair of the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP), believes the agreement should be greeted both with "enthusiasm and a degree of caution".

"The aspirations on a global, national and localised fleet basis are to be applauded and mark the almost certain end of the combustion engine in new vehicles on a global basis within a couple of decades," he said. "However, aspirations are simply that,

and the proof of their sincerity lies in the support that will be provided by governments to manufacturers, fleets and motorists to help them make this transition.

The AFP wants a roadmap produced as soon as possible to find out how the Government plans to assist those UK fleets who have committed to electrify by 2030.

"This is a target that is certainly achievable but only with the right investment in everything from vehicle production to charging infrastructure," he added.



**THE ASPIRATIONS ON A GLOBAL, NATIONAL AND LOCALISED FLEET BASIS ARE TO BE APPLAUDED**

PAUL HOLICK, AFP

## HGVs MUST BE ZERO-EMISSION BY 2040

The Government has announced it will phase out new, non-zero-emission heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) weighing 26 tonnes and less by 2035, with all new HGVs sold in the UK to be zero emission by 2040.

The announcement, made to coincide with Transport Day at COP26, means all new road vehicles in the UK will be zero emission within the next two decades. It followed a consultation which closed in September.

The Government has previously announced that it would end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans from 2030.

Olly Craughan, head of corporate social responsibility at DPD Group UK, welcomed the move and urged those involved in the supply of alternative green HGVs to "press the fast-forward button" on their development plans so fleets can make the transition as soon as possible.

"DPD is one of the brands leading the way on the decarbonisation of fleets but bringing down the cost of green HGVs and creating adequate supply will be essential to the UK hitting this target," he said.



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\*Data supplied by EV-Database (EVDB)

# Gordon Stephen and Peter Eldridge join the Fleet News Hall of Fame

Inaugural Wellbeing Award winner and leasing customer service winners are also announced



By Stephen Briers

**G**ordon Stephen and Peter Eldridge have entered the Fleet News Hall of Fame, a fitting tribute to their outstanding contributions to fleet during their long and successful careers.

Their awards were among several announced at the FN50 dinner held at London's Park Plaza Westminster Bridge Hotel earlier this month.

Stephen has been managing director of FN50 leasing company Ogilvie for 22 years. Among his proudest achievements is building a

team culture that prioritises customer service, as shown by multiple awards won over the years including Fleeteye, *Fleet News* and FN50 customer services trophies.

Colleagues describe his leadership style as "fair, honest and considered" and say he has "inspired and mentored" them to get to where they are today. He has, they add, "the absolute respect of every single person around him".

CEO Duncan Ogilvie called Stephen "a true gent, an honourable man... and a relatively good golfer! His induction

to the Hall of Fame is an extremely fitting tribute".

Eldridge has also earned his spurs in the fleet industry, enjoying a career spanning more than 58 years and encompassing almost every aspect of customer service and technical support.

He joined the newly formed ICFM in 1993, became a board member in 1998, a director in '99 and has been a lead tutor for the past 22 years. He remains the longest-serving board member of the ICFM and was awarded an honorary fellowship in 2015.

Eldridge was instrumental in the merger of the ICFM with ACFO to create the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP) in 2020. Without him, the birth of the AFP would almost certainly have not happened.

The training, education and coaching provided by the ICFM (and now the AFP) has given hundreds of fleet professionals the skills and ability to attain better things in their life and there is an army of fleet operators who will be forever grateful to Eldridge's dedication to raising standards in the industry.



## LEASING CUSTOMER SERVICE AWARD WINNERS



The winning Zenith Customer Relationship Management Team has outstanding net promoter scores and displayed amazing support for fleet customers during the Covid crisis. One of those customers said: "Their fleet expertise is second to none. The team have a truly innovative approach and always deliver on our fleet goals." Collecting the award are (from left) customer relationship directors Jon Smith, Gaynor McNicholas and Alan Bastey.



Individual star for 2021 Samantha Seaton is an exceptional sales account manager with more than 18 years' experience with Arval UK. She is described by her manager as a "role model", and one customer said: "Her service is always exceptional, and she goes above and beyond to help both us and our driver population. We feel really lucky to have her!" There can surely be no higher praise. Pictured collecting the award on her behalf is Kieron Hollis, senior account manager at Arval UK who was highly commended as a Rising Star in the awards.



FN50 Rising Star for 2021 Ifraan Zaman, customer service executive at Alphabet (GB), has gone from being an agency member of staff to customer service executive and compliance champion in just three years. His manager describes him as a "truly special person" who "positively impacts everyone he interacts with and is a fantastic example to not only his team and peers, but to the wider business".

## FLEET NEWS WELLBEING AWARD

The inaugural Fleet News Wellbeing Award, sponsored by Cox Automotive, has been won by Arval UK for its outstanding approach to staff mental health and wellbeing.

The award was introduced this year in honour of James Davis, customer insight director at Cox Automotive, who sadly died in July.

He was respected across the fleet industry and touched the lives of many people.

In a further tribute to James, Fleet News will be making a donation to Alzheimer's Association, a charity close to his heart. You can also contribute via our Just Giving page [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/fn50](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/fn50).

In addition to the winner, seven other companies entered the Wellbeing Award and all were presented with a framed certificate as recognition for creating a culture of emotional, mental, social and physical wellbeing and support for their employees.

They are:

- Athlon UK
- Auto Trader UK
- DriveTech
- LeasePlan UK
- Reflex Vehicle Hire
- Volvo Car UK
- Zenith

Fleet News editor-in-chief Stephen Briers said: "We hope



this award will help to raise the awareness and profile of such an important issue and to remove any stigma around the subject. As one of the entrants said in their submission: 'it's ok not to be ok.'"

Arval UK was recognised as the winner for its comprehensive and structured approach to staff wellbeing that incorporates a vast array of initiatives and programmes.

Staff testimonials sum up what this award, and the winner, are all about.

One said: "I'm so lucky that my company has caregiving at the heart of its culture – it really makes a difference, knowing someone is thinking of you."

Another, commenting on a health and happiness initiative, said: "I had given up running, I just didn't have the motivation, energy or desire. Since this challenge started, I've got out there. I love the energy it's giving me; I finally feel my mental health is in a much more positive place."



Collecting the award from James Leese, chief customer officer at Cox Automotive UK, is Lakshmi Moorthy, managing director of Arval UK

FleetNews



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2022

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MID-FEBRUARY 2022  
Shortlist revealed

16 MARCH 2022  
Winners revealed at Fleet News Awards  
black-tie ceremony, Grosvenor House  
Hotel, Park Lane, London

It is wonderful to be acknowledged by a transport industry leader. The ceremony is a fantastic opportunity to network and I would recommend anyone to attend

Fraser Crichton,  
corporate fleet  
operations manager at  
Dundee City Council –  
winner of environmental  
innovation 2021

# LINE: NOVEMBER 26

## THE CATEGORIES

### Trucks

Best two-axle lightweight rigid truck up to 12 tonnes (NEW)  
Best rigid truck more than 12 tonnes (NEW)  
Best tractor unit (NEW)

### Cars

Best Small Car  
Best Lower Medium Car  
Best Compact SUV  
Best Mid-size SUV  
Best Premium SUV  
Best Compact Premium Car (NEW)  
Best Premium Car

### Alternative fuels

Best Zero Emission Car – up to £35,000 (NEW)  
Best Zero Emission Car – more than £35,000 (NEW)  
Best Zero Emission Van  
Best Zero Emission Truck (NEW)

## HEADLINE AWARDS

Fleet Supplier of the Year  
Fleet Manufacturer of the Year – Car (VOTED)  
Fleet Manufacturer of the Year – Van (VOTED)  
Fleet Manufacturer of the Year – Truck (VOTED)  
Fleet Manager of the Year  
Fleet News Hall of Fame

## FLEET AWARDS

Excellence in Fleet Safety and Compliance  
Environmental Fleet Trailblazer  
Fleet Benefits Scheme of the Year (NEW)  
Most Improved Fleet  
Diversity and Inclusivity in Fleet (NEW)  
Fleet of the Year – up to 250 vehicles (NEW)  
Fleet of the Year – 251-1,000 vehicles  
Fleet of the Year – more than 1,000 vehicles

## SUPPLIER AWARDS

Leasing Company of the Year  
(up to 20,000 vehicles)  
Leasing Company of the Year  
(more than 20,000 vehicles)  
Rental Company of the Year  
Outstanding Product of the Year  
Fleet Customer Partnership of the Year  
Fleet Dealer of the Year

## MANUFACTURER AWARDS

Vans  
Best Small Van  
Best Medium Van  
Best Large Van  
Best All-terrain Workhorse (NEW)

Companies have been granted a one week extension to submit their entries to the Fleet News Awards 2022 and follow in the footsteps of British Gas's Steve Winter, the 2021 fleet manager of the year, who said: "Any award is a nice recognition of the work that you, your team or your business undertake, but to get it from *Fleet News* is a clear validation and recognition from industry experts of your achievements."

Or Fraser Crichton, corporate fleet operations manager at Dundee City Council, winner of the environmental innovation award, who said: "It is wonderful to be acknowledged for our innovative EV strategy by a transport industry leader such as *Fleet News*."

Like them, you can boost your business credibility, as well as your own careers and staff motivation. All it takes is half an hour of your time!

Interested? Then enter the Fleet News Awards 2022 – your opportunity for recognition within the fleet sector and beyond.

Judges are looking for quality, innovation and evidence of improvements in each of the fleet, manufacturer, supplier and headline categories.

contact Sandra Evitt on 01733 468123 or [sandra.evitt@bauermedia.co.uk](mailto:sandra.evitt@bauermedia.co.uk)



# What does mobility-as-a-service mean to fleets?

MaaS has long been hailed as a game changer in the fleet sector, but so far it appears to have had limited impact. Two leading fleet decision-makers discuss its potential. *Andrew Ryan* reports



## SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Gavin Franks, director of business services at the AA



The launch of our latest Operational Fleet Insight Report in collaboration with Rivus Fleet Solutions revealed that positivity towards electric vehicles (EVs) is at an all-time

high among fleets, with more than two-thirds (67%) likely to adopt EVs within five years. This marks a sharp rise from 2017, when only 23% of fleet decision-makers were considering

EV adoption, indicating the technology is migrating from the early adopter phase to one of widespread acceptance.

There are numerous reasons for this change in sentiment, some financial, some practical. For example, 82% of decision-makers state that the quality of EVs has improved since 2020, while 84% feel that the manufacturers' range of available EV products is superior. Meanwhile, 66% of fleet managers believe EVs require less servicing, while 65% note that EVs have better wholelife costs than diesel or petrol.

Although fleet managers are starting to look more positively at the broader range of benefits, there are still barriers where it comes to the practical elements of EV adoption. A third (32%) have identified the lack of charging points across the country and in the workplace as an issue.

We're delighted to see greater awareness evolving among fleets about the benefits of EVs, despite a third of respondents flagging a nationwide lack of charging points as an issue. However, we know first-hand that charging infrastructure is improving daily, with charge points increasing across the UK. While there is still a way to go with suitable HGV EV models, we believe fleets will see a change quicker than they anticipate with LCVs and the pace of adoption will accelerate.

To download the latest report visit <https://bit.ly/3BvfotP>

**T**he transition of a fleet decision-maker into a mobility manager has been much talked about since the concept of mobility-as-a-service (MaaS) arrived to loud fanfares several years ago.

Alternatives to the company car or van such as e-scooters, car- and ride-sharing were going to transform the fleet sector – and quickly.

However, on the surface not much seems to have changed as MaaS so far has made little impact on the UK's transport sector as a whole.

But the technologies continue to develop through numerous trials and projects and have recently gained further momentum through the Government's Transport Decarbonisation Plan.

What will this mean to fleets?

Here, two leading fleet decision-makers – Lorna McAtear, fleet manager for National Grid, and Colin Hutt, fleet and environmental manager at Clarion Response – discuss MaaS.

**Fleet News: Why do you think so few fleets seem to be adopting MaaS solutions at present?**

**Lorna McAtear:** I think it's because there hasn't been an appetite to change. We like our cars, we like our independence, we like the freedom to move around as we wish, and we don't like our unreliable public transport.

We also don't fully understand it. What mobility isn't going to do is get rid of the company cars that actually need to be company cars.

What I hope it will do is enhance choice for people and allow them more flexibility to do what they want to do in the most efficient way.

**Colin Hutt:** It's kind of habit, isn't it? If you employ a plumber or carpenter, they expect to have a van. If we told them we're not providing them with a van, here's an Oyster card instead, I guess we'd get a funny response.

**FN: Why is it the mood changing?**

**LM:** It's the clean air side of things: Net Zero means companies will have to start thinking about their Scope 3 emissions, including those for business travel in modes other than company vehicles. It's very easy for people at the moment to say 'you know what, let's just get rid of cars,

give everybody cash and that solves our Scope 1 emissions.

But you're just kicking that time bomb down the line to later explode in somebody else's face. Scope 3 is here, it needs measuring, and we need to look at what we do.

It's not just about changing out the vehicles that we have now for more efficient, greener ones.

There are also a lot of employees that want to do something different. They don't want to be forced into a company car just because that's come as part of the package.

They want to be able to make that choice because of where they live. It's a lifestyle choice as well.

**CH:** Like most companies, we're moving to a zero emission fleet and we hope by 2030 we will achieve that, but we're also thinking 'hang on a minute, probably the most efficient or the cleanest vehicle is one that doesn't actually exist. Do we actually need a vehicle for some of our operators?'

The cleanest solutions would be no appointment, a virtual appointment or no travel at all. I'm not saying that's possible, but that's probably where we'd like to be at some point.

We're also looking at mobility around financial efficiencies. Keeping a van on the road costs us something like £11,000 a year, so that's a fair chunk of money that we could divert into some other form of travel.

We've looked at some solutions and the best-case scenario could see us save as much as £10,000 per operative.

**FN: How may fleet mobility look in the future?**

**LM:** Mobility will be different for every fleet, so it may well be just an umbrella name for different modes of transport.

Below that you could still have company car schemes, commercial vehicles and salary sacrifice, but you could also put train journeys, car-sharing and anything else in there.

Utopia for me is I get up in the morning, have a look at an app which works a bit like Google Maps where you enter your destination and where I'm starting from, and it tells me what I need to do.

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## FOR MORE INSIGHT, WATCH THE VIDEO

Lorna McAtear and Colin Hutt discussed mobility-as-a-solution in more depth during a session on 'MaaS: Adopting a flexible strategy for getting people from A to B', sponsored by Nexus Vehicle Rental, at last month's Fleet & Mobility Live. To view this video and to access all of this year's Fleet & Mobility Live seminar content scan here.



From left, Colin Hutt, fleet and environmental manager at Clarion Response, James Maden, director of sales and marketing at Nexus Vehicle Rental, and Lorna McAtear, fleet manager at National Grid

If it's sunny outside, the app would tell me I could walk to the station to get the train and, when I get to the other end, I get a bus.

In winter, my utopia would be for the app to tell me to get a taxi to stay dry, don't go on the train because there are leaves on the track and we're actually going to take an alternative route instead.

I want something that's going to make my life really, really easy, but we've a long way to go to get there.

**CH:** In some places it might be easier because in London, for example, you've got a great public transport infrastructure where you can use things like an Oyster Card.

There might be guys who would quite happily use a mountain bike or an e-bike and we've been talking about other ideas such as van-sharing.

Do the guys need a van every single day? What about satellite vans? Could we have a single larger van that transports people to their jobs, dropping tools off? This could take several other vans off the road.

Perhaps we could replace vans with mopeds that are cheaper to run and can dodge in and out of traffic.

We've also been looking at the potential of pop-up stores on our London estates where we would store tools and stock. So, instead of carrying those things around with them, our operatives could go to one of those locations and grab the stuff they need.

### **FN: What should a fleet thinking about MaaS do?**

**LM:** The first thing is to start collecting the right data. You need to know who is doing what, where they are going and how are they getting there.

One of the issues a fleet manager may face,

**I WANT  
SOMETHING THAT'S  
GOING TO MAKE MY  
LIFE REALLY, REALLY  
EASY, BUT WE'VE A  
LONG WAY TO GO TO  
GET THERE**

**LORNA McATEAR, NATIONAL GRID**

particularly those in large corporations, is that the relevant information won't necessarily sit within your fleet. Different data systems won't be talking to each other, so fleets need to start looking across the piece and understand how they can gather that information.

Fleets should also talk to their suppliers and align any disparate contracts because they're going to start merging some of those things together.

They also need to engage with their stakeholders to work out where they want to go and how they can go forward.

**CH:** I think it's about starting that engagement with the drivers and asking them if they would be happy to use an alternative.

Even if, say, it was that we provided them with a

bike or an e-bike and said you don't have to use it every day, but perhaps there might be a few weeks of the year or a couple of months of the year where the weather's nice and they might fancy doing their work like that.

It's also about working with your operations and planning teams to make sure that if you've got people wanting to adopt that, we can change our processes so they can still be effective.

### **FN: What are the next steps?**

**CH:** We're not practically doing any of these things yet, but we know we've got to work with our operations team to look at the most workable alternatives.

We've already asked for volunteers and we've got someone who's prepared to try an Oyster Card. We've got another guy who'd rather ride a moped than drive a van.

Our next step will probably be to trial some options. If it works great, if it doesn't then we will see what we can learn from that.

**LM:** The next step is for a fleet to use the information they've gathered, understand what they could do, and pull it all together to create a plan.

I don't expect to have any kind of a full MaaS solution for another three or four years, but for other fleets that could be next year, in four years, or in 10 years.

It's going to be different dependent on what mobility solutions are offered, whether a company is going the whole hog or taking a softly-softly approach, and how quickly some of the suppliers can move into this space.



# ELECTRIC AVENUES

While rapid charging grabs the headlines and investment, on-street charging could be even more important to electrifying the UK's fleets. *Andrew Ryan* reports



A

s the electric vehicle (EV) industry progresses rapidly, many of the early obstacles are being overcome.

Vehicle range and availability are becoming less of an issue as more manufacturers are making more EVs, while the distance they can be driven on a single charge is also increasing.

But one issue does consistently remain among the biggest obstacles: the public charging network.

A recent survey by BP Pulse, for example, found inadequate public charging was the main concern of 54% of fleet managers and 61% of fleet drivers.

It is widely acknowledged that a successful future infrastructure will feature a mix of rapid charging at locations such as existing petrol stations, motorway services or purpose-built hubs, destination charging at supermarkets and shopping centres, and on-street kerbside charging.

The number of public charge points has increased steadily in recent years – ZapMap figures show there are now more than 24,000 in the UK, with around 700 being added each month.

The Government acknowledges this is not enough

and has announced hundreds of millions of pounds of funding to boost this number.

This includes the £950 million rapid charging fund, a sum which dwarfs the figures allocated for improving on-street charging.

Many industry figures feel on-street charging has a bigger role to play.

Government funding schemes for kerbside charging include the £20m on-street residential charge point scheme (ORCS), which supports local authorities in installing EV infrastructure on street and in public car parks, and a new £90m local EV infrastructure fund to support the roll-out of larger on-street charging schemes and rapid charging hubs across England.

"To our mind, the issue of kerbside charging trumps everything else," says Paul Hollick, chair of the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP).

"Adequate kerbside charging is vital to the corporate fleet sector being able to achieve its 2030 electrification objectives, but many are hitting significant problems with those employees that do not have a home charging solution."

## TOLERATE INCONVENIENCE

Many early-adopter fleets are content to tolerate some inconvenience, such as having to use multiple apps for charge points and a limited public charging network, as they are enthusiastic about the technology.

A large number of companies have also tended to ensure that the first batches of drivers to take EVs in their organisations have access to off-street parking and can charge their vehicles at home overnight to make the transition to the new technology as smooth as possible.

But, as EV adoption rates increase, it is inevitable that drivers who do not have those ideal home circumstances are required to switch into EVs.

This may be because they live in a flat, terraced house or rented accommodation, or that they do not want to park their own vehicle on the road to accommodate their works van on their driveway, potentially increasing their own insurance premium and making their private vehicle susceptible to damage from passing traffic.

The AFP has formed a kerbside charging group to



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## SPONSOR'S COMMENT

David Savage, vice-president, UK&I, Geotab



We've just participated at our first United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) and are pretty pleased that we were the only telematics company at the event. It was important for us to be there.

One of the central themes at COP26 was to put electric vehicle (EV) transition at the heart of its strategy to clean up our environment. It's not without reason. The transport sector accounts for more than a quarter of carbon emissions in the UK.

Both nations and corporations alike can no longer prioritise growth and economic development to the detriment of the environment. Current projections highlight an urgent need for a significant reduction in emissions before 2030 in order to mitigate a climate disaster.

But why wait until 2030? EVs are a fast-growing alternative to internal combustion-engined vehicles and the stats agree. Sales of EVs have surged 160% globally in the first half of 2021 with nearly a quarter of all vehicles sold in Europe in September 2021 being electric or plug-in hybrids.

The recent petrol shortage just accelerated a trend that is gaining strong momentum.

But EVs are not only good for the environment – they can save you money. Fleet operators who embrace electrification now can benefit from generous Government subsidies. These help to provide a lower total cost of vehicle ownership. A recent Geotab study highlighted that nearly 40% of UK fleet vehicles are ready for the switch to electric, offer reliable range and can provide cost reductions in most business cases.

It takes strong decisions and collective change when nations, governments and companies band together to make a change for good. But when backed up by good business sense, it makes the switch to EVs a win-win situation. Why wait until 2030? Make that switch today.

Visit our website to discover how we can help aid your fleet's transition to electric, or contact [davidsavage@geotab.com](mailto:davidsavage@geotab.com)

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tackle these fleet challenges. This will work with fleets, charging providers and local authorities to ensure that charging is available in the places where it is needed, and includes members from companies such as Virgin Media, SSE, Defra, Kier, Centrica and Mitie.

"Together these businesses are operating thousands of EVs and many are finding that more than half of their drivers really need kerbside charging, especially those that are adopting electric vans, whose drivers are proving less likely to have their own driveway," says Hollick.

"At the moment, it's not an exaggeration to say that they are muddling through with a mixture of depot-based charging and use of high-speed public facilities.

"However, both of these bring sizeable operational compromises, either needing vehicles to return to base or taking time out of the working day for charging."

London private hire company Addison Lee, for example, which last month committed to

transitioning its standard fleet to fully electric by 2023, says access to on-street chargers would save its drivers 16 hours of their time each month compared with if they solely relied on the public rapid charging network.

### PAUCITY OF CHARGERS

The paucity in the provision of on-street charging was highlighted earlier this year by Centrica after it made Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to more than 400 councils.

This found there were then 7,682 on-street chargers in the UK with only another 9,317 planned for the next four years: an average of 35 per local authority.

One potential short-term fix for areas which are poorly served with on-street charging facilities could be for councils to allow residents to run cables from their terraced houses across the pavement to their EV, but this creates a potential trip hazard for pedestrians.

Norfolk County Council, for example, has ➔





From left, Anthony Eskinazi, CEO of JustPark, Liam Griffin, CEO of Addison Lee, and Mike Strahlman, director of EV at JustPark

Put together a new EV strategy that acknowledges that, particularly in Norwich's terraced streets, many people do not have drives.

As a temporary fix until more charge points are installed, the council has proposed charging people £51.36 for a two-year licence to permit cables to be run across pavements.

Grahame Bygrave, director of highways and waste at Norfolk County Council, says the charges would be in line with other highway charges, such as allowing a skip on the road.

Council officers would need to carry out an assessment to make sure the cable is safe and secure and does not impede people in wheelchairs and those with pushchairs.

"It's a tricky one because there is the issue of people using footways," he says. "We wouldn't want hundreds of cables trailing over the footways every few metres."

The longer-term solution is, of course, to provide more on-street charge points, which is the purpose of the Government's ORCS initiative.

This supports local authorities in installing EV infrastructure on-street and in public car parks, with 75% of the cost met from a national fund with the remainder paid by the councils.

Since its inception in 2017, more than 140 local authority projects have benefited from the scheme, but research from DevicePilot, a service monitoring and management platform for EV charge point operators, found 52% of the 378 councils it contacted with FOI requests had spent nothing on EV charge points in the previous 12 months.

Hollick says many councils do not have the money



**ADEQUATE KERBSIDE CHARGING IS VITAL TO THE CORPORATE FLEET SECTOR BEING ABLE TO ACHIEVE ITS 2030 OBJECTIVES**

**PAUL HOLLICK, AFP**

for the charge points even if they have the will to install them: a local authority in the north-west which has not installed any charge points this year explained this to DevicePilot by saying: "We have experienced more than £100m in budget reductions from Central Government since 2010, which is a 50% funding cut."

Hollick adds: "This leaves fleets in a position where they are having to work out which of their drivers don't have access to kerbside charging and lobby local authorities individually for the installation of chargers in specific streets."

"This is proving time-consuming and not particularly effective. It is just not really working as a system and is proving a barrier for fleets."

#### THINGS CAN ONLY GET BETTER

There are numerous signs that the situation will improve soon, however.

The Government is due to publish its Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy later this year (see boxout on P24), which will set out the future of the UK's public network, while it also has the ORCS scheme mentioned earlier.

Grants given under ORCS have already been key to many kerbside charging schemes.

For example, Connected Kerb is working with Milton Keynes Council and Ringway to install 250 charging points in the older areas of the town where there are fewer off-street parking options after securing a £1.1m grant from the Office for Zero Emissions Vehicles.

It is also working with the London Borough of Lambeth to show how affordable and accessible public EV charging infrastructure can be deployed to tackle EV inequality. It will deliver 22 on-street EV chargers across 11 council estates.

"Unfortunately, some communities are being failed by a classic chicken-and-egg scenario," says Chris Pateman-Jones, CEO of Connected Kerb.

"Without high EV adoption, charge point operators won't build public charging and, without reliable charging, why would anyone go electric? We have designed our business model to overcome this and with Lambeth Council, we are delivering a fairer and equitable clean transport future."

Centrica's research found the distribution of on-street chargers in the UK is uneven, with southern councils installing 1,203 more chargers on their streets over the past three years than ↗



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their northern counterparts. This gap is set to widen with local authorities in southern England set to install two-and-a-half times as many on-street chargers as councils in northern England, the Midlands, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland combined.

One area which is well-served is central London, with Westminster City Council earlier this year becoming the first local authority in the UK to install 1,000 on-street charge points.

Working in partnership with Siemens, it is on track to deliver another 500 chargers in the area by April 2022.

### FUNDING SOLUTION

Shell is also offering councils a potential solution to the funding issue. It acquired Ubitricity, which has designed charging hardware that can fit into lamp posts to provide charging facilities without taking up additional space, earlier this year.

Ubitricity currently has around 3,600 chargers installed in the UK, and Shell has set an ambition to have 50,000 Ubitricity-branded on-street chargers across the UK by the end of 2025.

In order to drive take-up, Shell has said it will support local authorities with a financing offer to install more on-street chargers in towns and cities across the UK at potentially zero cost.

Shell is prepared to cover the remaining 25% of costs required from councils as part of ORCS, subject to commercial terms.

"It's vital to speed up the pace of EV charger installation across the UK and this aim and financing offer is designed to help achieve that," says David Bunch, UK country chair for Shell UK.

New in the on-street charge point arena is parking platform JustPark. It joined forces with Octopus Energy Group to last month launch FleetCharge, which it describes as "the UK's first fleet-focused community charging solution".

JustPark's core business is an app which allows users to find, reserve and pay for parking across a network of more than 50,000 spaces at car parks, hotels, residential driveways and other real estate providers.

Mike Strahlman, director of EV at JustPark, says FleetCharge guarantees that a charge point will be located at one of these parking locations within a five-minute walk of a given driver's home, or



it will install one at a new site within that radius.

"We can do that through our expertise in finding, sourcing and matching supply and demand for parking spaces, and then we can electrify those spaces with our partnership with Octopus," he adds.

"Using our app and technology, we can map that space to a driver so they can book it for when they need it, or we can keep it available to that fleet at all times."

JustPark will fund the installation of the charge point and consolidate the total cost of charging, parking and hardware into a single

payment over a fixed-term for a fleet.

One of its first customers is Addison Lee, which is investing £160m to fully electrify its 4,000-strong private hire fleet by 2023.

"Many vehicle owners in London and UK cities lack access to off-street parking, and the adoption of EVs will only succeed if drivers have access to a mix of charging options," says Liam Griffin, CEO of Addison Lee.

"Following our pledge to electrify our fleet by 2023, we know how important it is to support our partner drivers with suitable charging solutions for their vehicles."

## GOVERNMENT URGED TO PROVIDE CLARITY ON CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE PLANS

The Government is due to publish its Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy in the "coming months" and industry experts hope this will provide clarity on what will be delivered.

The strategy is due to outline the roles and responsibilities for stakeholders across central and local government, the market and the energy sector to ensure well developed local planning and deployment of public charge points.

In response to a zero emissions vehicle report published last month by the House of Commons Transport Committee, the Government says: "There is unlikely to be any one ideal solution appropriate for all areas.

"Instead, local areas will need a tailored mix

of charging infrastructure, which may include some rapid charging provision in addition to kerbside on-street charging.

"We agree the public charging network needs to include both a reliable network of high-powered charge points along major roads, and well-maintained local charging provision."

Earlier this year, clean transport campaign group Transport & Environment (T&E) worked with Cenex to undertake an examination of the state of the UK's charging network.

It identified four key issues: addressing the 'postcode lottery' of the uneven spread of charge points throughout the UK; making the charging system far simpler and more reliable

than it is at the moment; tackling the high grid costs for connecting some charge points to the electricity grid; and reaching a clear consensus of what kind of a network the UK needs.

"What is that balance between kerbside, destination and rapid charging?" asks Greg Archer, UK director of T&E.

"Until we reach those decisions, we don't know how many chargers we need, and if we don't know how many chargers we need, we certainly don't know whether we're on track to deliver them.

"These are key issues we hope will be addressed in the infrastructure strategy planned for the end of the year."



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# Cutting costs through streamlined processes

Reduced lease cycles among other improvements have helped Shaun Atton to generate some significant savings to reinvest into the fleet. *Jess Maguire* reports

**S**haun Atton has made considerable progress during his short four-year fleet management career, illustrated by the success of Auto Windscreens at the Fleet News Awards.

In 2020, Auto Windscreens won most improved fleet and was highly commended in the fleet of the year up to 1,000 vehicles; this year, it was named fleet of the year, with Atton highly commended as fleet manager of the year.

It's been an impressive rise for the former apprentice technician. He is now responsible for an operation consisting of 310 light commercial vehicles and 41 cars, spending around 70% of his time managing the fleet and the rest on facilities.

Next year, the fleet is expected to grow by around 16% as the company recruits an additional 54 mobile technicians.

Planning is already well underway, in close consultation with its two leasing providers, Arnold Clark and Rivervale, with orders secured despite ongoing vehicle supply shortages.

"Our providers are aware of our ambitions for 2022 growth and the vehicles for this have been secured for the first quarter," Atton says.

"Alongside vehicle orders, we have engaged with suppliers of equipment for the fit-out of our vehicles, as we are aware there are longer lead times on some materials. Ensuring we have orders secured is paramount."

Atton has extended the company's lease cycle for vans from three years to four, which has resulted in a £132,000 annual cost saving,

allowing the company to make further investment in the fleet.

This includes installation of new lightweight racking, which is offering additional savings through reduced fuel consumption.

Atton says the company's previous racking solution did not make it into a second lease cycle, whereas its new lightweight racking can be fitted into a replacement van, giving the company eight years use, as opposed to three.

"In terms of vehicle technology and reliability, a four-year lease is not a massive term to be running a van for," Atton says.

"There's a big investment that goes into our vehicles for racking and equipment – so there's a saving from not taking it out for three years.

"Some equipment gets recycled, some of it is not recyclable after three years – we get an extra year out the equipment fitted into our vehicles, giving us a huge saving."

The lease cycle for cars is three years. Atton left this unchanged as cars form part of a staff incentive package and, in most cases, newer vehicles result in more engaged team members.

## POOLED MILEAGE FLEXIBILITY

All vehicles are on pooled mileage contracts giving the company flexibility and eliminating the need to redistribute them.

Auto Windscreens can also service customers at its nationwide depots which helps to reduce fleet mileage.

Atton has limited the number of funders to two. It gives him a competitive benchmark on lease prices but also enables him to build stronger relationships with account managers compared with managing the company's previous five funders.

"We had been using our previous lease providers for the past 15-20 years, so it was one of our big projects. That's when we came up with Rivervale and Arnold Clark, which we've built a relationship with over many years," says Atton.

"In my experience, having additional funders can lead to confusion and less autonomy over damage and mileage terms. Now we're streamlined, we're able to negotiate in volume more effectively and have saved around 6% in lease costs.

"We own seven vehicles outright, of which six cover high mileage, meaning purchase worked out better than leasing."

The company also has support terms in

“OUR PROVIDERS ARE AWARE OF OUR AMBITIONS FOR 2022 GROWTH AND THE VEHICLES FOR THIS HAVE BEEN SECURED FOR THE FIRST QUARTER”

SHAUN ATTON,  
AUTO WINDSCREENS





Shaun Atton has reduced the number of funders to two, allowing him to build stronger relationships

**HEAD OF FLEET AND FACILITIES:**

Shaun Atton

**TIME IN ROLE:** Four years

**FLEET SIZE:** 351 (vans – 310; cars – 41)

**FUNDING METHOD:** Business contract hire

**REPLACEMENT CYCLE:** four years for

vans and three years for cars (30,000

miles per annum on pooled mileage)

**BRANDS ON FLEET:** vans – Ford, Renault;

cars – Volvo, Peugeot, Mercedes-Benz,

BMW, Lexus, Toyota

PICTURE CREDIT: BP



## FLEET OF THE YEAR (UP TO 1,000 VEHICLES)

**Winner: Auto Windscreens**

### SPONSOR'S COMMENT

Northgate Vehicle Hire is delighted to have presented the Fleet of the Year Award to Auto Windscreens. Neil McCrossan, sales and marketing director, who presented the award said: "It is clear that the innovations and changes implemented by fleet manager Shaun Atton and his team in driving the fleet strategy forward have already delivered significant benefits to all stakeholders and will continue to do so."



"It is fitting that they have been recognised and celebrated on this the industry's biggest night. We'd also like to offer our congratulations to Brecon Beacons National Park Authority who were highly commended in the category, and all the other finalists."

Auto Windscreens now refits its racking systems, giving them a second life



place with manufacturers who appear on its choice list and holds quarterly reviews with the account manager to ensure it receives the best terms, which feed down to the lease provider.

### CONNECTED AND ENGAGED FLEET

Over the past two years, Auto Windscreens has been focused on developing a connected and engaged fleet to manage risk and safety. It has integrated VisionTrack's connected camera solution with Webfleet's real-time telematics platform, moved its accident management in house, switched to an in-house claims management service and launched a new driver training programme.

The total incident rate as a percentage of the fleet is 17.3%, substantially below industry averages. Claims were made for all incidents in 2020.

Atton led the integration of the telematics software with the cameras for a single tracking and driver behaviour solution which helps protect drivers and track vehicles while reducing fuel and insurance costs.

"Knowing vehicle speed and g-force when an incident occurs, alongside real-time video footage, offers indisputable evidence to challenge claims," he says.

"It's helped reduce their frequency and decreased insurance costs by 7.5% this year."

The company has also improved fuel



# ATTON ON...



## ... trialling EVs

Auto Windscreens has engaged Energy Saving Trust to compile an electric vehicle (EV) report and is trialling vehicles with a view to having a fully electric fleet by 2030.

"There's not the right commercial vehicle out there for us yet. We've trialled the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter, Vauxhall Vivaro-e, Custom Transits – which only have a low roof. We'll keep trialling until the right vehicle comes along," says Atton.

"There's pockets of the country where we could implement a fully electric fleet if we had the right vehicle. We're at that stage where we know where the pockets are, where we could put an EV, but it's finding the right vehicle."

## FREE HOME CHARGERS

The company offers incentives to employees using an electric or hybrid company car, including an increased monthly budget and a home charge point installed free of charge.

It is also in the process of implementing an EV salary sacrifice scheme.

"We will offer the scheme to our senior management team first and filter it down; by the middle of 2022 it will be a group-wide scheme for all employees," says Atton.

"There will be some eligibility criteria, length of service, etc. But we will offer it to the bulk of staff, offering a tax saving for them and a fully maintained vehicle.

"It's going to slowly take away from the traditional company car and we'll see a lot of company car users adopting the salary sacrifice scheme, as there's some big savings involved."

consumption through route planning and is using telematics data to challenge unnecessary idling, reducing this from an average of 60 hours per month in 2019 to 27 in 2020.

Auto Windscreens will also be investing in factory-fitted integrated rear-view cameras for vehicles next year.

Atton's team has devised a bespoke fleet management system, built into Auto Windscreens' Field Service Management platform, that provides scheduling, personnel ID data, traceability and control.

It records licence details with real-time updates, while managing vehicle maintenance, servicing, MOT and tax information.

The company has developed the system over the past 12 months, adding dashboards and functionality including sending jobs to mechanics via tablets, whose work feeds into the company's management information (MI), creating digital logs for vehicle service history.

## PERFORMING OWN REPAIRS

With the system, Auto Windscreens has synchronised mechanics' equipment and diagnostic tests, enabling the company to service and repair vehicles itself, rather than visit a dealer, offering a saving of £22,000 per year.

Atton plans to develop the system further and in early 2022 will roll out a driver app that has been developed by its internal IT teams, to

accommodate both company van and car users.

"The app will have daily walkarounds on weekly vehicle checks, incident reporting, incident investigations and frequently asked questions," he says.

"Moving into Quarter 2 of next year, we will incorporate telematics data into the app to provide gamification for drivers. Now, our technicians see the driving scores through reports, and we see a bit of banter between them – it encourages better in-house competition. Instead, they'll be able to see that information on the app and drivers can visit it whenever they want."

A 'lone working' element will also be built into the app that triggers alerts if a driver hasn't moved for a specific period, or if a vehicle is not in a place it is expected to be, making use of geofencing on the technician's trackers.

"A trigger will prompt a phone call from our dispatch team to the technician to ensure everything is ok. It's about knowing where they are in difficulty and putting measures in place to act on that if they are," Atton says.

Auto Windscreens has also integrated BP Fuel Cards with its telematics system, where the card or BPme app are used for payment instead of cash, reducing downtime and increasing pandemic-related safety, as drivers don't have to leave vehicles to pay.

All emissions associated with the fleet are offset in partnership with BP Target Neutral.

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**SHAUN ATTON,  
AUTO WINDSCREENS**



## 'Customer experience is key', says Arval UK's new MD

Meeting the need for 'sustainable mobility' for fleets, employees, retail and industry partners is at the heart of Lakshmi Moorthy's strategy, reports *Stephen Briers*

**A**rval likes to know its place: within minutes of meeting new UK managing director Lakshmi Moorthy and commercial director Paul Hyne at its Swindon head office, chat turns to the then imminent release of the FN50 listing of the UK's biggest leasing companies (report included with this issue).


Has Arval consolidated its place in third position, seized from LeasePlan last year, they were keen to know? The answer is yes – it's one of six top 10 companies to grow funded fleet size year-on-year – although no secrets were revealed to the pair ahead of the official announcement which, at the time of the interview, was still six weeks away.

It was the same with Moorthy's predecessor

Miguel Cabaça and, before him, Benoit Dilly. Over their eight-year tenure, Arval UK accelerated from 85,000 funded vehicles to 179,000 through a combination of the GE acquisition and organic growth. It rose from number five to third.

That's not to say Arval's leadership team spends its time obsessing about figures; the interest in the FN50 is genuine, and the eagerness stems from





Lakshmi Moorthy was part of the leadership team that created the Arval Beyond strategy

“THE ETHOS IS WE ARE GOOD AT COMPANY CARS AND CONTRACT HIRE AND THAT WILL REMAIN THE BACKBONE OF OUR STRATEGY, BUT WE WILL EVOLVE WITH CHANGING CUSTOMER NEEDS AND EXPERIENCES”

LAKSHMI MOORTHY, ARVAL UK

360-degree Mobility (shared services, micro-mobility, Mobility as a Service); Good For You, Good For All (EV/sustainability); Connected & Flexible (technology-based services); and Arval Inside (corporate partnerships to help develop products).

It's an over-arching mandate which Moorthy is now integrating into her local plan in one of Arval's biggest markets.

“There are some core elements which we align with, but adaptation and timing is decided locally,” she says.

“A lot of my role since I started has been about adapting those key elements from Arval Beyond, focusing on 2021, 2022 and later years.”

Moorthy describes the roadmap for the UK as “offers, customer segments and levers”.

She explains: “The ethos is we are good at company cars and contract hire and that will remain the backbone of our strategy, but we will evolve with changing customer needs and experiences.”

“We have the highest penetration of electric vehicles (EVs) in our order bank of any Arval market. It aligns with the green agenda for COP26 and the Government, but also our company car customers who have to figure out how to make the transition to 2030. Electrification is the biggest opportunity for the leasing industry because we have a role to play (in supporting the transition).”

More than 40% of orders are for electrified models, according to Hyne, of which 70% are pure electric.

“We expect at least 34% of our total risk fleet will be battery electric and 21% plug-in hybrid or hybrid by the end of 2025,” he says.

Sustainability isn't simply about EVs; it is closely linked to mobility, which is where 360-degree Mobility enters the lexicon.

Moorthy says: “Companies don't just want a company car for 5-10% of their employees; they want to offer all staff sustainable mobility.”

Several Arval countries are already offering a Mobility as a Service (MaaS) proposition, including multi-modal payment systems, and it will come to the UK in the next 12-24 months, but Moorthy's immediate priority is salary sacrifice.

The Covid pandemic has made people more nervous about using public transport with some now reconsidering car schemes thanks to the increasing number of low-BIK EV options.

“Salary sacrifice ties everything in nicely and the

pandemic has accelerated that trend,” Moorthy says. Arval UK has reported a surge of 280% for vehicles on its Ignition salary sacrifice scheme over the past 12 months, and nine out of 10 of these are electric. The company is also trialling e-bikes with 20 customers and has both car share and e-scooters in the pipeline as it moves closer to a full MaaS offering.

As part of its commitment to flexibility, Arval is working on a ‘try before you buy’ scheme for EVs. Moorthy believes it's a low risk move as the vast majority of people who try an electric car do not want to go back to petrol or diesel afterwards.

Within the next 12 months, it will also launch an all-inclusive pay per month subscriptions service, enabling people to take a car for as little as one month and hand it back at any time with no penalties. It will come at a premium and will suit those who want complete flexibility.

“The key is sustainable mobility,” says Moorthy. “Although there will be certain active roles where ↻

### ‘A MATURE MARKET, COMPANY AND TEAM’

Lakshmi Moorthy joined Arval as part of its acquisition of GE in 2015 where she had worked for several years, latterly as managing director for marketing in Europe. Prior to taking up the MD role at Arval UK, Moorthy was working out of the Paris head office leading Arval's global retail operation which focuses on the SME market.

“I wanted to work in an Arval country because that's where the action is,” she says. “The UK is where I live and it's the market that most interests me – it's the most mature and I see it as an opportunity.”

Her initial impressions when appointed in March reinforced her view that business contract hire was highly advanced, while the PCH market was growing rapidly with individuals. And with digitisation and self-service, it is also an open market.

“Arval UK has a maturity of vision; there's an understanding where we need to get to regarding customer experience and the products,” Moorthy says. “We have a mature market, company and team.”

wanting to compare its performance against its nearest rivals. This is about much more than simply looking at numbers. For Moorthy, growth is a positive indication that the business is achieving its strategic objectives, which are tightly bound in one central pillar: customer experience.

“Customer experience is a key theme in the UK, and we focus on it in the various customer journeys, not just sales. Everyone has a role in it,” Moorthy says.

Moorthy was part of the leadership team which created Arval's new global five-year strategy, which was revealed to the media in October 2020.

Dubbed Arval Beyond, it aims to transition the business into mobility services, with solutions for corporates, their employees, retail buyers and industry partners – reflecting a broader customer base and its changing requirements.

It will sit alongside Arval's traditional full-service leasing proposition.

The strategy is divided into four strands:



“The car is essential, most employers will have to start thinking of the car as one part of a mobility offer. However, we do see it as staying an important part for a few years.”

That’s just as well, as Arval harbours considerable growth aspirations in the funded fleet sector.

By 2025, Moorthy expects to be “well over 200,000” in the UK, growth of between 10-20% on the size of business she has inherited.

For cars, growth will be three-pronged: leasing and salary sacrifice fuelled by EVs, PCH in the retail/individual/SME sector, and partnership opportunities with energy companies, utilities and such-like where Arval can offer leasing services

“WE ARE SEEING A RENAISSANCE IN THE COMPANY CAR. THE SHIFT TO ELECTRIC HAS STOPPED THE DECLINE”

PAUL HYNE, ARVAL UK

to their employees and customers to facilitate uptake of EVs.

Hyne says: “We are seeing a renaissance in the company car. The shift to electric has stopped the decline and this year we have seen a return to the company scheme. Even within Arval employees, we have seen cash takers come back.”

This rebirth has seen cars maintain their 73% share of Arval’s funded fleet, but Hyne predicts vans will start to capture a greater slice due to heavy demand for home delivery services.

“We would like to see 35-40% of total orders for vans because of the corporate strength,” he says.

Meanwhile, last mile deliveries will see Arval extend into funding new forms of asset.

Moorthy explains: “We may see eCargo bikes replacing vans for the final drops and we will be offering these kinds of assets as part of our sustainable mobility offering.”

The route to 200,000 vehicles will not come solely from business conquests; Moorthy is confident the entire company vehicle sector will expand.

“Two or three years ago, I would say not, but today when you put everything together with electric cars and salary sacrifice, we do see moderate growth in the market leading up to 2030,” she says.

“The composition may change, with fewer traditional company cars, but salary sacrifice will make up the shortfall.”

■ **Arval wins inaugural Wellbeing Award – see page 14.**

## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) ‘IS OUR PASSION’

Arval’s sustainability plan is not just about electrification; safety is also key.

It includes internal and external factors:

- Technology, including connected car and driver behaviour – using data as an incentive to reduce insurance by rewarding safer behaviour.
- Targeted safety training, improving driver education.
- CSR – sponsoring road safety in schools, providing cars to charities free, staff wellbeing, diversity and inclusivity. The

wider community approach is a core value.

“We are responsible for cars on the road so it’s our job to make sure everyone is aware of safety,” Lakshmi Moorthy says.

“CSR is an important part of Arval Beyond; it’s our passion and part of our culture. It’s good for employees and the community.

“As an industry, we are being charged to be more inclusive, environmentally friendly and mindful of what we do. It’s no longer just about being best on the rental price and that’s good for all of us.”



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# WINNER: HITACHI CAPITAL VEHICLE SOLUTIONS



Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions head of corporate sales Andy Fuller (right) with members of the HCVS team

## Fleet of foot – agile HCVS responds well to Covid challenges

Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions urges fleets to order vehicles now to avoid costly contract extensions. *Gareth Roberts* reports

**I**t's been a good year for Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions (HCVS). The vehicle leasing company reported strong growth and was named Leasing Company of the Year – 20,000-plus vehicles – for the third successive year at the Fleet News Awards.

Despite the fleet industry being hard hit by the pandemic during the past financial year (2020/21), profit before tax was £19.7 million, compared with the £25.7m achieved for FY19/20.

It now operates a fleet worth £1.2 billion, a 24% year-on-year increase, securing its number seven ranking in the FN50 with a risk fleet of almost 78,000 cars and vans.

However, that growth could have been higher



still if Hitachi, like the rest of the vehicle leasing industry, was not having to endure long lead times for new product, because of the semiconductor shortage.

Jon Lawes managing director at HCVS, says that there is a high demand for both new cars and commercial vehicles from its fleet customers.

"The economy is thriving and it's the responsibility of us all (in the industry) to furnish those customers, because it's those new, bigger fleets that turn the wheels of UK plc," he explains.

However, with demand outstripping supply, Lawes admits: "The current situation is quite frankly limiting growth."

Hitachi's strong financial performance has been helped by a strong order book in 2020, which it was able to capitalise on before the semiconductor shortage bit.

"We managed to get in there early, but I think this problem is going to continue into 2023," he says. "I can't see it being solved in 2022 and I don't think it's going to get back to how it used to be. This is kind of the new normal and it's putting pressure on fleet discounts."

"The key challenge for all leasing companies and end-user customers is that their operating costs are going to be very different."

#### **Fleet News: How are you going to mitigate any potential increase in costs for fleets?**

**Jon Lawes:** We have to think differently. Our customers rely on ourselves to help them drive down costs.

For instance, we're looking at the lifecycles of vehicles; should we replace them at three years or if they're going to be more expensive, should we have a longer lifecycle?

Electric vehicles (EVs) will last longer than combustion engines so have we got that right?

We're being very open and transparent with our customers about what the challenges are, and our customers are very understanding. They know it's not just an issue for Hitachi, it's a global problem.

#### **FN: Are you extending contracts to manage new vehicle supply pressures?**

**JL:** Economically, it would be better if we didn't extend vehicles; in the current market, we're better off selling them.

But the ultimate goal is to serve your customers, so we're not pulling vehicles back to profiteer from the current used car market; we're very much supporting our customers and putting in plans to extend where we can't get replacement vehicles.

#### **FN: What can fleets better do to manage their replacement cycles?**

**JL:** A lot of organisations have a 12-month (fleet) programme, especially in the commercial vehicle market where they're ordering in batches, but my big message would be you should be ordering 2023-24 vehicles before Christmas.

You have to be sharper at planning and understanding what's going on in your business. It puts a lot of pressure on businesses that have had a tough time over the past 18 months, with a lot of uncertainty.

Who wants to order vehicles for two years' time when they've had the 18 months they've had? There are some real challenges for business.

#### **FN: What are the challenges around electrifying fleet operations?**

**JL:** Some 65-70% of our orders are for battery electric vehicles. The current regime is working whether you talk about taxation policy or company car policies.

We've changed all the policies for our customers over the past couple of years to really drive ULEV (ultra-low emission vehicles) or battery electric vehicles only.

The challenge is supply because the demand for EVs is outstripping the supply. Our order bank has just doubled.

We've also created a dedicated team which specialises in helping to provide solutions to customers around their (electric vehicle) charging. Whether that's a depot charging solution – we have a full turnkey solution where we can provide charging infrastructure at depots – whether it's workplace charging or transactional home-based charging, or even solutions around the public charging network.

That's where we're taking our business, really evolving a total solution, including the refuelling options. It's the biggest barrier to the mass adoption of EVs apart from their supply.

We think there's a real opportunity for our business to expand into that refuelling solution by providing that total solution to our customers. That is what they're worried about, my role is to help them solve that problem.

#### **FN: We have seen record electric car registrations, but what success are you having with fleets adopting electric vans?**

**JL:** We're having a lot of success with car-derived electric vans. The uptake and demand are very strong. For 3.5-tonne vans, the demand is also really strong, but there is only really one or two products at the moment that can serve that market and they're very expensive.

In terms of the mid-sized panel van such as the Vivaro-e, we have that working from a total cost of ownership (TCO) perspective.

#### **FN: Do you think that the ban on the sales of new petrol and diesel vans from 2030 is achievable given the lack of electric variants in the large van market?**

**JL:** I think it's very much achievable. I thought at the start of the pandemic it may just slow people's appetite around EVs, because they would have more operational things to focus on. How wrong I was. We've seen more progress during the pandemic than we have ever seen.

It's about fleet managers having the courage. If you're a fleet manager, would you want to be the last company running diesel vehicles?

The sooner you start trialling an EV, the sooner you will start learning how you can use EVs.

All of our staff have gone through an EV academy, which is externally accredited. They've done that for cars and now we're doing it for vans as well.



Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions has announced that it will rebrand under the new trading name of Novuna Vehicle Solutions in February 2022.

At the same time, parent company Hitachi Capital (UK) will change its legal name to Mitsubishi HC

**FleetNews**



#### **JUDGES' COMMENTS**

**A true car, van and truck leasing provider, Hitachi offers forward-thinking support for customers, including its electric vehicle charging scheme and excellent downtime management. It displayed clear evidence of its fleet assistance during Covid, while by aligning its products and services to its customers' strategies, Hitachi can react swiftly to understand and meet their priorities. A model of consistency across every part of its business.**

Capital UK, following the merger earlier this year of Hitachi Capital Corporation with Mitsubishi UFJ Lease and Finance Company, forming Mitsubishi HC Capital.

The rebrand to Novuna, which means 'new together', marks the start of an exciting era as the business accelerates its growth plans under its new parent company, says Lawes.

"Customers will see more investment in decarbonisation; they will see more investment in delivering a great customer experience," he adds.

Each of the other business divisions within Hitachi Capital UK will also operate under Mitsubishi HC Capital UK's Novuna trading name, including Novuna Consumer Finance, Novuna Personal Finance, Novuna Business Finance and Novuna Business Cash Flow (previously Invoice Finance).

The European division will adopt the Mitsubishi HC Capital trading name as part of its collaboration with the parent company, Mitsubishi HC Capital.

The change, it says, indicates an evolution from a manufacturing-based heritage to a new global financial powerhouse with the scale and expertise to drive change for business partners and consumers.

The backing of Mitsubishi HC Capital aims to provide Novuna with the opportunity to leverage the size, scale and expertise of its new parent company in order to realise the company's ambitions.

The new name is the first stage of the business's transformation.

# Merger marks the start of new era for Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions

Next phase of growth will follow change of branding to Novuna Vehicle Solutions



The motor industry is experiencing a seismic shift with fleets increasingly transitioning to electric and reaping the environmental and cost benefits.

Last year's 0% BIK rate (now 1%), along with a greater choice of electric vehicles (EVs) with improved range as well as charging infrastructure improvements has produced unparalleled demand over the past year.

Following the Autumn Budget and COP26, there is a clear commitment to the decarbonisation of transport in the UK and while Government can enable the road to zero through policy and investment, it is up to UK businesses to innovate and provide the solutions for a net zero future.

Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions is one of the UK's largest vehicle leasing companies and is a recognised leader in the transition to electric for fleets and consumers alike.

Crowned Leasing Company of the Year (more than 20,000 vehicles) for three consecutive years at the Fleet News Awards, the company has also recently announced that it is embarking on a major rebrand, accelerating its market-leading fleet decarbonisation solutions.

The rebrand to Novuna Vehicle Solutions, which will be fully implemented by March 2022, follows the merger of the business's parent company with Mitsubishi UFJ Lease and Finance Company Limited earlier this year.

This was a significant move for the business, making it part of one of the world's largest and most diversified financial groups.

Jon Lawes, MD of Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions, explained the thinking

"Novuna perfectly captures the proposition of our business to be market-leaders in electric vehicles, working together with our customers to future-proof UK fleets"

**Jon Lawes, MD,  
Hitachi Capital  
Vehicle Solutions**

behind the rebrand. "Novuna comes from the Latin words Novo – new and Una – together, which captures the essence of our business and how we work with fleets, creating innovative solutions together and supporting our customers through rapid change.

"Novuna perfectly captures the proposition of our business to be market-leaders in electric vehicles, working together with our customers to future-proof UK fleets."

As one of the UK's largest vehicle leasing companies, working with OEMs right across the spectrum to supply and service fleets of all complexities, the Novuna brand provides our business with a clear point of differentiation in the motor industry. Our new brand name is readily aligned to our

market-leading decarbonisation strategy which is delivering cost and environmental benefits for our customers.

"We're supporting our customers to future-proof their fleets by assessing their current fleet and workplace charging capability to deploy total fleet electrification solutions," says Jon.

From company cars and salary sacrifice through to specialist and modified vehicles, Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions is already transforming UK fleets with absolute confidence to achieve decarbonisation targets.

The size and expertise of its new parent company following the rebrand will provide a springboard for the next phase of growth for the business, built on an ethos of consistently exceeding customer expectations.

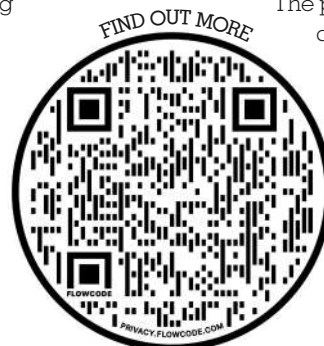
Novuna Vehicle Solutions will offer competitive funding, fleet management, consultative policy design, EV transition planning and installation of electric infrastructure to get green fleets on the road and fully charged.

Customers will have already seen the Novuna brand being introduced on marketing channels, ahead of the full rebrand in early 2022.

The products and services currently offered will remain the same, as will account management teams.

But, in the longer term, this is far more than a change of name.

"The rebrand marks the start of an exciting new era for our business and for our customers," says Jon.







## Building on experience in hybrids since 2012 puts Rav4 in prime position to attract fleet interest. *Matt de Prez* reports

**T**he latest generation Toyota Rav4 has set a new standard in the mid-size SUV segment, since it launched in 2019. It offers an unrivalled balance of running costs, practicality and efficiency, enabling it to pick up two trophies at the 2021 Fleet News Awards.

Based on an all-new platform, the Rav4 features the latest hybrid powertrain technology from Toyota. It utilises a 2.5-litre petrol engine, which can be paired with a hybrid or plug-in hybrid system. Both deliver strong performance along with CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from just 22g/km.

**Fleet News:** How does the Rav4 fit in with Toyota's powertrain strategy?

**Stuart Ferma, general manager, fleet, Toyota & Lexus GB:** The plug-in element has always been a key part of our strategy. Prius Plug-in Hybrid launched in 2012, so we've had these vehicles way before anyone else. There's always been a focus on how we take the self-charging element to the next point and, at the moment, we are in a really good

position, because what we've got is self-charging hybrid, plug-in hybrid and pure EV, with the new BZ4X, specifically within the D-SUV sector. We've got the full complement of vehicles within our powertrain strategy, which is absolutely brilliant for us. So, it fits with that strategy of having the right vehicle at the right time for us.

**FN:** Has the Rav4 met your fleet sales expectations?

**SF:** Sales of Rav4 Hybrid are almost 50:50 split between fleet and retail, at 46% fleet. It's probably fair to say we got off to a quicker start with retail sales with Rav4 Plug-in Hybrid, but it's growing month-on-month in terms of our mix of sales. So, it's slightly different at the moment where we've got higher percentages of self-charging as a fleet mix, which doesn't make sense really because of the BIK (benefit-in-kind tax) but that's the strength of the product we've got a moment. Because of its 46-mile EV range, clearly a lot of our dealers are selling it to retail customers on the strength of that reduction in fuel costs.

**FN:** What feedback have you had from fleet customers about the new Rav4 Plug-in Hybrid?

**SF:** It's really been positive and we did some changes to the pricing as well, reducing it by £4,450. So that's enabled it, where people were looking at the on-the-road pricing, to get into certain bandings. What we are doing is selling in terms of the total cost of ownership (TCO) and without that element of range anxiety, of course, it's really hits the mark. It puts us in a good position with those user-chooser fleets. We've seen a really big opportunity for this product towards the back end of this year and going into next year, as well, in terms of accelerating the SUV segment.

**FN:** What makes the Rav4 Plug-in Hybrid stand out among its rivals?

**SF:** The overall CO<sub>2</sub> figure for the Rav4 Plug-in Hybrid is achieved, in part, because of the nature of our powertrain. So, when that 46-mile EV range is depleted, the system reverts to our tried and trusted, full hybrid system. It means the vehicle doesn't become, essentially, a carrier of a redundant, empty, big heavy battery. There are two batteries on the car. There's what we would call the EV battery, which is under the floor, then, as is always the case with Lexus and Toyota SUVs, a self-charging hybrid battery that sits just beneath the rear passenger seats. That's a big differentiator. We are unique in being able to say that the powertrain reverts to a full hybrid system once the battery electric range is depleted.

Compared with its predecessor, the new Rav4 has greater driver appeal thanks to improved comfort and refinement levels, plus the new powertrains are more responsive, making the car better to drive. A high level of build-quality puts the car on the coattails of the premium SUV segment.

### SPONSORS' COMMENTS

FMG is proud to sponsor the Alternate Fuel categories at the Fleet News Awards 2021. Our customers and our people want to do their bit for the planet, and we're no different, so seeing the addition of 'best plug-in hybrid car' to the annual awards scheme is pleasing, and a clear demonstration of the direction in which fleet operations are heading.

We are thrilled for the Toyota Rav4 to have won this category, with comments such as 'highly efficient, with excellent EV-only range, delivering outstanding economy in petrol mode thanks to its hybrid technology.'

The additional commentary around the Rav4 being packed with safety technology and extremely reliable were significant as both safety and reliability are critical in the effectiveness and efficiency of fleet operations.



# CUT COSTS AND DOWNTIME AFTER A COLLISION

The right accident management process can help a fleet minimise cost and vehicle off-road time, maximise driver welfare and prevent crashes recurring. *Catherine Chetwynd* reports

**O**ne of the inevitabilities of being a fleet decision-maker is that some of your vehicles will be involved in a collision.

The Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP) estimates around a third of an organisation's vehicles will be in a crash during a year.

What happens next can have a wide-ranging impact. If the response takes too long or is incorrect, then it can have major cost and operational implications, as well as potentially having long-term consequences for the driver who may be shaken or injured in the collision.

"The most important thing is to ensure everyone is safe – the employee and anyone else involved – and to get the police involved; the vehicle is almost a secondary issue," says Paul Hollick, chair of AFP.

When a collision occurs, drivers should react quickly and be proactive in documenting everything from dents in metal to the personal details of any third parties, ideally on bump-cards, and to notify their incident management partner.

Incident management and roadside services company FMG says details that should be recorded are time, date, visibility and weather conditions; road name, number, signs, markings and lighting; vehicle lights and signals; damage to third parties' vehicle/property, with photos if possible; police identity and reference numbers.

In addition, "drivers should never admit liability at this stage, but must exchange names, addresses, vehicle registration numbers and insurance details with any third parties, and collect contact details of any independent witnesses", says Andrew Chandler, sales director of FMG.

Hollick adds: "I would encourage most fleets to use apps for first notification of loss (FNOL). These tools guide the driver to exchange insurance details, take pictures of the incident, note third party details; that is all in the app and it helps with subsequent issues such as if the vehicle needs to be repaired or replaced."

This mitigates the 'fight or flight' reaction, where drivers either become emotional about the accident and argue with an individual, or they try to get away quickly without taking any of the right details.

As well as making sure the driver has collected the right data on the spot, other issues include getting the replacement vehicle, managing the insurance and third-party claims process, managing repairs and getting legal support.

Most fleets do not have the resources or expertise to do all of this in-house, so outsource it either directly to accident management providers or to them via their leasing provider.

Here we look at the key components of successful accident management processes to show how technologies and policies can be used by fleets to minimise cost, reduce vehicle off-road time, maximise driver welfare and prevent incidents recurring.



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## REDUCING VEHICLE OFF-ROAD TIME

Shortages of car parts, particularly for new vehicles such as electric vehicles (EVs), exacerbates repair wait times. So, it is important to have an anthology of bodyshops to mitigate this.

Accident management companies have networks across the UK and the expertise to ensure a quick turnaround.

"Don't try to do it in-house," warns AFP's Hollick.

## MINIMISING COST

The two major expenses fleet managers have to deal with after a collision are the cost of repair and the amount of time a vehicle is off-road (VOR); the latter is likely to be the larger because it includes replacing the vehicle and the loss of labour.

There is also the risk of leakage.

"In a non-fault accident, fleet managers should ensure they can claim back everything that has been documented from the third party's insurer or company," says AFP's Paul Hollick. "If your driver is not to blame, there should be no consequent loss."

There are advantages to using specialist accident management companies for the efficiencies they bring in reducing the cost of repair and getting people back on the road.

Labour rates at accident repair centres can vary wildly so it is essential to choose an appropriate supplier and make sure repairs are performed to the level required.

Timely reporting of an accident can also mitigate cost, another possible reason for using a specialist.

"The longer it takes to report an incident, the more downtime there is for both the driver and the vehicle," says AX's Mark Young.

"We would also recommend that the fleet manager, or someone involved in the process, interviews the driver involved in the incident; that way more detailed and extensive notes can be taken."

If there were any doubt about the need for a prompt response, "the accuracy, quality, and quantity of available information within an FNOL can be reduced by up to 45% through late notification, negatively impacting the ability to cut down indemnity expenditure", says Callum Langan, commercial director at Sopp+Sopp.

Without an app, mandatory telephone reporting (at the scene of the accident, where possible), provides an immediate opportunity for FNOL handlers to challenge the driver's account and detail given.

This allows for validating the incident circumstance and prompting for additional information such as third-party contact detail and bump-card exchange.

Prompt action could also give fleets control over any replacement vehicle supplied to a third-party, helping to avoid them using costly credit hire cars or vans.

Telematics can flag the occurrence of an incident promptly to your supplier's FNOL handlers, eliciting rapid intervention.

Corporate account director at AX Mark Young adds: "AX targets delivery of 90% of replacement vehicles to customers the same day and, where required, in less than four hours from FNOL. Partners and customers can see the repair process and view a claim progression via the AX Beacon portal."

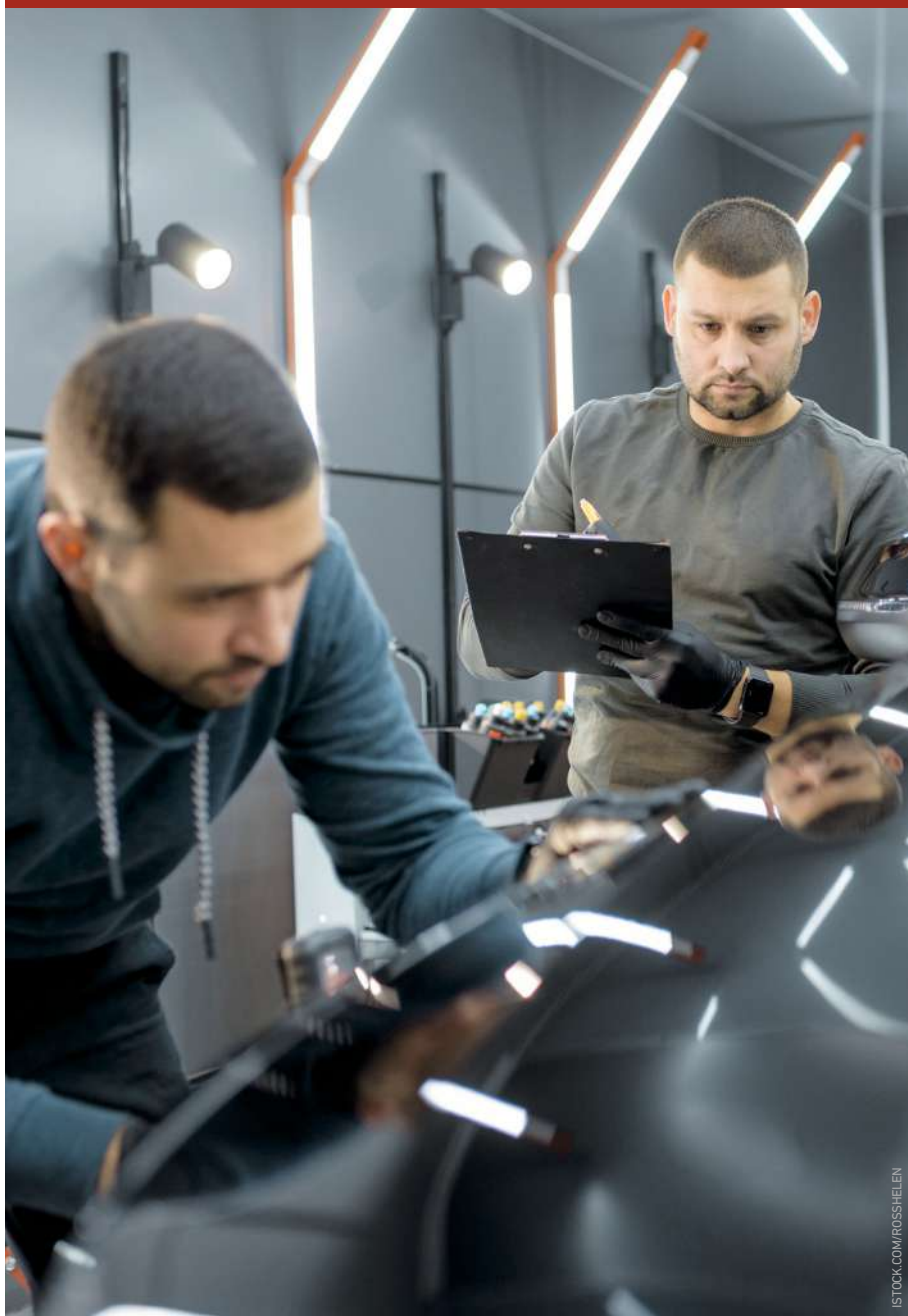
The company also recommends preventive maintenance to reduce vehicle downtime and save money.

And intelligent repair triage would bring about the most appropriate and speedy means of repair. Sopp+Sopp, for example, arranges mobile repairs for minor damage such as bumper scuffs and dented trims, doors/wings, providing a swift on-the-hoof service.

In addition, the company recommends fleet managers question accident management providers about the flexibility in their claims management system and look for integrations to common third-party tools such as CAPS (Common Automotive Platform Standard), Audatex and Plan Manager.

FMG's engineers monitor all repair methods, costs and downtime, and operate with delegated repair authority from major UK insurers; this will dramatically reduce delay in the repair process.

In addition, monitoring of standards could be achieved through integrated technology, which could record areas covered by service level agreements (SLAs) and key performance indicators (KPIs) such as FNOL call answer times, calls abandoned, complaints management, driver and vehicle off-road times.





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## MAXIMISING DRIVER WELFARE

Concern for a driver's welfare is part of an organisation's duty of care and an open culture is crucial if it is to be effective.

Organisations should have a policy for re-introducing an employee to company driving following an incident, whether this involves a one-to-one with management or completing in-vehicle training.

Technology – whether telematics data or an app – can also play an important role in diagnosing potential driver problems such as harsh braking, swerving, speeding; amount of time spent on the road, leading to tiredness; eyesight, etc.

But when interviewing drivers about an incident, it is important to extract the necessary collision information while bearing in mind the mental and physical welfare of the individual. Empathy is all.

## PREVENT INCIDENTS RECURRING

Telematics data can be used to create safety policies and training strategies to avoid repeat incidents.

However, "that's not to say specific drivers should be targeted for their 'reckless' driving. Instead, managers should create a whole-fleet driver training strategy – that also includes senior figures – built on a solid data foundation", says AX's Mark Young.

Data capture for incident reporting should also support robust investigation, including where it is stored and how easily accessible it is – and by whom.

If it is clearly categorised it is easier for fleet managers to see trends.

"For example, the ability to identify incidents that occur when a vehicle is delivering to a residential area could lead to internal training to

adopt best practice," says Sopp+Sopp's Callum Langan.

Fleet managers should analyse whether certain cost centres, depots or drivers are repeatedly having accidents, the types of accidents that are happening and at what time of day, month and year they occur.

FMG's risk management portal collects data from numerous sources: telematics devices, fuel cards, vehicle sensors, dash cams, etc. – and consolidates, normalises and simplifies that to create a clear picture of the fleet risks.

"Rather than relying on post-collision investigations to prevent incidents recurring, fleet operators can be proactive in making risk prevention a simpler and smarter process, with all decision-making powered by the data their fleet collects," says Dave Parry, commercial director at FMG.

RED Driver Risk Management's system

emphasises wellbeing and emotion, which can lead to a lack of concentration, observation and anticipation.

It is essential there is no culture of fear in the company so drivers will talk openly about incidents, near-misses and their causes, to allow fleet managers to see patterns and take mitigating action.

Training, educating and coaching should be viewed as a positive thing by both drivers and their managers, especially when backed by group support programmes and possibly performance incentives to inspire driver engagement and ability.

A combination of tools, analysis and empathy is required to tread the fine line between gaining information to find out what happened, so that it can be prevented from happening again, and awareness of drivers' wellbeing.

But prevention is definitely better than cure.



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# Flexible electric vehicle solutions with Ford Fleet Management

Service includes total cost of ownership analysis to ensure right choices

Fleets are looking for flexible partners to help guide them through the transition to electric vehicles (EV) and Ford Fleet Management (FFM) is offering free operational consultancy to help them navigate this potential minefield.

FFM was created in summer 2020 when Ford and ALD Automotive signed a shareholder agreement to create a new integrated all-makes leasing and fleet management business.

John Wright, FFM Managing Director, says: "We have two shareholders that are right in the middle of the EV transition so there is a lot of expertise we can draw on.

"Our free EV consultancy offers high level assistance with strategy, but I think, more importantly, we can offer more operational help on the ground to answer all the practical questions fleet decision-makers might have on their electrification journey."

This includes creating a bespoke charging infrastructure solution to provide convenient, reliable and connected EV charging everywhere a driver is likely to spend time, whether it's at home, at a workplace, in the city or out of town.

FFM has partnered with a range of highly respected EV specialists to provide an open, secure and robust network for fleet drivers.

The company is collaborating with charging point operators (CPOs) and e-mobility service providers (eMSP) to make EV charging available everywhere, including the workplace.

FordPass Connect modems are built into all-electric Ford products, which means fleet customers need only activate a subscription to gain further data and analytics to help fine-tune their EV fleet\*.

While FFM provides services for all-makes company car and LCV fleets, there is a particular focus on being a specialist for all-makes van customers with bespoke specification requirements.

Wright says: "We're working with large fleets and LCV fleets that have made the switch to EVs; they are operating at scale with a mix of charging solutions needed.

"Some vans are at the depot, some are



charging at home and others might need a mix that incorporates public charging."

Part of FFM's EV service includes a total cost of ownership (TCO) analysis to determine which vehicles are the right fit for fleets, as well as access to a Flexible Leasing product that opens up access to the Ford E-Transit van with up to 196-mile range\*\* and All-Electric Mustang Mach-E products with up to 379-mile range\*\*\*.

It means fleet customers can lease an all-electric Ford for shorter-term contracts, typically between six and 18 months, to give businesses a substantial amount of time to align their operations with areas like charging infrastructure, route changes and shift patterns.

Wright says: "We now have physical stock on the ground as part of our Flexible Leasing fleet and I think offering the chance for long-term EV evaluations

is going to be really important, particularly for van fleets.

"A quick test around the block isn't going to cut it, you have to live with an EV.

"Flexible leasing can really help with making longer-term decisions."

FFM has also partnered with AA DriveTech to offer driver assessment and training, with a range of specialist support options for customers.

Wright says: "We need to get drivers into a real mindset change with EVs.

"Leveraging the connectivity of these vehicles, combined with online learning and access to specialist training will really help fleet operators with making the switch. We're taking a much more pragmatic approach with the conversations around EVs and our goal is to help fleets make the most informed decisions about their electric future."



**FORD FLEET MANAGEMENT**

For more information about Ford fleet management visit:

[www.fordfleetmanagement.co.uk](http://www.fordfleetmanagement.co.uk) or contact its experts today on [information@fordfleetmanagement.co.uk](mailto:information@fordfleetmanagement.co.uk) or 0370 325 0023

Business customers only. Funding/finance solutions provided by Ford Fleet Management UK Ltd., BS16 7LB. Finance subject to status. Guarantees and indemnities may be required

\*Ford Telematics is available for Ford vehicles with a FordPass Connect Modem. Eligible Fleet/business customers only. Subscription charges and FCS T&Cs apply.

\*\*Based on full charge. Range quoted for best performing variant, Medium Wheel Base, Medium Roof Cargo Van, 390 Series, Speed Limited to 90kph. Targeted estimate range applies to an available configuration (and is based on CAE modeling using Worldwide Harmonised Light Vehicle Test Procedure [WLTP]). Actual range varies with conditions such as external elements, driving behaviours, vehicle maintenance, lithium-ion battery age and state of health

\*\*\*Based on full charge. Estimated range using WLTP applies to RWD model with extended range battery. Actual range varies with conditions such as external elements, driving behaviours, vehicle maintenance, and lithium-ion battery age

# Drivers excited by provision of salary sacrifice electric vehicles

Roundtable event gives decision-makers the chance to discuss a range of topics from fleet size expectations to driver training



By Mike Roberts

**O**n a day when fuel shortages were gripping Britain, a roundtable of UK fleets took place debating topics including fleet funding, the environment and driver safety initiatives.

Fleet sizes for attendees ranged from around 150 to more than 10,000 and, as you might expect, the conversation quickly turned to electric vehicles (EVs), with salary sacrifice already offered by some delegates as an employee benefit or being considered by others.

As one decision-maker put it: "Our drivers are excited by it. And it helps us control our grey fleet."

Sponsored by Athlon, the roundtable took place at Chesford Grange hotel in Warwickshire.

**Fleet News: How is your fleet is funded?**

**Mandi Nicol, fleet manager UK & Ireland, Schneider Electric:** We've come from an employee car ownership (ECO) scheme environment – it's a very tax-efficient way of providing a car, as it utilises AMAPs (approved mileage allowance payments) in order to pay for the cost.

We didn't want to lose savings we were making against contract hire by moving over to a salary sacrifice scheme for EVs, but we've found that we're retaining, if not bettering, them.

**Mark Waby, procurement category manager, Kuehne + Nagel:** We're just launching our salary sacrifice scheme and it'll run parallel with our normal company car scheme, which means we can maintain manufac-

turer discounts that we've previously enjoyed. It will help us control more of our grey fleet. We'll offer second cars to partners of staff members through the scheme.

**Andrew Houston, fleet manager, The Altro Group:** We looked at salary sacrifice some time ago and one issue that prevented us moving forward with it was the second car option if you allowed it. How do you meet your duty of care for people that don't even work for you?

**MW:** It's the person who works for you who signs the agreement that the other driver will perform safety checks etc. on the vehicle. Employees are excited by it, we don't have the same sort of rules as we do around company cars, for example, having to have four doors. We offer a car allowance, but are finding that employees are looking to go electric now.

**Graham Goadby, transport – senior EV instructor, DPD:** How are residual values (RVs) going to work for EVs? It's a guessing game.

**MW:** That's a leasing provider's problem, not ours! But, what they'll lose on RV, they'll probably gain on maintenance budget.

**AH:** When I looked at Teslas for our directors four or five years ago the lease was astronomical. But it's a lot less now.

**FN: Have you had any negative feedback about the charging infrastructure for EVs?**

**Alison Devine, fleet manager, Socotec:** The charging infrastructure can put people off a scheme like this.

**MN:** Personally, I think EVs force wellbeing and prevent the scenario of drivers travelling too many miles without a break. So, it encourages a change in driver behaviour – they will have to stop for 20 minutes to top up and have a refreshment break at the same time.

**FN: Are all your vehicles leased?**

**AD:** Two-thirds leased and the remainder short-term hire, which we're struggling with because of vehicle availability. We short-term

hire a lot of specialist vehicles like welfare units, perhaps for a nine-month project.

**Norman Harding, corporate fleet manager, London Borough of Hackney:** I buy all internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, but lease electric. We tend to run our diesel vehicles for long periods, for example, trucks for 10 years. But with electric, things move along so quickly that we tend to take them on a four-year lease.

**FN: Have any replacement cycle/mileage profiles changed?**

**MW:** Our replacement cycle is still four years but our provider is looking at accelerating cars back so we can switch to green faster. They're looking at how they can support us to do that.

**NH:** We're hanging on to vehicles because you can't get hold of anything now.

**FN: What cost control measures do you have in your fleets?**

**MW:** For me, the main thing was to widen the costs we were looking at. Two years ago, for example, people weren't talking about Class 1A, but now it's massively important.

It's a big chunk of money for the business and you need to widen the net about what you are covering as part of your cost of ownership with these vehicles. So, we've become tax experts, efficiency experts... and it's a minefield.

**FN: What are your expectations in relation to your fleet size?**

**MW:** Ours will increase because it's the cheapest way of owning a car. I think more cash drivers will come back into a company scheme, especially those who opted out because of the pandemic. But the biggest nuisance now is lead times, gone are the days when you could ring up on a Tuesday and have your new car delivered by the Thursday.

**AD:** We've had a lot of enquiries from our cash allowance drivers asking if they can take an electric vehicle through the company car



scheme. Currently, we don't offer it as we still have some work to do, but, as a company, we're growing ergonomically and through acquisition so our fleet size will increase.

**FN: How do you manage your grey fleets?**

**AH:** We have two sorts in our business: drivers who are not, as part of their package, allowed a car or allowance, but they can drive company cars, for example occasional trips to see suppliers. But the true grey fleet is our car allowance staff and for those we apply the same rules as we do for contract hire vehicles around maintenance and safety checks.

**FN: What alternative fuels are you looking at for your fleets?**

**NH:** For the past two or three years, I've been running my vehicles



**ATTENDEES**

1. **Dale Fullerton:** commercial vehicles sales manager – corporate, Athlon
2. **Mark Waby:** procurement category manager, transport and logistics company Kuehne + Nagel
3. **Norman Harding:** corporate fleet manager, London Borough of Hackney
4. **Andrew Houston:** fleet manager, floor and wall coverings manufacturer The Altro Group

5. **Graham Goadby,** transport – senior EV instructor, parcel delivery company DPD
6. **Colin McDonnell:** client sales manager, Athlon
7. **Alison Devine:** fleet manager, testing, inspection and certification company Socotec
8. **Mike Roberts:** deputy editor, *Fleet News*
9. **Mandi Nicol:** fleet manager UK & Ireland, energy management and automation company Schneider Electric



on HVO (hydrotreated vegetable oil). I was involved in emissions testing this fuel at Millbrook and it's so good. It's 80% carbon efficient before it even goes through the combustion process. We get a 12% carbon reduction at the tailpipe and, what we found staggering, was we got a 60% NOx reduction at the tailpipe. I've got about 350 vehicles running on it and we have our own bulk fuel storage.

**GG:** We are looking at alternative fuel options for our heavier vehicles but that's in its infancy.

**FN: Any other environmental actions you've taken?**

**NH:** We use remoulded tyres on our trucks. We try to repair rather than replace parts and we separate all our waste. Also, this may sound daft, but specifying your vehicles correctly right from the start is

important. The vehicle might be perfect for your needs now, but what about in future? Some of our vehicles, gritters for example, we run for 10 years, so we need to plan ahead.

**MW:** I want to find out more about eco tyres for our lorries and vans.

**FN: What technologies do you use in your vehicles?**

**NH:** We use camera systems which help bat off spurious insurance claims. It's not uncommon for people to wait for the truck to go past and then claim it's knocked off their wing mirror or scratched their car, but our camera systems can prove it hasn't.

It's the same when they claim we've missed collecting their bin. We can see whether they put it out in the first place.

**AD:** We've had accidents where we've sent the telematics data

and video to the insurance company.

**NH:** We've fitted front and rear parking sensors on our vans as well as white noise reversing systems to warn pedestrians.

**FN: What driver training policies do you have?**

**MN:** All of our drivers do an online driver risk assessment which suggests whether they need to do additional training, either one-on-one classroom or additional e-learning. We also have road risk days, usually in the autumn, which involve hosting quizzes and offering e-learning.

**AD:** We're looking to run regular driver campaigns every month. They're still being planned, but will include winter campaigns, awareness of idling etc.

**MW:** We held driver of the year competitions. We had a big day out

with a party in the evening. Behaviour improved, so it was worth the investment. We haven't run it for the past couple of years, but it's something we'll look at again. We also do all the regular driver licence checks and psychometric testing. I think one-on-one time with drivers is always useful.

**AH:** We do very similar to what others have already said. Initial risk assessments, for example. But I also look at employees to see how they behave in the business, so you get a feel for them which can give you an idea of how they drive. Also, we have had situations where colleagues have said 'I'm not travelling with them again, they're a dreadful driver'.

The challenge is how do you approach that person and what conversation do you have.

Fortunately, we have a really good set of drivers, so it's not a problem.

# FACTOR IN ALL VEHICLE COSTS WHEN PRICING EVs

Electric vehicle experts share hints and tips on moving to an EV fleet at this year's Fleet & Mobility Live. *Mike Roberts* reports



From left to right: EV Café members Sara Sloman, Sam Clark, Jonny Berry and John Curtis, presented at this year's Fleet & Mobility Live

**U**sing a total cost of ownership (TCO) approach and ensuring the decision-making process is communicated with relevant teams within the business are key to bringing e-mobility to life.

Electrification is a major focus for many fleets ahead of the Government's ban on the sale of new internal combustion engine (ICE) cars by 2030.

The TCO approach was highlighted by the EV Café, whose members presented a session at this year's Fleet & Mobility Live.

The group, which was formed at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic last year, runs a popular YouTube channel to promote electric vehicles (EVs).

And ensuring all teams are on board with a move to electrification for commercial vehicles is the advice from Ben Guest, field operations director at Ovo Energy, which has a goal of having a 100% electrified fleet by the end of 2025.

The EV Café consists of Jonny Berry, head of decarbonisation at Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions; Sam Clark, chief electric vehicle officer at Gridserve Sustainable Energy; Paul Kirby, head of vans and electric commercial vehicles at EV Essentials; Sara

Sloman, head of future mobility partnerships at Eltronics; and John Curtis, head of communication at ChargePlace Scotland.

In response to a question from the audience, Clark said one way for fleet managers to win buy-in from the board for EVs is to focus on their TCO compared with petrol or diesel models.

"We've got to try to get the message through that, actually, just because the capital costs of EVs are still a little bit higher than the ICE equivalent, that doesn't mean it's more expensive to run or, indeed, lease," he said.

"Inherently, a person will look at a lease price and go 'ok, well that ICE car is £500 a month, and that EV over there is £700 a month, that's too expensive for me, I can't afford that'.

"But the total cost of ownership model looks at the maintenance, fuel, insurance and other things and, when you put them together, the EVs are without doubt cheaper to run now."

Berry said, for example, the service, maintenance and repair (SMR) costs of a battery electric vehicle (BEV) is around 33% of that of an ICE model, while vehicle downtime is also lower as "there's not a lot

that needs doing on the vehicle".

Sloman added: "It's not all about EVs. If you work for a local authority, for example, it's about the strategy; it's about a clean air strategy; it's about clean air zones (CAZs), it's about declaring a carbon emergency, it's about the fact we're in code red for humanity.

"So, much more now than just the cost is the fact that we all have to do something. And the transport hierarchy has a really important part to play.

"That's about looking at your fleet and deciding which of those vehicles can be swapped for an EV, but also perhaps which of those vehicles could be utilised another way or how your staff travel.

"So, when we're looking at this, think about it holistically from the top to the bottom and everything in between."

In a presentation at this year's Fleet & Mobility Live to explain how his company is making the switch, Ben Guest of Ovo Energy, said: "The most important thing to us while transitioning to an EV fleet is how happy our teams are.

"There's a real partnership when making an EV transition. Yes, for us it's about vehicles and





## SPONSOR'S COMMENT

**Jon Lawes, managing director,  
Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions**



A more sustainable and cleaner future is society's greatest challenge and also its greatest opportunity.

It's encouraging that following the Autumn Budget and COP26, there is a clear

commitment from Government to the decarbonisation of transport in the UK. However, fleet owners, operators and individual drivers will want to consider how the announcements made are likely to affect their current cost of mobility and their plans for switching to electric vehicles (EVs) in the months and years ahead.

Government support for the transition to zero emissions vans and trucks is important. A great step in the right direction was its publication of the Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener document in October. It highlights a £40 billion private investment in the Road to Zero and an immediate issue of £15bn in Government gilts.

The Government's net zero strategy stretches well beyond cars, vans and HGVs, there was a £1.5bn increase in funding designed to improve the rail, tram, bus and cycle networks in the mostly densely populated areas of the country.

However, while Government can enable the Road to Zero through policy and investment, it is up to UK companies to innovate and imagine the solutions for their businesses in a net zero future.

At Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions, we have developed an end-to-end total EV transition strategy for our customers to assess, design and deploy vehicles, workplace/depot charging solutions, collaborating with distribution network operators (DNOs) and solar partners.

By managing the entire process we've become a trusted partner across our customers' total EV transition.

**To find out more about how to transition your fleet visit:**

**[www.hitachicapitalvehiclesolutions.co.uk/electric-vehicle-leasing/fleet-electrification](http://www.hitachicapitalvehiclesolutions.co.uk/electric-vehicle-leasing/fleet-electrification)**

**Hitachi Capital (UK) PLC  
Vehicle Solutions**

racking and range and all of that, but it's also about engaging with the team; it's about communication and co-creation and how you manage change. That's what we've put an incredible amount of effort into.

"Don't get me wrong, I think there will be further challenges along the way. There are many drivers who have driven similar vehicles for many years and there will be some change anxiety and range anxiety and all of that, but we'll work with all of our teams."

Offering advice to fleets about to embark on the EV journey, Guest said: "Be absolutely determined. It's my view that we will all go in this direction – we can't be driving thousands and thousands of carbon-emitting vehicles around UK roads for too much longer if we are going to arrest the climate crisis.

"If people feel that what is ultimately a tool of their job is forced upon them and they have no choice or influence over that, or it's not fit for their purpose then very quickly they could chose somewhere else to work, or be far less efficient.

"So, it's determination, a determination to listen,

learn and bring your team with you on the journey."

Paul Hollick, chair of the Association of Fleet Professionals, which offers a range of training courses and guides to help fleets make the switch to electric, said decision-makers shouldn't be too concerned if they've not yet started on the journey to electric.

"Having EVs is just an extension of having a different type of fuelled vehicle on your fleet. You do need to think about the practicalities of charging as opposed to filling up, but everything else should pretty much work the same," he said.

He suggests that the biggest barriers to a successful transition are employee misconception about what an EV can, or can't, do.

"There will be some concern about 'will it suit me, what about range?' but it's not so bad for cars because drivers save so much money in tax, so why wouldn't they want to make the move? And more drivers are seeing that their colleagues are driving EVs without any problems. Also, the fact that many electric cars nowadays have a range of between 200 to 250 miles is a game changer," he added.

FleetNews



AWARDS  
*Summer Garden Party*  
2021

## SPONSOR PROFILE

Northgate Vehicle Hire's core business is the hire of light commercial vehicles (LCVs) to businesses on flexible and minimum term contracts, providing customers the flexibility to manage vehicle needs without capital outlay or long-term commitments.

We have a network of 67 large scale rental locations and workshops across the UK and benefit from large volume and long-standing supply agreements with the UK's leading van suppliers. We can help you to build and flex your fleet. Alongside LCV and specialist vehicle rentals – which, for peace of mind, include servicing, maintenance and breakdown cover – we also provide a range of mobility solutions to help customers manage their fleets more effectively, reducing costs, improving efficiency and ensuring they are able to meet legal and duty of care obligations.

Northgate can also provide expert consultative advice across all aspects of operating electric vehicles (EVs), helping customers with everything from choosing the right e-LCV through to charging infrastructure, driver training and advice.

With 40 years' experience in the industry, Northgate can deliver the fleet solutions you need.

**NORTHGATE**  
Vehicle Hire

# Plan your road to zero with turnkey solutions from Northgate

Northgate has been supporting the commercial vehicle needs of British businesses, public sector organisations and charities for 40 years. We are a customer-centric rental company and fleet solutions provider. Our mobility solutions ensure that we can support our customers' full fleets – whether hired or owned.

As the journey towards electrification continues for light commercial vehicles (LCVs), it would be fair to say that the transition is presenting a host of considerations for fleet operators.

The current shortages in vehicle supply seen across the automotive industry may mean you should reconsider the pace at which you plan to introduce change to your fleet, but advance planning is more important than ever.

We see a period ahead where ICE (internal combustion engine) and EVs (electric vehicles) will both be needed with each having their part to play dependent on the solutions needed by modern fleets. Here at Northgate, we offer both – providing customers with the

widest choice of vehicles tailored to their specific fleet needs.

Throughout the past year, Northgate has continued to evolve into a specialist B2B customer-centric LCV mobility provider. This includes our own move towards cleaner vehicle solutions. We are busy adding more e-vans to our fleet, providing charging points throughout our network and equipping our workshops for and training our technicians on EVs.

From the beginning, we've worked with EV industry experts to ensure that we can support you in the right way.

Adding EVs to your fleet should form part of a wider mobility solution. The evolution in technology means it is important when operating EVs that whole life costs are considered, from initial capital outlay through to running costs versus ICE and residual values. Being able to change up to the latest models as technology improves is an important consideration.

Ownership or contract hire will commit fleets to years in vehicles that will have been superseded by newer, more capable







and cost-effective models. Northgate flexible hire packages provide the opportunity to change vehicles as technology evolves.

Working closely with OEMs, we're continually adding to our EV range to meet customer needs across all e-LCV vans, conversions and electric cars. They're available on flexible and minimum term hires so you can make the right choice for your fleet.

We have also invested in bringing EV infrastructure solutions to our customers – for site and home installations. Leading charging, power supply and consultancy provider, ChargedEV recently joined the Redde Northgate Group. With more than 20,000 completed installations delivered, customers may be confident in our ability to support all their infrastructure needs, whether at work, home or on-the-go. We provide complete turnkey solutions based on the customer's specific needs. We are power supply and equipment agnostic. Our sole focus is the correct customer solution.

We also have a solution to meet on-the-go



**"Our propositions are designed to let customers focus on their business while we focus on running their fleet"**

**Neil McCrossan, sales and marketing director, Northgate Vehicle Hire**

charging needs – with a combined fuel and electric chargecard available that is accepted at more than 1,000 rapid chargers and 3,000 fast chargers.

Our proposition is designed to let customers focus on their business while we focus on running their fleets.

Northgate customers benefit from services and agility not available to those who buy or contract hire their vehicles. And for those that do have a mix of acquisition methods, we can still help, offering mobility solutions for 'YourFleet'. Customers benefit from cost reductions and efficiency solutions across the whole fleet by using Northgate solutions.

Recent solutions launched covering YourFleet include fleet management, vehicle maintenance, accident management and Northgate Safe Driver – all of which can be tailored to customer's fleet requirements.

At Northgate, we are passionate about customer service. Our people will take the time to listen to your needs and will then apply expertise and resources to deliver the right solutions.

**Find out more at [northgatevehiclehire.co.uk](https://northgatevehiclehire.co.uk) or call us on 0330 042 0903**





# KIA EV6

The EV6 deserves to be in big demand, but getting hold of one soon may be another matter

By Matt de Prez

**C**hange is afoot in the compact executive segment and, with a distinct lack of electric models from the sector stalwarts, newcomers such as Tesla and Polestar, along with rapid-rising Hyundai, are creeping in and capturing fleet customers with long-range, high-tech, affordable models.

The latest brand to join the craze is Kia. While it's no stranger to electric cars, with two successful fleet models – the E-Niro and Soul – already available, its latest offering is set to take the brand

to new heights and compete head-to-head with premium marques.

Named EV6, the new model straddles multiple segments, offering hatchback practicality, luxury saloon levels of space and a raised driving position.

The futuristic styling incorporates neat details such as retractable flush-fit door handles and a charging port that's cleverly integrated into the rear tail light.

Inside, the EV6 provides an enhanced digital experience with two conjoined 12-inch displays mounted Mercedes-style at the top of the dash. A

third digital touch panel integrates all the familiar climate and infotainment short keys, along with the all-important volume knob.

The newcomer shares a platform with the recently launched Hyundai Ioniq 5, packing in a 77kWh battery for a WLTP range of at least 300 miles on all variants.

Impressive range is paired with rapid charging capability that sees the car replenish its battery from 10% to 80% in 18 minutes, when using a 350kW charger. A full charge on a 7kW home charger will take around seven hours.

There are two versions to choose from: a rear-wheel drive single motor, known as RWD, and a twin-motor all-wheel drive, called AWD.

The RWD version serves up 229PS and provides the greatest range, with a WLTP figure of 328 miles. AWD models, meanwhile, can cover up to 314 miles.

Despite weighing almost two tonnes, the EV6 RWD completes the 0-62mph sprint in around seven seconds, which should be more than adequate for the majority of drivers of compact executive vehicles. There's a decent surge when you call for more power, thanks to the instant deployment of the motor's 350Nm of torque.

Those that want a more thrilling drive can, of course, opt for the AWD model. It's noticeably more potent, giving a sports-car rivaling 5.2-second 0-62mph acceleration time.

Driveability is about more than just acceleration, however, and in a segment led by the BMW 3 Series, the EV6 can't afford to disappoint. We're pleased to say it does not.

Compared with its Hyundai sister car, the EV6 has been tuned for better driver engagement. Its



All the gadgets and features you would expect from a premium car are present in the EV6



# WARDY'S WORLD

By Martin Ward



Many of you will have heard about the ZEV (zero-emission vehicle) mandate – manufacturers certainly will have.

The Government is considering bringing in a law obliging car manufacturers to produce a minimum proportion of their vehicles as zero-emission, starting in 2024, and with the proportion rising every year up to 2030, when sales of new petrol and diesel cars will be banned, with the exception of some hybrids.

In a way, this means manufacturers will be forced to produce cars and market them with no real idea if anyone will buy these zero-emission vehicles.

Trying to force a product onto people can, and usually does, have a negative effect on that product. It's like bakers being told to sell more wholegrain bread, because it's more healthy, but I guess at the end of the day, they will have plenty of this product left, to be thrown away, or sold off cheaply.

If you put an EV on your fleet today with a 36-month contract, it will be coming off in 2024, exactly the time that new, potentially cheaper, EVs may be forced into the market. They will certainly be more readily available, meaning your three-year-old EV will be competing with many more new ones.

The Government, understandably, is keen to see more EVs available, but at the same time the infrastructure has to improve not just dramatically, but mega-dramatically, something I can't see happening any time soon.

This 2024 ZEV mandate is certainly one to watch...

## Back in circulation

It's be so good to be out and about again and to see so many friendly faces at the well organised SMMT Test Day North at Wetherby Racecourse.

In addition, at Amber Lakes, near Staines, I had the opportunity to drive the facelifted Seat Ibiza and Arona. Both get full LED tech, a 'floating touchscreen' and plenty of new technology and much improved interior.

I also went to North Yorkshire for a first drive in a Ineos Grenadier which is due on sale in the UK mid-2022. It is a large go-anywhere 4x4, powered by BMW's 3.0 six-cylinder petrol or diesel coupled to a eight-speed ZF gearbox. Ineos say a hydrogen unit will follow. The interior was of a very high standard, and I particularly liked the roof-mounted switches and buttons. No prices yet, but it is expected to start at around £40,000 plus VAT.

	ENTRY LEVEL Kia EV6 RWD Ai	FLEET PICK Kia EV6 RWD GT Line	RANGE-TOPPER Kia EV6 AWD GT-Line
<b>SPECIFICATIONS</b>			
P11D Price	£40,890	£43,890	£51,890
CO <sub>2</sub> emissions (g/km)	0	0	0
Range (miles)	328	328	300
Monthly BIK tax (20%)	1%/£7	1%/£7	1%/£9
Annual VED	£0	£0	£0
Class 1A NIC	£56	£61	£72
Fuel cost (ppm)	4.6	4.5	5
Running cost (4yrs/80k)	40.5ppm	43ppm	51.5ppm
AFR (ppm)	4	4	4
Residual value (4yrs/80k)	£14,679/36%	£15,754/36%	£18,004/35%

Go to [www.fleetnews.co.uk](http://www.fleetnews.co.uk) for tax figures from April 2020-2022

## RIVALS



**TESLA MODEL 3**  
Standard Range Plus



**POLESTAR 2**  
Single Motor Long Range



**BMW 330E**  
Sport PHEV

<b>SPECIFICATIONS</b>			
P11D Price	£40,935	£42,845	£42,490
CO <sub>2</sub> emissions (g/km)	0	0g	31
Range (miles)	278	335	201mpg/37
Monthly BIK tax (20%)	1%/£7	1%/£7	11%/£78
Annual VED	£0	£0	£0 then £480
Class 1A NIC	£56	£59	£645
Fuel cost (ppm)	3	5.5	10
Running cost (4yrs/80k)	39.5ppm	44ppm	51ppm
AFR (ppm)	4	4	14
Residual value (4yrs/80k)	£15,494/38%	£16,325/38%	£13,187/31%

suspension is firmer, and Kia's engineers say they have calibrated the chassis to be "a bit more fun".

That doesn't come at the expense of ride comfort though. If you avoid the 20-inch wheels on the range-topping model, the EV6 is smooth and comfortable. Wind noise is well isolated too, with nothing but a little tyre rumble to break the silence.

While range, performance and handling are all important, cost will really determine the EV6's fleet viability. A £40,000 Kia might have seemed like a ridiculous proposition 10 years ago, but today the EV6's starting price of £40,945 seems perfectly reasonable given its capability.

Sure, drivers will have to do without a German premium badge – a sticking point for some, no doubt – but, in all other respects, the EV6 hits the mark. So far, the initial order bank shows the majority of fleet customers have opted for the range-topping AWD GT-Line S model, costing £51,945 – a clear sign of changing times.

All the gadgets and features you'd expect from a premium badge car are present and correct. There's a semi-autonomous adaptive cruise control and lane-keeping system, a high-end Meridian stereo, heated seats, keyless entry and LED headlights.



Features you won't find on the likes of a 3 Series include ventilated front seats, a remote autonomous parking system and the ability to run an electric appliance, or even charge another EV, from the EV6's battery.

There's only one problem Kia has to contend with and that's supply. Ahead of the car's launch Kia had already accepted 1,500 pre-orders, taking up its full allocation for the year – so there's no shortage of demand, and that's before anyone had even driven it.

The EV6 is definitely one to watch, but, while volumes remain restricted, it's likely to remain a rare sight on the road.



# DS4

It doesn't sport a badge drivers aspire to, but the DS4 has many premium attributes

By Matt de Prez

**C**ompact premium cars sit at the heart of the fleet sector. They're aspirational, practical and enjoyable to drive, while being cost-effective and economical.

Drivers of cars in this segment could easily choose a Ford Focus or a VW Golf, but they don't. They want badge kudos, they want kerb appeal and they want to feel like they're doing a little bit better than their mainstream-brand-driving counterparts.

That's why German brands Audi, BMW and Mercedes-Benz dominate the segment. Remember the Alfa Romeo Giulietta and the Lexus CT? They both came, tried and went. Competition in this space is fierce, with each respective model among the best sellers for their makers.

DS is looking to take on the big players head-to-head by offering a futuristic-looking, technology packed, luxury-focused rival. The styling makes the DS4 stand out. It's an assertive-looking hatch, with bold lines and distinctive styling cues. You can't miss its LED light signature and flush door handles. There's more than a hint of concept car about it.

On the inside, it's a similar story. Don't expect a Peugeot parts bin special here. There's an all-new infotainment system, a neat row of switches that are mounted in front of a hidden air vent and an obscure phone-sized touchscreen where you'd expect the gear lever to be.

Range-topping Rivoli models benefit from a leather-clad dash, hiding some of the cheaper plastics that are visible in lower-grade models.

It's a fabulous bit of interior design, though. The only disappointment is a slightly lower-resolution instrument cluster, which contrasts with the rather excellent new multimedia display in the centre of the dash - it's much faster, crisper and easier to operate than the set-up in other DS models, making it a welcome addition.

The lower screen can be used to call up some



There's an excellent new multimedia display in the centre of the dash

customisable shortcuts. We feel, however, it's a bit under-utilised and would be better deployed as a remote controller for the main screen.

As the DS4 is closely related to the new Peugeot 308, it's perhaps unsurprising that the two cars share an array of powertrains. Petrol options come in 130PS, 180PS and 225PS guises, while there's a single 130PS diesel option. All are paired with an eight-speed automatic.

None of these engines give the DS4 an advantage over its competitors. Only the diesel manages to slip under the 130g/km CO<sub>2</sub> emissions threshold and with no manual option, some enthusiastic drivers may be put off.

The plug-in hybrid E-Tense is more interesting. It offers fleet customers the most attractive tax costs - sitting in the 11% benefit-in-kind bracket - and serves up the same 225PS as the range-topping petrol. It can cover up to 38 zero-emission miles and can be recharged in a little less than two hours using a 7kW wallbox.

As a French luxury car, the DS is set up primarily for comfort. However, in order to look the part, it's

fitted with massive wheels (up to 20 inches) and the engineers have attempted to implement a degree of sportiness to the drive.

It means the DS4 is neither particularly comfortable or particularly sporty.

That doesn't necessarily matter, however. The DS4 offers other things that rival cars don't.

There's a high-level of standard equipment and unique options like massaging and ventilated seats and clever suspension system that uses a camera to adjust the dampers to the road ahead.

It's also supremely quiet inside, which makes motorway trips a breeze.

Prices start at £25,340, or £36,600 for the E-Tense, so it's not exactly a bargain.

Audi's A3 PHEV can be had for £3,000 less while that range-topping Rivoli is more than £40,000 - eclipsing a top-spec Mercedes A250e.

The DS4 may look and feel a lot more premium than its counterparts, but it lacks the driveability and all-important badge that many fleet drivers in this space crave.

**Running costs not available at time of writing.**





# MERCEDES-BENZ S-CLASS

All-new model is a great luxury car, but is it about to be overshadowed by its electric sister?

By Matt de Prez

**W**hen a car is dubbed as being “the best in the world”, replacing it with an all-new model is often a tall order. That’s why the launch of a new S-Class is always an important event. It’s usually the flag-bearer for Mercedes’ latest and greatest innovations and serves to showcase the features and technology that will eventually filter through the rest of the range.

At first glance, the newcomer is still unmistakably a member of the Mercedes-Benz elite. Its three-pointed star sits atop a bold new grille at the end of its long and intimidating bonnet.

The curvy, retro lines of the old car have been replaced with a squared off rear-end, but it’s still very much a case of business-as-usual.

As you approach the S-Class, the new flush-fit handles automatically extend from the door providing access to the car’s best feature – its interior.

The leather-clad cabin is spacious, airy and packed with materials and details that reflect the S-Class’s luxury status.

## FLEET PICK S350 d AMG LINE

SPECIFICATIONS	
<b>P11D Price</b>	£79,500
<b>Monthly BIK (20%)</b>	37%/£490
<b>Class 1A NIC</b>	£4,059
<b>Annual VED</b>	£895 then £490
<b>RV (4yr/80k)</b>	£25,536/32%
<b>Fuel cost (ppm)</b>	14.5
<b>AFR (ppm)</b>	15
<b>Running cost (4yr/80k)</b>	92ppm
<b>CO<sub>2</sub> (g/km)</b>	173
<b>Mpg</b>	42.8



Conventional dash controls are replaced by a large 12.8-inch touchscreen

Like its predecessor, the seats are super-soft, electrically adjustable in many multiple and capable of heating, cooling and massaging occupants.

Whether you’re a driver or passenger, the isolation from the outside world is fascinating. There is little noise intrusion, and the air suspension system provides an exquisite ride, ironing out imperfections and keeping the body flat in the corners.

At its core, the S-Class ticks all the boxes of a class-leading luxury saloon. But, that’s exactly what its predecessor did. So, is the car’s long-standing tradition of being the pinnacle of Mercedes-Benz engineering coming to an end?

Exhibit one: a headline feature is the next-generation MBUX system, which does away with the traditional Mercedes cockpit layout and introduces a large 12.8-inch central touchscreen that takes the place of conventional dashboard controls.

The new system is impressive, both in terms of usability and display clarity. It’s easy to navigate and use on the move, despite doing away with a physical controller. But, it’s a system that’s also already available in the new C-Class.

Exhibit two: the powertrains. From launch the S-Class offered a pair of six-cylinder diesel units or a mild-hybrid petrol. With CO<sub>2</sub> emissions starting from 172g/km, none of the engines are particularly revolutionary for efficiency.

We tested the entry-level S 350 d, which provides 286PS and can achieve around 40mpg. It’s perfectly adequate – much like the last S 350 d – if a little growly at higher revs, but not really cutting edge.

The plug-in hybrid S 580 e, which recently joined the line-up, is more impressive, however. It emits just 18g/km of CO<sub>2</sub>, officially, thanks to its 28.6kWh battery giving a zero-emission range of up to 62 miles. That’s the most electrification the S-Class will provide though, as the upcoming fully electric EQS will act as its zero-emission sister car.

It seems, then, that the S-Class may now sit in the EQS’s shadow when it comes to showcasing the best Mercedes can offer. But, we’ll have to reserve judgement until we’ve been behind the wheel.

Based on our experience, the S-Class is still the clear leader in the internal combustion engine luxury car segment, at least.

# CUPRA FORMENTOR

Much more substance to the Formentor than just its head-turning looks



By Matt de Prez

**C**upra may have made a name for itself as the 'hot' arm of Seat, but in these changing times the pressure is on all brands to focus on sustainability. That's why the new Formentor, Cupra's first standalone model, is available with a choice of two fleet-friendly plug-in hybrid powertrains.

With its sporty looks and crossover practicality, the Formentor is certainly going to catch the eye of user-choosers. But it's the 27g/km CO<sub>2</sub> emissions figure and zero-emissions range of up to 36 miles that's likely to be the key selling point here.

It sits on the same platform as the latest VW Golf and, of course, the Seat Leon – with a greater focus on driveability and exclusivity.

Like its stablemates, the Formentor utilises VW's proven 1.4-litre turbocharged petrol engine and electric motor, with 204PS or 245PS. These are known as eHybrid. There's also a choice of 1.5-litre and 2.0-litre petrol engines, but these are less efficient.

Our testing showed that around 28 miles of driving

## FLEET PICK CUPRA FORMENTOR EHYBRID V2 240PS

SPECIFICATIONS	
<b>P11D Price</b>	£38,060
<b>Monthly BIK (20%)</b>	11%/£70
<b>Class 1A NIC</b>	£578
<b>Annual VED</b>	£0 then £145
<b>RV (4yr/80k)</b>	£13,812/36%
<b>Fuel cost (ppm)</b>	8.5
<b>AFR (ppm)</b>	12
<b>Running cost (4yr/80k)</b>	44ppm
<b>CO<sub>2</sub> (g/km)</b>	29
<b>Mpg</b>	235.4



A central 12-inch touchscreen takes the place of conventional switchgear

in 'EV Mode' is possible, before the petrol engine kicks in. The car defaults to its zero-emission setting each time you start it, although it's possible to switch to hybrid mode to retain charge for use later.

On longer trips, or those where the battery is depleted, we'd expect fuel consumption to hover around the 50mpg mark.

The 204PS car can accelerate from 0-62mph in 7.8 seconds, while the 245PS model manages it in 7.0. As both use the same electric motor, the difference is only noticeable in the mid-range at full throttle.

Prices start at £36,115 for the 204PS car in V1 trim, which comes packed with equipment such as LED headlights, digital instruments, sat-nav, keyless entry, adaptive cruise control and heated steering wheel.

The V2 (£38,060) adds super-comfy Nappa leather seats with copper stitching, a leather dashboard, front parking sensors and a rear-view camera.

The more powerful engine is only offered in higher-specified VZ1 and VZ2 trims, costing from £38,860. These look and feel sportier, with bucket seats, adaptive dampers and a black headliner. The benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax difference between the top and

bottom of the range is only £10 per month, however.

We were impressed at how well the car rides, given its character. Our V2 test model was fitted with 19-inch wheels, as opposed to the 18-inch units found on the base V1 car. It's firm, but not particularly harsh and delivers enjoyable handling.

Practicality is reasonable too. The car sits between a regular hatch and crossover, offering a raised seating position but without the dynamic shortcomings. There's a 345-litre boot and decent rear-seat space. Up front, the dashboard is lifted from the Leon, but features copper detailing and plusher materials to help set it apart.

A central 12-inch touchscreen takes the place of conventional switchgear, which can be frustrating for first-time users as some simple functions like switching on the heated seat require several screen taps. It is possible to set-up shortcuts and customise the menus to suit individual requirements.

Cupra's first bash at making a car from scratch has been a resounding success. It's enjoyable to drive, has head-turning looks, ample performance and reasonable running costs.



# MERCEDES-BENZ C 300 E

Battery capacity has almost doubled and can be charged in as little as 30 minutes

By Matt de Prez

**W**hen we first drove the new C-Class a few months ago, we were pretty certain that it was good enough to steal the crown from BMW's 3 Series as the best compact executive.

Claiming that 'title' was dependent on one thing, however, the plug-in hybrid. Mercedes-Benz offers two, with the unique proposition of a diesel or petrol. The diesel will launch next year, but company car drivers can order the C 300 e now.

A 25.4kWh battery is the big news here. It has almost twice the capacity of the old one, but thanks to the car's new platform it doesn't eat into the available boot space.

Officially, the car can cover 62 zero-emission miles. We managed 55 in our tests. Not only does that give a benefit-in-kind rate of 7% but it also

The C 300 e is one of the few plug-in hybrids that can make sense to charge mid-journey



means the car is far more efficient than both its predecessor and keenest rivals in the real world. We'd expect upwards of 80mpg to be achievable.

Charging the battery takes as little as half an hour, using a DC charger (55kW), meaning the C 300 e is one of the few plug-in hybrids that can make sense to charge mid-journey.

The powertrain outputs 320PS in total, although the electric motor's 130PS is enough to render the petrol engine almost unnecessary in urban driving. The C 300 e will accelerate to 62mph from rest in about six seconds. It's quick, but the 550Nm torque output is less aggressive than the old model's – arguably unnecessary – 700Nm output.

# SEAT IBIZA

On the outside, there's little difference, but the interior changes are significant

By Andrew Ryan

**F**our years after its launch, the current-generation Ibiza still looks as vibrant as ever. Which is a good thing really as, under a recent refresh, changes to the exterior are minimal: they include LED headlights now being fitted as standard across the range, and, err, that's about it.

Much bigger changes can be found in the cabin. This has undergone a significant redesign to give it a more modern, youthful look.

A new infotainment touchscreen which is 20% larger than the one found in the pre-facelift Ibiza has been installed, while there is also a softer dashboard, a new leather steering wheel and the driver and passenger air vents now illuminate.

The infotainment screen is the real highlight, measuring between 8.25 inches on SE trim models and 9.2 inches on SE Technology, FR, FR Sport and Xcellence trim levels, with an ultra-crisp and colourful display.

Other changes in the model refresh include the introduction of the Seat Connect app, and the availability of new driver assistance systems including lane-assist, traffic sign recognition, side assist and high beam assist.

LED headlights are now fitted as standard as part of the Ibiza's refresh



Only one engine – a 1.0-litre petrol – is available but it can be specified in three power outputs: 80PS, 95PS and 110PS.

Seat expects the 95PS engine in FR trim to be the best-seller.

On the road, the Ibiza is as engaging as ever, with

its direct steering and slightly-sporty oriented suspension making it fun to drive, while practicality remains competitive with its rivals.

Pre-facelift, Ibiza could still be considered to be among the best of the superminis available, and the updates have only added to its appeal.





## ▶ AUDI Q4 E-TRON FIRST TEST

40 SPORT

**By Andrew Ryan**

Audi has high hopes for its fully-electric Q4 e-tron SUV, forecasting that it will become its second best-selling model in the UK.

My time with our 204PS Q4 e-tron 40 Sport long-term has started well.

It has the larger 82kWh battery, giving it an official WLTP range of 316 miles. Having come into it straight from a BEV with a range of just 130 miles this makes for a far more relaxing time.

Our Q4 e-tron can charge at a maximum of 125kW on a DC rapid charger, meaning 80 miles of

range can be restored in 10 minutes at peak speed.

Standard equipment on Sport trim includes 19-inch alloys, LED head- and tail-lights, electric tailgate, heated and electric front sports seats and three-zone air conditioning.

It also features a number of driver assistance systems, including cruise control, lane departure warning, rear parking sensors, pedestrian and cyclist detection and keyless start.

The P11D value for the standard model is £46,435, but our test model is fitted with a number of optional extras which pushes its price up to £51,970.



## ▶ MAZDA MX-30

145PS SPORT LUX

**By Jeremy Bennett**

The most pressing question I have about the MX30 has nothing to do with its power source.

Rather, what I want to know is what was the thought process behind the rear-hinged rear doors, which can only be opened when the front ones are open. Think of the Mazda RX-8 from the noughties.

The access they provide to the back is quite small for my 87-year-old mother to get in. It was a similar story with a coffee table I bought – the front seat had to be adjusted to the upright position and brought as far forward as it possible.

Responding to my question, a Mazda spokesperson said: "The freestyle door is carefully designed to facilitate smooth, effortless exit from the cabin as well as being a stand-out style feature that emphasises the open and airy nature of the cabin."

The doors, he said, makes the "line of motion of passengers simple", so, when placing luggage in the rear seat or getting in the front seat, it's an "easy movement".

Our MX-30 is being taken back for a safety recall on the passenger airbag which "could split at the seam and may not deploy correctly in a collision".

## ▶ VOLVO XC40

T4 R DESIGN



**By Mike Roberts**

Volvo swapped our XC40 Plug-in hybrid T4 long-term test car with a more powerful T5 version, allowing the T4 to undergo routine maintenance. I'd received a notification at 5,500 miles to book it in on the car's display screen and via the phone app.

Although the T5 had fewer optional extras than the T4 (no adaptive cruise control or lane-keep assist, for example), it was still brimming with great tech and the extra boost in power when accelerating was immediately noticeable – official figures show the T5 can reach 0-60 in seven seconds, 1.2 seconds quicker than the T4 thanks to its extra 51PS.

And the brakes on the replacement were a big improvement. On the T4 they felt disengaged and 'spongy'. It took me a week or two to get used to them – I pressed the pedal a little too hard on more than one occasion.

The seats in the T5 felt more comfortable too – a bit more padded – but they looked the same as those in the T4, so it could have been that the seat position setting better suited my posture.

Another obvious addition in the replacement car was a panoramic sunroof, which looked cool and allowed a decent amount of extra light in, to the benefit of rear seat passengers mainly. It costs an additional £1,000.

The T5 with options costs £47,680 while the T4 model, again with options, is £44,405.

P11D prices start at £39,940 for the less-powerful model, increasing to £43,690 for the T5, while CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for both are below 50g/km so they share a 13% benefit-in-kind tax rate.

The XC40 is a premium car and the ride quality is refined and comfortable.

The battery is cleverly packaged into the car's chassis so passenger and luggage space is generous.



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## ▶ VW GOLF FINAL TEST

GTE 1.4 TSI PHEV

By Matt de Prez

Innovation in the automotive sector largely comes from two areas: technology and powertrains. When it comes to refinement, driveability and practicality the Golf was already the segment benchmark, but we entered our long-term test of the eighth-generation car with some trepidation.

While the new Golf comes packed with technology, not all of it worked properly. Early teething problems with the car's new infotainment system and updated driver assistance systems were widespread.

Even our own GTE test car suffered a few glitches.

This hasn't stopped people buying the car in droves, however. At the time of writing, the Golf is the UK's second-best selling car. Its fleet performance is equally strong, with almost 40% of new Golfs going into the true fleet market.

Having covered 5,000 miles in the Golf GTE, it's easy to see why. Once you get your head around the infotainment set-up, there's little not to like.

The seats are comfortable and supportive, the digital instruments are crisp and easy to read, there's plenty of space for people and things, and, as we've previously said, it really is a great all-rounder.

Our GTE plug-in hybrid model returned 55mpg during our time with it. This was achieved from a mixture of long motorway trips, where the 1.4-litre turbocharged petrol engine did the bulk of the work, and shorter zero-emission ones that made use of the car's electric range.

With its high level of specification and compliant drive, the GTE could be comparable to premium-badge rivals, offering features like matrix LED headlights, adaptive cruise control with lane-keep assist and the ability to use your smartphone as a key.

It's not the 'hottest' hot hatch, due to the weight of its battery, but it's certainly one of the best handling plug-in hybrid cars on the market. The optional DCC adaptive dampers are a must, if anything to smooth out the ride on rougher surfaces – we spent the majority of our time in Comfort mode.

We'd also recommend the 18-inch alloy wheel upgrade, purely for aesthetic reasons.

Volkswagen may be throwing a lot of investment at its ID range of electric cars right now, but the latest Golf is no afterthought.



## ▶ SEAT LEON FINAL TEST

1.4 E-HYBRID FR

By Gareth Roberts

Two weeks behind the wheel of the Seat Leon 1.0 TSI SE Dynamic 110PS manual has only strengthened the appeal of our long-term test car, the plug-in Leon 1.4 e-Hybrid FR.

The petrol Leon still shares that sporty-looking bodywork and includes lots of hi-tech equipment. It's good to drive, there's a little body roll in corners and a good amount of grip.

There is also a bigger boot, 380 litres for the internal combustion engine (ICE) car versus 270 litres for the plug-in hybrid.

But that's perhaps the only down-side of the PHEV, which has continued to impress during its time on the *Fleet News* test fleet.

The plug-in hybrid produces more power than the standard petrol and diesel versions, so it feels nipper when you accelerate hard.

The 12.8kWh battery and 85kW e-motor are supported by a 1.4-litre petrol engine, which drives the front axle through a six-speed twin-clutch automatic gearbox.

The way it uses its motor as a brake to help slow the car down can take a bit of getting used to

though, especially when crawling along in slow-moving traffic.

The Leon e-Hybrid offers a good choice of standard technology and options in five trim levels – FR, FR Sport, FR First Edition, Xcellence and Xcellence Lux.

Fully charged, it offers a claimed 40 miles of zero-emission driving, but, as we bid farewell to the Leon plug-in hybrid, the best return achieved remains at 30 miles.

A full charge takes around three hours and 45 minutes using a 3.6kW charging point or wall box unit.

The car can also be recharged using the mains power supply at home, though Seat says it will take five hours and 48 minutes to fully recharge via a three-pin plug socket.

Claimed fuel economy is up to 235mpg (WLTP), but in real-world conditions we found it achieved creditable 53mpg when being driven along the motorway – not far off its ICE counterparts.





## ▶ HYUNDAI TUCSON

PHEV ULTIMATE



By Stephen Briers

Comparing the Hyundai Tucson plug-in hybrid against competitors poses a bit of a problem.

Most of the models closest on price and running cost are two-wheel drive; bringing a four-wheel option into the mix generally means entering the premium sector and far costlier cars with bigger petrol engines.

**Exhibit one:** the Volkswagen Tiguan PHEV and Ford Kuga PHEV, both two-wheel drive. The P11D of the former is £4,200 less than the £41,975 Tucson and, consequently, its running cost is £5,000 less over a four-year/80,000-mile operating cycle. The Kuga is £4,300 cheaper but only undercuts the Tucson's £40,336 running cost (50.42p per mile) by £1,600\*.

**Exhibit two:** The Volvo XC60 T6 and the Audi Q5 PHEV, both four-wheel drive and carrying 2.0-litre petrol engines compared with the Tucson's 1.6. The XC60 has a P11D price almost £10,000 more than the Tucson, and costs that much more over four years; the Q5 is £12k more, but thanks to strong residual values, it only costs £9,000 more to run over four years.

Arguably the closest competitor to the Tucson – aside from stablemate Kia's Sportage which is not yet available as a plug-in hybrid – is the Fleet News Award-winning 1.8-litre Toyota Rav4 PHEV. It has a higher P11D but is slightly cheaper on pence per mile running costs thanks to a stronger residual value performance and lower fuel costs due to its 46 miles of zero emissions range (Tucson 38).

That the Tucson runs the Rav4 so close is impressive; and in Ultimate trim, it's also better equipped.

It's worth taking a quick peek at the mild hybrid version of the Tucson, Hyundai's only other 4WD model. Despite being almost £5,000 cheaper to buy, it costs around £500 more to run, while staff will pay £1,744 more per year in benefit-in-kind tax (£145 per month).

We'll stick with the PHEV.

\*All figures from the Fleet News running costs tool.



## ▶ VAUXHALL MOKKA-E

FIRST TEST

SRI NAV PREMIUM AUTO

By Luke Neal

The Mokka is the second model after the new Crossland to feature Vauxhall's new design language including a revised grille and headlight treatment – dubbed the Vauxhall Vizor.

Shorter and wider than before, this new Mokka has a more aerodynamic design compared with its predecessor and Vauxhall claims the new shape will cut drag by up to 16% at motorway speeds. It's also up to 120kg lighter.

Our long-term fully electric Mokka-e is the halo model in the range and offers an indicated range

of 201 miles from its 50kWh battery and 100kw (136PS) electric motor which produces 260Nm of torque. It also has rapid charging capability, meaning it can be charged from 0-80% capacity in 30 minutes. From a 7kW charger, a full charge will take seven-and-a-half hours.

Drivers can also schedule delayed charging, taking advantage of lower electricity tariffs during off-peak hours through the MyVauxhall app.

Three driving modes are available – Normal, Eco and Sport – and each alters the throttle, steering response, power and torque available.



## ▶ CITROËN BERLINGO

FIRST TEST

CREWVAN ENTERPRISE BLUE HDI 100

By Trevor Gehlcken

In my 30 years as a van journalist I've driven just about every commercial vehicle there is. Many come and go and fade in the memory within weeks, but just a few find a special place in my heart.

The Citroën Berlingo is one of those vans.

When launched in 1995 it was the first small van to be built as a light commercial vehicle from the nuts and bolts upwards. At the time, the others were van versions of cars.

I was mighty pleased to be offered a new Berlingo for a six-month test period.

Our variant is rather unusual in that it's a crew-cab with seating for five and a clever system that allows all the seats to be folded into the floor while the mesh bulkhead slides back and forth on rails.

Our van is available at a rather hefty price of £27,982 OTR, but it seems a bargain to me as it offers so much practicality (more of which in a future report).

Under the bonnet is Citroën's tried and trusted 1.5-litre turbodiesel powertrain offering 102PS and 250Nm of torque. Fuel economy is rated as 46.2-55.6mpg (WLTP).



# FleetNews READER RECOMMENDED

Over the past turbulent 18 months, supplier relationships have been tested like never before. Covid, lockdowns, supply chain issues, environmental challenges, changing driver demands and ongoing post Brexit uncertainty have added complexity to the job of a fleet operator.

It's, therefore, a perfect time for *Fleet News* to reintroduce the Reader Recommended programme, giving fleet decision-makers an opportunity to praise the work and support they have received

from key partners by nominating them as a recommended company.

Over 28 pages, Alphabet, ARI Fleet, BP Fuel Cards, Civica, DriveTech, FleetCheck, Geotab, Jaama, Keyfuels, LeasePlan, Northgate, TrackM8, UK Fuels and Zenith will let you into their world to discover the ways they have supported their fleet customers.

This feature starts, though, with a four-page insight into how the fleets themselves seek out and value strong partnerships with suppliers.

## READER RECOMMENDED

ALPHABET



CIVICA



GEOTAB  
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# TENDERING: IT'S NOT JUST A CASE OF 'SAME AGAIN'

Slick sales pitches should be things of the past. Suppliers need much more substance, reports *Tom Seymour*

**T**he true test of a partnership is how well it copes under pressure and the combination of the Covid-19 pandemic, the transition to electric vehicles (EVs) and continued new vehicle supply shortages have provided plenty of challenges.

Pricing has always been – and will continue to be – extremely important for fleets, particularly for those able to leverage strong deals with economies of scale.

However, the current challenges facing fleet decision-makers have put flexibility and customer satisfaction even higher on the agenda as a deciding factor in the tender process.

Determining what areas the business should be focusing on through key performance indicators (KPIs) is a good starting point, but this is a constantly evolving process that can take a long time to finesse.

James Rooney, fleet engineering and innovation manager, UK field operations, Centrica, says managers need to know their fleets like the back of their hand to know the pertinent questions to ask so suppliers can add the most value.

Rooney says: "An engineer off the road is measured in minutes, not days for us. How long does it take to get an engineer back into a vehicle?"

"We track how easy it is for our questions, queries and problems to be resolved.

"Is that an enjoyable experience? We want to make sure the customer experience is up to scratch."

Shaun Atton, head of fleet and facilities at Fleet News Award 2021-winning fleet of the year Auto Windscreens, said the process of reviewing KPIs

and developing a tender document is difficult to do without experience. He is responsible for 350 vehicles, the majority of which are vans.

Atton says: "Having that experience with the fleet really helps you to know what to look for and prioritise. Now I'm into the second or third lease cycle, I know what to look for. At the start, I was going off the typical sales pitch.

"Price is very important, but suppliers need to take the headaches away from the day-to-day."

Dale Eynon, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) group fleet services director, with responsibility for 4,000 vehicles, has been working to reduce the number of KPIs to the key elements that enable the fleet to make sure it's getting value for money.

He says: "We pick a number of very relevant KPIs and focus on a smaller set of them."

Eynon says Defra is also pushing for suppliers to offer business intelligence, rather than an overload of data through management information.

The onus is on suppliers being able to be more consultative to work with the fleet to interpret data that can make a tangible difference.

Eynon says: "We need to know how that supplier is effectively improving our business. We want suppliers to be able to tell us areas we should be looking at and flag them up."

"Lots of people talk about true strategic partnerships, but what often happens is you just get a lot of data and not the intelligence to change the way you do business together."

He adds: "The normal day-to-day stuff has to happen to what we have agreed. We don't want to be spending a lot of time making sure the daily service works. We want to spend our time looking at where we can make efficiencies and how our suppliers can help facilitate that."

## REVIEW YOUR OPTIONS

Atton says that, while long-standing relationships can be a strength, a fleet should always explore its options. Vehicle leasing is one of Auto Windscreens' biggest costs and during Covid-19, it started its tender process slightly earlier than usual.

Auto Windscreens puts a formal review and complete tender process in place with suppliers every five years.







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A contract with Centrica and British Gas opens access to nearly 11,000 vehicles. It means that every £1 spent can suddenly turn into £11,000 due to the scale of the fleet.

Rooney will look for contract terms for the maximum duration possible as he finds this helps drive the best value.

British Gas will continue to benchmark over a five year deal with a supplier.

This will see the business look at peer reviews on rivals to help scope what service levels are like elsewhere.

The company will also perform "dip tests" with other suppliers with service trials or by placing a small order through another leasing provider.

Rooney says: "There usually isn't too much difference in price, but there can be a huge difference in the quality of service.

"As we're a global company, we might use different suppliers in other markets and those relationships can help open doors for benchmarking what's available in the UK as well."

Rooney said changing suppliers for something like a fleet management provider is a "massive

undertaking" and can take up to two years.

Rooney tracks supplier performance on a weekly basis by tracking data. There will be another statistical review done each month, which looks at the general direction of trends.

Quarterly reviews are then performed in person and then an annual review, also in person.

Rooney says: "The prospect of a contract going sour poses an enormous threat to our business.

"We need to catch any issues that can threaten the core running of the fleet as early as possible.

"That's why we have such a close eye on things."

#### FREQUENCY OF REVIEWS

Chris Connors, Countryside head of facilities and fleet, puts regular reviews in place with a weekly operational call, a monthly management meeting and then quarterly formal reviews.

Whatever the frequency, there was a consensus that there needs to be open lines of communication at major milestones.

Connors says: "We don't want a situation where things start to escalate if there's a problem."

Atton holds regular reviews with account

managers to make sure the business is continuing to get value for money.

He says: "I know some people don't like to hold reviews too frequently as that can take time out of the day-to-day."

Atton looks at internal data to make sure what the business is projecting for expenditure like end of contract damage charges align with the supplier's view.

Connors asks to speak with current customers, knowing full well they may be a supplier advocate. However, he says conversations with other supplier customers are generally very open.

He will also go personally to see a supplier at their offices, where appropriate, to see the way they work.

"Have they given you a nice glossy sales pitch or do they actually live the values they have told us," Connors asks.

"I like to get a feel for the business before we go ahead. I'll sit with the accident management team and listen to how they deal with a call.

"We need to make sure they're going to deliver a service we'll be happy with and it's not just a ➤



“sales person telling us what we want to hear.”

As a public sector fleet, Defra is aided in its supplier review process by gaining access to Crown Commercial Services (CCS) frameworks.

Where there is enough demand for a service across central and local government departments, CCS will put a tender framework in place. This creates a list of approved suppliers that have already passed certain checks and balances.

Eynon will then work from that CCS framework to develop Defra's own contract and approach. Where there is no CCS framework, Defra will take an independent approach, much like private sector fleets.

Eynon says: “For around 75% of the work we do there is already a supplier framework in place.

“That allows us to hone in on the bits of contracts that are important to us such as sustainability.”

Defra goes through a benchmarking process every six months.

This is made simpler with access to a benchmarking portal through CCS that allows Defra to easily compare elements like cost of suppliers between Government departments.

Eynon says: “There's a difference between price and value for money. Maintaining that is key for us. We need to make sure we're spending public money wisely.”

#### CONTINUED VALUE FOR MONEY

These reviews can also help determine if the fleet is continuing to get the best value for money.

Rooney advises tender issuers to be critical of any information a supplier sends through.

He says: “We look at 10 or 15 KPIs each week, whether they're positive or negative, and then we'll look at the narration on why that is happening.

“We need to know the day-to-day is being delivered. The quarterly and annual reviews provide the opportunity to take stock and determine if the relationship is heading in the right direction.

“What needs to change? What's costing more? What new technology is coming through that will change what we're doing today?”

A drop in customer satisfaction and service levels is going to be the main driver for most fleets to switch suppliers.

This is usually quite easy to detect as drivers will

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#### ESTABLISHED BUSINESSES ONLY

British Gas reviews the turnover figures of any supplier that it works with, as they need to be an acceptable scale in order to handle the size of business put through to them.

For example, a potential supplier with £1 million turnover that is being awarded a

£3m annual contract would ring alarm bells.

Rooney says: “Due to the size of our fleet most contracts are amicable when it comes to the end of the contract. I've only seen two occasions where the toys were thrown out of the pram over 10 years.”

This was because these suppliers were small companies and so losing a big contract meant

relying on one fleet business for a large percentage of their annual turnover. Losing a contract for some suppliers can spell their ruin.

Rooney says: “We will give suppliers every opportunity to stay in the running and remain competitive, but we will move if there are better options on the table. It is very rare that we have issues at the end of a contract.”



be quite vocal and feed back their dissatisfaction to fleet decision-makers. Complaints from drivers at British Gas are reviewed in detail monthly.

Rooney says: "We interact with the fleet and those KPIs every day, so you get a feel very quickly for the success of the supplier."

"Our drivers are fairly vocal. If we're getting a lot of dissatisfied drivers, we'll know about it."

Interviewees for this feature told *Fleet News* the fleet market is so competitive on price that there is usually not a huge amount of scope to undercut rivals. Savings would have to be significant to consider a change and even then, would that supplier be over-promising?

Connors at Countryside says: "It would have to be a material drop in service, or a significant

cost saving that we would have to consider."

Generally if it's cost alone, Connors will try to work with the supplier before jumping ship.

Atton agrees that considering other suppliers based on a couple of pounds difference isn't going to be enough to switch.

Dependent on the size of the fleet, innovation can sometimes be woven into supplier contracts with a specific clause, while other fleets may have something slightly less formal in place.

For fleets like British Gas and Defra, a specific innovation clause is included in all supplier contracts. Innovation might be something as simple as allowing collaboration and communication between suppliers like windscreen or tyre providers to align efficiencies in service.

Rooney says: "Innovation can bring a level of autonomy and reduce downtime for our fleet."

"Wherever we can tick value and safety boxes, for us, that's innovation."

Suppliers need to map out new technology and products to let fleets know what is coming and how they can best use these new developments.

Eynon says: "We need to make sure we are forward-thinking all the time."

"That strategic plan would be owned on both sides by senior people. I own it from Defra's side and I would expect the managing director or one level below that to own that from the organisations that we're dealing with."

This includes the supplier developing a bespoke plan with separate deliverables from the "business as usual" element of the contract.

Connors says that, even without an innovation clause, there should be an openness from the supplier to look at innovation at all times.

He says: "Contracts are there to act as a framework and the terms of conditions for what you're working to."

"Innovation is built into our review meetings. They look back, but they also look forwards to what the next 12 months look like."

"That works from our side and the supplier's side too. It looks at how our business is likely to change and predicts what's next."

Innovation can also come in the form of making sure both fleet and supplier are aligned on areas like sustainability, diversity and inclusion.

Atton says: "You can't just shout about how you're progressing, you need to make sure everyone you're working with is aligned on areas like sustainability too."

"Unfortunately, that can be a sticking point for some suppliers."

#### BIG CHANGE IN 'WEIGHTING'

Any contract Defra puts in place has to look at the impact on people and the environment and areas like sustainability have now been given a 25% weighting to win a tender. It's a significant increase from the previous figure of around 5%.

Eynon says: "In the new world of the climate emergency, 5% doesn't really feel appropriate any more."

"We think 25% will drive change in the marketplace and it's something I'd like to see reflected across the whole fleet market."

Eynon advises fleets to look forward to what they might end up wanting from a supplier relationship and then draw this into contracts.

He says: "It's easy to go for the same as you've had before, plus a bit more. But can you should try and build towards a five-year goal and incorporate that into the delivery of the contract."



## PEER REVIEWS

For those new to fleet, reaching out to other fleet managers and creating a network of support can help to further refine the tendering process.

Countryside's Chris Connors says: "Get yourself out there in the industry and make

yourself known. People in fleet will give up their time willingly to help you."

"Those that are new to the industry might not know how open this sector is to collaboration and sharing best practice."

"Reading publications such as *Fleet News* or attending events like Fleet & Mobility Live or Company Car In Action can help you

easily create a network and test the waters with new suppliers."

Atton urges fleet managers to seek advice from peers, even if it's a competitor. He says: "There might be some that don't want to speak with competitors, but talking to those in the same sector can help both of you. Take advice before you sign years away into a supply deal."



# Navigating the road to zero

**T**he fleet sector has never been more dynamic. Environmental concerns are at the top of the political and public agenda, and electric vehicles (EVs) are becoming increasingly mainstream as organisations realise the benefits they can offer.

It's a significant change but, with more than a decade working through that transition with customers, LeasePlan can help you find a path to what's next.

## Electric vehicle solutions, tailored to you

No two fleets are alike, so LeasePlan provides a selection of funding and management services built around your specific requirements.

Choose from solutions including worry-free business leasing, attractive salary sacrifice schemes and flexible short-term car and van hire to suit your drivers. Our expert consultancy team will guide you through the process, setting out the right blend of products to meet your electrification goals, supported by home and office charging solutions to make the switch easier.

To get started, our online Electric Vehicle Hub provides loads of useful information for fleets and drivers, with free-to-use tools offering feedback about your electrification progress and straightforward advice on the next steps.

■ Find out more at <https://insights.leaseplan.co.uk/topics/electric-vehicles/>



## The vehicles you need, without the wait

Business demands can change overnight, and LeasePlan Flexible is designed to keep your operation mobile. Our short-term hire solution provides fast access to a large selection of cars and vans available from stock with adaptable loan periods from 84 days to two years, so you're always in control of costs.

■ Immediate availability and nationwide delivery mean you can scale your fleet up quickly for new contractors or employees, without needing to wait months for the vehicles you need.

■ Compare and select specific cars and vans from stock, including an extensive choice of electric and plug-in hybrid models

with CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 50g/km or less. We won't swap them mid-term, so budgeting is easy.

■ With no long-term commitment, LeasePlan Flexible is also a risk-free way to see how EVs fit your fleet. Simply extend the loan period if you need to, or off-hire vehicles when they're no longer required.

■ Discover how LeasePlan Flexible can benefit your organisation: <https://www.leaseplan.com/en-gb/fleet-management/leaseplan-flexible/>

## Recommended by you

LeasePlan is one of the world's largest leasing suppliers, with more than 50 years' experience working with businesses, 1.8 million vehicles in 29 countries, and a proven track record supporting the transition to electric fleets.

We're leading by example; as a co-founder of the Climate Group's EV100 initiative, a member of the Business for Clean Air Task Force and supporter of the Global Action Plan's Clean Van Commitment.

By 2030, we've also set a net-zero target for our entire funded fleet.

But don't just take our word for it. LeasePlan is a *Fleet News* Reader Recommended supplier, alongside accolades including GreenFleet Leasing Company of the year in 2018 and 2019, and being Highly Commended in 2020. However the fleet sector's future shapes up, we're a trusted partner as you map out your road to zero.



For more information visit [leaseplan.com](https://leaseplan.com)







# Short-term electric vehicle lease

**Flexible plans to suit your business  
– from three months to two years**

Electric moments with **LeasePlan**

You don't have to sign a long-term lease to drive electric. LeasePlan gives your business quick access to electric cars and vans across the UK, for anything from three months to two years – with the flexibility to return them when you want. You'll be helping the environment and your employees, particularly as their BIK bills will be a lot lower.

**For more information search "LeasePlan electric vehicles" or visit [leaseplan.com](https://leaseplan.com)**



# FUTUREPROOF YOUR FLEET WITH NORTHGATE'S UNIQUE MIX OF DEPENDABILITY, AGILITY AND INNOVATION.



**Northgate has been supporting the commercial vehicle needs of British businesses, public sector organisations and charities for 40 years. We are the leading customer-centric rental company and fleet solutions provider.**

We continually investing in our people, technology, systems, and products to ensure that we can address all our customers' vehicle supply and fleet services needs. I'm extremely proud that we have been recognised for our performance in this area and are Fleet News Reader Recommended Rental Company for the fourth year running.

Our mobility solutions have been reviewed and expanded, to ensure that we can support our customers' full fleets – whether sourced from us or not.

So, for those that do have a mix of acquisition methods, we offer mobility solutions for 'YourFleet', so that customers can benefit from cost reduction and efficiency solutions across their whole fleet from Northgate.

Recent solutions launched for YourFleet include Fleet Management, Vehicle Maintenance, Accident Management and Northgate Safe Driver – all of which can be tailored to a customer's fleet requirements.

Our Accident Management services – offer support for full fleet vehicles from First Notification of Loss (FNOL), recovery, repair, replacement vehicles, third party management and getting vehicles back on the road. It takes the hassle away from dealing with accidents and incidents.

Fleet Management has been designed for YourFleet vehicles (offered as standard on Northgate hires).

Whatever customers need, whether it's as straightforward as vehicle servicing or maintenance through to the more complex challenges of running a fleet day-to-day; our expertise helps them reduce costs, minimise vehicle downtime and free-up time, so they can concentrate on their core business.



Following customer research, we developed Vehicle Management for customers who don't need a full Fleet Management service but would benefit from access to our workshops and over 2,000 approved suppliers for adhoc vehicle maintenance and servicing.

Customer research also identified a growing focus from fleets on reducing risk and supporting driver welfare.

We've launched Northgate Safe Driver which helps fleets ensure vehicles and drivers remain complaint whilst on

the road, understanding a driver's risk profile and providing driver training. Thinking ahead, adding EVs to your fleet should form part of a wider mobility solution. Our experts can advise you on how to move to electric vehicles. Which roles electric vehicles are best suited for? Which electric vehicles best suit your needs? The cost variances to ICE alternatives and what charging infrastructure and power supply arrangements will suit your business and your drivers best.

Our sister company Charged EV are market leaders in providing electric vehicle charging solutions across domestic and commercial installations. They also provide software to manage driver reimbursement and tax issues in addition to fleet information and independent advice on power supply options.

Northgate offers customers a range of unique services including fully Flexible Van Hire and 12months+ flexible agreements. Hires come with full fleet management, SMR and replacement vehicles included.

Our proposition is designed to let customers focus on their business whilst we focus on running their fleets.



**Neil McCrossan,**  
Sales & Marketing  
Director, Northgate



# NORTHGATE CAN DELIVER THE FLEET SOLUTION YOU NEED.

With a full range of vehicle hire options and mobility solutions available.



## FLEET MANAGEMENT

Reduce costs and increase efficiency with our range of mobility solutions for your whole fleet.

### Fleet Management

With our flexible account managed solution, we look after vehicles for whole of life, taking away the burden of administration, minimising vehicle downtime, reducing fleet costs and saving you time

### Accident Management

Deal with incidents across your fleet, from notification through to insurance and repair using a single phone number

### Telematics

Know where your vans are at all times, improve driver behaviour and effective route planning to reduce fuel costs

### Safe Driver

Fleet risk audits, driver risk assessments and tailored driving courses available

### Fuel Management

Drive down fleet fuel spend with a fuel card solution that gives you money off the pump price

### Vehicle Inspection App

Reduce paperwork and easily monitor your fleet's overall condition, ensuring you have fully compliant vehicles

## HIRE OPTIONS

### 12months+

A great alternative to the commitment of contract hire or ownership, ideal for uncertain economic times. The longer the term, the better the rate we can offer.

### Flexible Hire

Available for three months or more and ideal for when you have a ballpark idea of what you need, but want some flexibility in exact end dates.

### Short Term Hire

Rent vans when you need them, for as long as you want them.

### We Buy You Rent

A hassle free way to sell your vehicle and rent new. With We Buy, You Rent, you get a fair market price for your existing vehicles and all the benefits of renting new. You choose a hire option - 12months+, Flexible Hire, or VanHire+.

### Electric Vehicles

Providing a turnkey solution for operating EVs including everything from helping you to choose the right E-LCV through infrastructure to driver training and advice – we're ready to help you make the switch.

### What's included as standard:

- ✔ Full service and maintenance
- 🕒 24/7 breakdown and recovery
- 🚐 Over 50,000 vehicles
- 📍 67 branches nationwide
- 🔑 Courtesy and replacement vehicles
- 🛞 Road Fund Licence included

Find out more at [northgatevehiclehire.co.uk](https://northgatevehiclehire.co.uk)  
or call us on 0330 042 0903

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Vehicle Hire

# THE ONE & ONLY FLEET PARTNERSHIP YOU'LL EVER NEED

For any vehicle, any funding, and the best service - we're the one. Partner with the UK's leading independent leasing, vehicle outsourcing and fleet management provider.

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Get in touch

[oneteam@zenith.co.uk](mailto:oneteam@zenith.co.uk) | 0344 848 9311







# FLEET, AND THEN SOME

We deliver innovative and intelligent vehicle solutions. Whether that's funding company cars or commercial vehicles, providing flexible benefit schemes for all employees or delivering fully outsourced fleet management services. By working in partnership with our customers, we align to your strategic goals to maximise the efficiency of your fleets.

## DISCOVER SIX KEY BENEFITS OF PARTNERING WITH ZENITH and why we're the one and only fleet provider you'll ever need...

### 01 BY UNLOCKING YOUR FLEET'S POTENTIAL, we'll help you reach your financial targets

We start by analysing your fleet, asset by asset and finding the right blend of funding for your business. But we don't stop there. We know every business is different, which is why we develop bespoke fleet strategies to increase profitability, drive growth and boost efficiency. Making fleet work for business like never before.

### 02 WE'LL ENABLE YOU TO SEE YOUR FLEET CLEARLY, so you can act fast

A successful strategy starts with seeing the full picture. That's exactly what we deliver. We offer a single view of your entire fleet; whether your focus is utilisation, running costs or uptime, we make analysis simpler to perform and action plans easier to develop.

**This proactive approach leads to highly efficient fleets and it's just part of why we're trusted by some of the UK's leading organisations to deliver innovative vehicle solutions that support their business needs.**

### 03 OUR FINGER IS ALWAYS ON THE PULSE, so you won't get stuck in first gear

Now, more than ever, it's important to remain flexible and have the ability to adapt to the ever-changing landscape. By staying one step ahead of legislative updates, economic changes and evolving consumer trends, we identify potential challenges, then plan and evolve to deliver fleets that are prepared for the road ahead.

### 04 YOU'VE GOT QUESTIONS?

#### our experts have the answers

When it comes to fleet, strategy is the name of the game.

With over  
**150,000**  
vehicles under management



and  
**1,100**  
in-house experts



we've got strategic-thinking people in every team throughout the business, across all different asset classes and fuel types. That means we've always got the answers to your questions and the expertise to deliver policies that are fit-for-purpose, fleets that are fully compliant and schemes that reward and retain your people. This expertise combined with our market-leading tech is what makes partnering with us different.

### 05 WE'LL SUPPORT YOUR FLEET'S TRANSITION, aligning with your ESG agenda

With government policies continually evolving, we'll work with you on the road to net zero and beyond. Whatever the structure of your fleet, our experts will help you navigate the complexity and develop a bespoke transition strategy to align to the ambitions of your business. And we do far more than just help you make the switch, because fleet isn't only fleet – it's a significant contributor to your ESG agenda and an opportunity to drive change and lead the way in your industry.

**By choosing Zenith as your partner, you're already working towards your carbon targets thanks to our proud status as a carbon-neutral business and EV100 and SBTi commitments.**

### 06 YOU'LL BENEFIT FROM OUR INNOVATIVE TECH, making your life easier and experiences better

We invest in tech, so you can reap the rewards. Business priorities and customer demands are regularly changing, which means technology is continuously evolving. So are we. With our customer service platform, driver portals and management information system, you can rest assured your drivers are getting the very best experience and you're getting total transparency. Our industry-leading tech, powered by our knowledgeable people is what takes our award-winning customer service to another level.

#### Are you ready for a true fleet partnership?

Connect with our experts:

[oneteam@zenith.co.uk](mailto:oneteam@zenith.co.uk)

0344 848 9311





**U**K Fuels, the provider of the UK's largest independent fuel card network, has extended the appeal of its popular Fleetone fuel card; a single card that can now be used to purchase discounted fuel at more than 4,100 fuel stations nationwide.

### Extensive coverage

Fleetone card users can now enjoy **guaranteed discounts of up to 10 pence per litre** on their fuel purchases, with access to more than 80 per cent of supermarket fuel stations and over 70 per cent of motorway fuel stations across the UK. With this extensive nationwide acceptance – 98 per cent UK postcode coverage – Fleetone provides a game-changing solution for both diesel and unleaded fleets of all sizes.

### Market-leading technology

Those with a Fleetone card also get access to UK Fuels' online account management portal, Velocity, which allows fleet managers to control their fuel costs and driver performance. With HMRC-compliant invoices, the need for drivers to retain fuel receipts is removed, making it simple to reclaim VAT. Users can also order new cards, put existing cards on stop, view

pin numbers and much more.

In addition to Velocity, UK Fuels' E-route app shows every fuel station in the UK that accepts their fuel cards. The app is available to all UK Fuels customers for free, making it easy for them to find their nearest fuel station. With the ability to select a start and destination point, it can highlight all fuel sites between two locations and show real-time traffic congestion levels. This makes it easy for fleet drivers to plan fuel stops into their journeys, helping them save time and money on wasted mileage driving to find a fuel station.

### Over 30 years of experience

Established 31 years ago, UK Fuels offers the most extensive range of fuel cards in the UK, with more than half a million fuel cards actively in use. Earlier this year, they became the highest-rated fuel card provider on the online review website, Trustpilot. Their five-star rating on the site is the result of more than 1,200 customer reviews.

What's more, UK Fuels has recently been named as a recommended supplier by Fleet News readers. Throughout the summer, readers were asked to give the names of suppliers who, based on experience,

they would happily recommend to other fleet decision makers. After more than 21,000 senior decision makers with fleet responsibility were asked, UK Fuels was recommended as a Fuel/Fuel cards supplier.

### Extended family

Radius Payment Solutions, UK Fuels' parent company, offers a wide range of fleet services, such as vehicle tracking, business telephony, vehicle leasing, insurance, and electric vehicle solutions. Globally managing over 3 billion litres of fuel per annum and with 1.2 million active fuel cards in issue, Radius is one of the UK's fastest-growing companies.

If you would like to know more about UK Fuels and their range of cards and tariffs, call them on **0330 124 7643** and speak to a member of their sales team.

Alternatively, you can visit **ukfuels.co.uk** for more information and to apply online.

**UK**fuels



Smarter fuel  
for your  
business

**UK** fuels



# One convenient card to fuel your fleet



**4,100+**

fuel stations  
across the UK



**98%**

of UK postcode  
areas covered



**80%**

of supermarket  
fuel stations



**70%**

of motorway  
fuel stations



[ukfuels.co.uk](https://ukfuels.co.uk)

**0344 880 2468**



# See SMR as an opportunity

ARI Fleet has been providing SMR solutions to fleets for more than 30 years in the UK, and with the need to keep vehicles on the road and running for longer, its expertise is hugely valued by *Fleet News* readers

**W**ith supply delays over new vehicles and the shortages on some parts, it's more important than ever to keep your fleet on the road. That means looking at every aspect of your service, maintenance and repair (SMR) operation, understanding how you can spot problems before they arise, and effectively managing issues to minimise downtime.

At ARI we are experts at this and that's why we are a *Fleet News* Reader Recommended SMR partner. We manage SMR for tens of thousands of cars, vans and specialist vehicles through our 80-strong in-house team of experts drawn from across the SMR sector, backed up by state-of-the-art digital systems and our long-established 500-strong workshop network, Masterserve.

Here are the five ways we keep our customers' vehicles on the road longer:

## 1 Constantly challenge downtime

Our team's technical experience and skill, combined with advanced systems, allows us to prioritise and constantly challenge downtime by looking at what's happened at every stage of the repair process to ensure everything is ready to return that vehicle to the road as quickly as possible.

We can do this quickly by identifying the



outliers, knowing how long every job takes, every required part and what workshops need. Minimising downtime is a partnership between us, the fleet and the repairer, and it's one we have perfected.

## 2 Ensure you only pay for what you use

Our innovative pay-on-use model means fleets only pay for work when it needs doing, rather than paying set monthly SMR fees even if work is not required. This frees up cashflow for customers to invest proactively in their fleet, allowing them to understand the actual cost and react quickly to continuously shifting conditions.

## 3 A network delivering quality SMR

Excellent SMR comes from having great workshops. We know those in our 500-strong Masterserve network deliver on this

because they specialise in corporate fleet work, are hand-picked and constantly monitored to ensure they are hitting the levels of quality, efficiency and customer service we demand.

## 4 Put in place detailed, proven processes

Everything in its place, and everything done for a reason: we have some of the most advanced SMR processes in the industry, so operations swing seamlessly into action when there is an issue. Our digital systems monitor and measure every aspect of repair while our expert teams manage every step, from replacement vehicles and recovery to parts sourcing and technical support.

## 5 See problems before they arise

Spotting trends in breakdown, parts failure and driver faults ensures problems are often seen before they arise and are proactively managed.

We put in place systems and actions that do this such as our maintenance health check and portfolio management solution, and that's why the expertise and consultative approach of our SMR teams is so valuable – especially as we move into an electrified future.

In a world of many new and unforeseen issues, being a step ahead is a hugely competitive advantage and one that turns your SMR from a cost into an opportunity.





Fleet Manager

Which vehicle is going  
to breakdown today?

Fleet Administrator

You can't predict that.

Fleet Manager

I have seen a  
company that can.

Here's the link.

[airfleet.co.uk](http://airfleet.co.uk)



*Specialists in Funding and Fleet Management*

# Your drivers are at risk.

## It's that simple.

**We live in a world of uncertainty, and any time spent on the road presents a real danger to your drivers and your business' reputation.**

That's why DriveTech exists. Reducing driver risk is what we excel at, and it's why our customers keep coming back to us. We provide online and on-road driver training solutions that genuinely save lives, whilst reducing your operating costs. We do it to scale, and we do it really well.

Whatever type of vehicle your drivers operate, however much they drive and wherever that might be, every business has a duty of care to meet for any employee driving for work.

It can be daunting getting started, and we understand that. But ensuring legal compliance, improving driver competency and reducing operating costs are crucial success factors in helping your fleet to succeed and beat the competition.

We'll take time to listen to your needs, requirements and concerns and will work consultatively to provide solutions that will keep your drivers safe.

**Now is the time to kickstart your fleet driver safety programme - let's talk about how we can keep your show on the road, safely. Read on to find out more, or get in touch by emailing [tellmemore@drivetech.co.uk](mailto:tellmemore@drivetech.co.uk)**





# Driver Training That Changes Behaviour

**DriveTech**

From the **AA**. Driven to keep people safe



**Behaviour changing solutions**



**Digital driver education**



**On-road driver training**



**tellmemore@drivetech.co.uk**



**01256 610907**



**drivetech.co.uk**



# Leading technology and outstanding support – accessible to all, everywhere

**F**leetCheck is delighted to receive a Reader Recommended software supplier award from *Fleet News* readers. The success of our clients has always been our central focus and with more than 1,400 UK-based fleet operators using our services we continue to invest heavily in our commitment to them.

## Helping businesses for 15+ years

Since our inception in 2006 we have championed the fleet operators that have always been overlooked – often because they were “too small” or because they haven’t had the technical support internally.

Our primary belief is that fleets of all shapes and sizes should have the option to access market-leading technology without needing to invest in unnecessarily complex systems. We have no standard set-up charges, taking the burden of implementation off our clients. The software is designed so any operator can use it after just one hour’s training.

## New challenges

During the past 18 months, every business has had its operational procedures turned upside down.

We have seen operators move to remote working and a constant pressure on businesses to transition to paperless



processes. With changes to work environments, we have seen a rapid adoption of our online software during this period including our driver app.

We are delighted to have welcomed more than 500 new clients since March 2020 and have seen them exceed 10 million pre-use checks via FleetCheck Driver and store eight million-plus documents through our platform.

## Support when you need it

While we know our software helps fleet managers meet their compliance requirements, our core ethos has always been to support our clients; from their very first enquiry with our fleet consultants through to our exceptional onboarding team and into our long-term client success programme – aiming to exceed their expectations at every step.

## The recognition from the *Fleet News* readership is echoed by our clients words

**“Customer Service is excellent with nothing too much trouble for the friendly staff. Would totally recommend them to anybody with a fleet (...) however small or large.”**

*Mark Barlow, Barlows Electrical*

**“This is a fantastic system that makes managing a fleet much easier. Very user-friendly but if you do ever have a question, members of the support team are always on hand to help.”**

*Richard Pearson, Ganymede*

**“Operationally, FleetCheck has changed the way all Lambeth Council drivers carry out vehicle inspections using the app. This has vastly improved the council’s target of going paper-free.”**

*Robert Presnall, Lambeth Borough Council*

**“The support from FleetCheck has possibly been the best I have experienced with regular check-ups from the teams. The response to any questions I have asked are quickly followed up with full support.”**

*Emma Cable, Gasco Utilities*





# Safer. Faster. Simpler.



## Welcome to a better way to manage your fleet.

Choose the UK's most recommended fleet management software.

### One easy to use platform

Save time and enjoy having all your fleet data in one place with automated integration across a multitude of third party providers.

### 24/7 peace of mind

Have confidence in your compliance. Our robust platform with proactive alerts and reporting will ensure you can sleep at night.

### From £2 per vehicle

FleetCheck is fully customisable and grows with your business.

Reducing your paper records is not going to cost the earth.

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# Future-proof your fleet with help from the right measurements

**A**s a leading telematics provider, we're experts in understanding your business needs.

**Control costs, stay agile and increase the productivity of your fleet with a data-led approach**

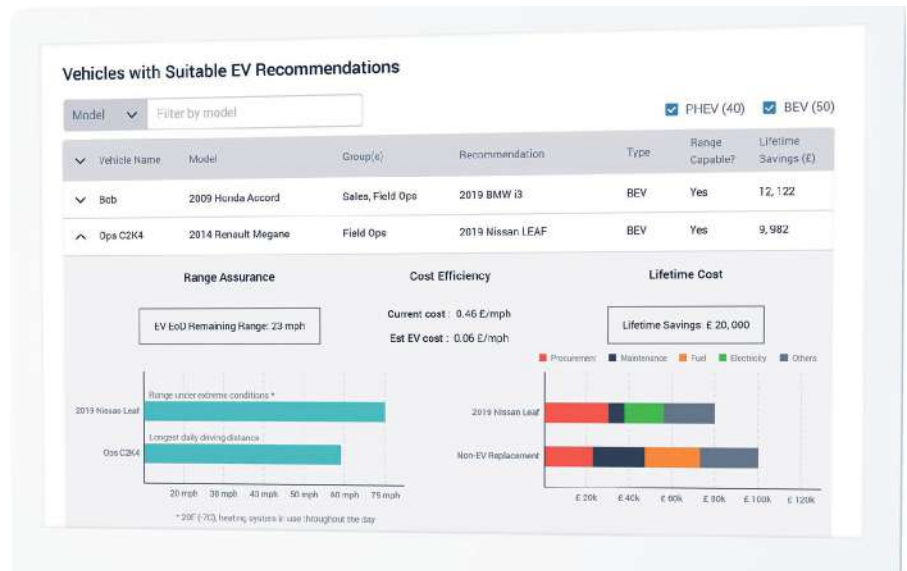
With recent shortages affecting many aspects of personal and commercial life, efficiency has become more of a priority than ever. These, combined with key initiatives from the Government in an effort to tackle climate change, culminate in the need to assess overall fleet sustainability, regardless of your business size.

Before doing this, you should consider whether you have the right tools to measure your fleet's sustainability performance effectively and, if not, whether you have the right partner in place to help conduct the measurement.

There are a number of activities that can contribute to reducing the cost and environmental impact of your fleet such as route optimisation, driving fuel efficiency, idling reduction, and right-sizing.

Not all of these may be suitable for your business, but all should be considered. For example, a strategy that has been in the spotlight for some time now is fleet electrification. Whether you are considering the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) into your fleet, or have already partly/fully transitioned to EVs, Geotab has the expertise and tools to suit.

Our Electric Vehicle Suitability Assessment (EVSA) combines your existing fleet telematics data with real-world performance data to provide bespoke recommendations, including but not limited to:



- Existing ICE (internal combustion engine) vehicle candidates for EV replacement.
- Future electrification journey based on upcoming EV model data.
- Calculated potential CO<sub>2</sub> and fuel consumption reductions.
- Vehicles that meet your range performance even in extreme weather conditions.

Earlier this year we released the results of a UK-wide EVSA that found almost four-in-10 fleet vehicles in the UK could switch to electric today and save money over the course of the vehicle's life.

Analysing data from more than 3,400 vehicles operating in the UK across all industries, the research offers valuable

data and insight for organisations seeking to determine EV suitability for their fleet.

Looking abroad, in one of our largest assessments to date, Enterprise Fleet Management in North America uncovered the potential fleet electrification offered their business as more than 90,000 vehicles were included in a study designed to better understand how the transition to EVs would affect the business today and in the future.

The findings surprised both teams. Near-term transition to EVs represented a potential saving of \$33 million (£24.5m) and a reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 194,000 tons over four years.

These are just two examples of how combining real-world telematics data with best-in-class analysis can deliver measurable improvements to your business and its fleet.

Being recognised as a Reader Recommended provider is a privilege and reassures us that case studies like this, and the solutions we provide to customers each day are adding value to businesses.

Geotab has been supporting the automotive industry for more than 20 years, providing tailored solutions to businesses ranging from one vehicle up to a fleet of 200,000-plus, utilising the insight from processing in excess of 40 billion data points each day.



Find out more by visiting [www.geotab.com/uk](http://www.geotab.com/uk)

**GEOTAB**  
management by measurement



# For every driver

Every journey, every last mile pick up and on-time delivery. They matter. To us all.

We're here for every mile of every journey, to make them safer for all, and more sustainable than ever.



**GEOTAB®**  
For every journey

[www.geotab.com/uk](http://www.geotab.com/uk)



# Consistent investment helps keep Jaama on top with fleets

**J**aama is delighted to receive the preferred software supplier accolade as part of the Fleet News 'Reader Recommended' initiative for 2021/2022. There is no better advocate than our peer group and to be consistently recognised by readers of *Fleet News* as a supplier that they believe offers the best service in the fleet management software arena is fantastic.

This prestigious accolade comes after another busy year helping and supporting fleets to manage their vehicles and drivers more efficiently while keeping them compliant within the challenging circumstances of an ever-changing social and legislative environment.

Achieving a paper-free operation has been an objective for Jaama and many of its customers, not only to reduce the risk of spreading Covid-19 but also to enable remote working and streamline processes.

Jaama's product investment continues to snowball and spend is on track to be around £4.8 million for 2021. Our investment programme has significantly enhanced our products and, most importantly, has enabled us to help our customers to push their operations forward.

Martin Evans, Jaama's MD and director of the AFP, said: "Companies have faced many driver and vehicle challenges over the past 18 months and we have seen the pandemic force fleets to review their



operations and act quickly to adopt new initiatives and systems to support their activities. Our stringent internal processes have enabled us to implement systems and train users remotely in order to help customers meet their business objectives during lockdown."

Jaama's Key2 management software has been at the forefront for its customers with, among others, Herd Group, Octopus Electric Vehicles and TCH Leasing all rolling out Key2 during 2021.

There is no better example of how Jaama delivers against the needs of its customers than the recent decision by Octopus Electric Vehicles to roll out Key2 to run its entire back-office operation in unison with their own front-end customer experience. The direct API integration ability with Jaama's



**Martin Evans**  
helping  
customers  
meet their  
objectives

Key2 platform was a key factor in choosing the solution and the quote system now includes more than 500 vehicles, a figure which is increasing daily.

Octopus commercial operations director, Chris Joyce said: "We started talking to suppliers who offered a very different range of solutions. It was clear when we got down to our shortlist that Key2 would do much more out of the box and needed very little development to interface with our own IT systems."

He added: "Key2 is a proven platform, and it is more advanced than its competitors when dealing with EVs. Its Signable electronic document signing proposition is impressive and ahead of other solutions, and the Leaselink integration efficiently connects dealers and OEMs for new vehicle supply. Overall, Jaama's Key2 provides us with the perfect software proposition."

All Jaama customers benefit from a raft of new features and improvements in functionality every six months. Once you are a Jaama customer you always have the latest version of the product available with no need to budget for costly upgrades.







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# Talking Technology: Trakm8's Fleet Management Solutions



Fleet News has now awarded Trakm8 'Reader Recommended' status, following feedback from more than 300 fleet industry decision makers.

Supplying its solutions to the country's best-known brands, Trakm8 goes beyond vehicle tracking to provide fleets with a comprehensive, customisable telematics platform, proving key insights into a range of metrics – from vehicle health and driver behaviour, to fuel expenditure and carbon emissions.

Among the key products in Trakm8's technology portfolio is **Insight Optimisation**, the award-winning software **proven to cut fleet fuel spend by as much as 20%** and **increase productivity by upwards of 33%**.



downtime. Via deep CANbus connectivity, Connectedcare enables fleet managers to gain remote access to readings directly from the dashboard providing fleet managers real-time vehicle health updates.

Capturing this data from fleet vehicles enables trend analysis, allowing for the identification of common faults within vehicles before they become critical, helping businesses to take a proactive, preventative approach to vehicle maintenance - ultimately keeping key assets running for longer.

Trakm8's solutions are utilised by the biggest names in British business, including **Iceland Foods, Autoglass, Calor Gas** and **Scottish Power**. With an award-winning technology offering and focus on customer service, Trakm8's technology is proven to improve fleet efficiency, safety and profitability.

Tailorable to almost any mobile workforce, from logistics and home delivery to utilities and service engineers – Insight Optimisation utilises award-winning algorithms to deliver significant ROI in just a matter of months.

With vehicle maintenance always a key concern for any fleet operation, **Trakm8's Connectedcare** helps businesses avoid costly vehicle

**Trakm8's RH600 Dashboard Camera**, combines an in-cab camera system with the same technologies found in Trakm8's most sophisticated telematics devices. The RH600 includes a flexible camera which can be positioned anywhere in the cab, alongside an industry-leading diagnostics provision, allowing fleet managers to save time and money on the identification of underlying vehicle faults.



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For more information on the full-range of Trakm8's products and services, please visit  
[www.trakm8.com](http://www.trakm8.com)





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**Get in touch:**

[www.trakm8.com/fleet-management](http://www.trakm8.com/fleet-management)

[info@trakm8.com](mailto:info@trakm8.com)

0330 311 517



**Trakm8**  
Data driven insights



# Helping our partners to be well placed for EV transition

**W**e think of ourselves as more than just a fuel card provider. We see our customers as partners who we work with closely to help advance their fleets.

We value the long-term relationships we have with our partners, almost half of them stay with us for 10 years or more.

But, whether we've been working together for a day or a decade, bp Fleet Solutions can help support the ambitions of every fleet, whatever their needs may be.

Most importantly, we understand that fleet managers are under constant pressure to keep modernising, ensuring their fleet is the greenest and most efficient it can be and that's where we're here to help.

With bp, we provide all partners with unmatched customer service and assign a dedicated account manager as a single point of contact who will take the time to understand the needs of each fleet and provide tailored solutions to help.

We understand that things are changing quickly in the industry, so our account managers alongside our bp self-serve portal provide the support fleets need to navigate the fast-changing market challenges, as well as control spend and transactions.

bp Fleet Solutions also includes the Fuel & Charge card and app to support fleet vehicles of all engine types in their transi-



tion to electric vehicles (EVs). With a focus on end-to-end integration, mixed fleets have a one-card solution for all charging and fueling needs.

The upfront cost of transitioning to EV can feel overwhelming, but bp supports fleets in weighing up initial costs of electric vehicles, against long-term gains including savings on tax, fuel and maintenance of the fleet.

There has never been a better time for fleet decision-makers to lead the way to an electric future, and Fuel & Charge can help

fleets embrace the change as we head towards a net zero ambition.

With advancements in fuel technology, a wider range of EVs, new emission legislation and the complication of managing both fuel and electric vehicles, bp Fuel & Charge gives you the flexibility to bring fleets into the future when the time is right.

On top of this, bp customers can benefit from the bp Fuel & Charge app which enables drivers to locate the nearest charging point, verify its availability, pay using the app or filter for car model and charging pin type.

On the other hand, the online services allows customers to manage their fuel cards 24/7 and easily order, replace or block cards; and the BPme app means our customers can make fast, cashless purchases safely.

And finally, bp Target Neutral, helps your fleet to reduce, replace and neutralise your carbon emissions in a convenient way.

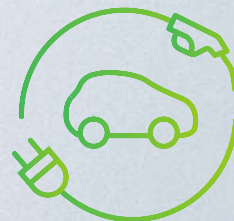
■ For more information, please visit here [bp Fleet Solutions](#)





# BP Fuel & Charge

All the energy you need for your fleet  
with our simple all-in-one solution



**One easy choice today for an advanced fleet tomorrow.**

Whether your vehicles use conventional fuels or electricity, our innovative BP Fuel & Charge offer can power your entire fleet with just one card.

Discover more at: [bp.co.uk/fuel-charge](https://bp.co.uk/fuel-charge)

Fleet Solutions





# Understanding customers is the foundation of fleet management

**The best partnerships are those that can stand the test of time. As business mobility specialists, we understand that switching to electric fleets is a process, unique to every individual organisation. This is why we dedicate ourselves to creating bespoke solutions for our customers and supporting them every step of the way.**

We have been the sole fleet supplier for B. Braun, one of the world's leading providers and manufacturers of healthcare solutions since 2010. By introducing AlphaRent services and encouraging adoption of AlphaCity (our corporate carsharing solution) we have already helped B. Braun revolutionise its business operations. Our online platform Alphabet Connect has additionally enabled simple quoting and ordering for drivers and fleet managers, as well as providing B. Braun access to vehicle data in one place. With this existing experience, we were perfectly positioned to consult on how electric vehicles could streamline their operations.

## How we did it

B. Braun wanted to take advantage of Benefit-In-Kind (BIK) tax rates and embrace a Whole Life Cost (WLC) model for its company car fleet. This meant stepping away from its reliance on solely diesel cars and moving to electrification. This is where we could help, via a tailored transition plan that suited their unique needs.

Commitment to employees is important. So we set up virtual 'Driver Clinics' to understand the needs of their workers, and to engage them in the Alphabet support services available. An internal survey revealed an interest in going electric, so we developed a set of FAQs to reassure employees at every step of the process. Involving them from the start of the journey created anticipation ahead of the PHEV launch, which ultimately resulted in 97% of drivers making the shift to an electrified vehicle.



Claire Richardson, Fleet Manager & Procurement Support, B. Braun said:

**"It's been invaluable to provide our drivers with PHEV options, so they can not only embrace cost savings and get the vehicles they want, but also support our wider business objectives. This is something we couldn't have implemented on our own and is why we continue to work so closely in partnership with Alphabet, which forms an extension of the B. Braun team and has done for over ten years. Alphabet have been the EV experts we needed to continually transform and develop both our business and fleet strategy."**

## From strength to strength

From 2019 to 2021, B. Braun's driver satisfaction scores increased by 10%, despite the increased pressure wrought by the pandemic. Thanks to our monthly forums which we used to ascertain the support required by B. Braun during the national lockdowns, we were able to ensure fleet managers and drivers felt fully supported the whole way through, and communications always ran smoothly.

## A plan for the future

At Alphabet, we immerse ourselves in our customer's industry and business to ensure we always offer a bespoke service, tailored to their needs. As demand for electric continues to grow, B. Braun can expand its fleet choice list further to include pure electric vehicles (EVs) and offer employees support as requirements change.

We are looking forward to incorporating pure EVs into its fleet choice list, to continue to future proof and evolve B. Braun's fleet strategy.





# Some things are clearer from a different perspective

So if you're wondering how to get on the road to zero and introduce more EVs into your fleet, why not book your AlphaElectric consultation today?

As the experts in electric, we can help you with everything from policy changing and fleet analysis, to vehicle ordering and finance. We can even help you sort your charging infrastructure. So get in touch today and **make your road to zero stress free.**

[www.alphabet.co.uk/alphaelectric](http://www.alphabet.co.uk/alphaelectric)

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**ALPHABET**



# Fuel management that allows fleets to get on with business



**C**ommercial vehicle and haulage fleets face much uncertainty, but Keyfuels customers have one thing less to worry about: fuel management and cost-effectiveness. That's why we are a *Fleet News* Reader Recommended Fuel Card partner.

The commercial vehicle sector is facing uncertainty and instability in many areas, including a lack of drivers, the shortage of parts and technicians, rising costs and delays to vehicle supply.

So having dependable, proven suppliers that deliver on a key part of your operation will give you one less cause for concern. At Keyfuels, we provide fleets with a standard of customer service and a fuel card that takes the weight off when it comes to managing, sourcing and paying for fuel.

This doesn't just mean looking for cheaper fuel, but managing how and where drivers pay for it. Our 2021 customer survey shows we're doing well at this with 95% saying they were either extremely satisfied or satisfied with us.

## So how do we provide this service?

### 1. Getting work done easier

More than a third of our customers rated

doing business with us as 'extremely low effort', which, crucially, then allows them to concentrate on other areas of their operation.

A supplier shouldn't make it harder for its customers to get work done.

That's why providing an attentive, personal service, combined with efficient processes, makes it easier for fleets to get on with their work.

And, taking up as little time as possible on this area of the operation means you're enhancing efficiency and maximising productivity too.

### 2. Having knowledgeable staff

Although customer service processes are important and are continually improved, it's the employees that really make the difference. At Keyfuels we have knowledgeable, experienced staff who know the commercial and haulage sectors inside-out.

It means we understand quickly what you need and know the pressure you're under to deliver.

Building a strong, supportive relationships with our customers is a priority – they know they can rely on us and our team when they need it most.

In our survey, 99% rated us as a 'reliable and trustworthy partner' and 97% said that we are 'easy to contact'.

The result is a solution-driven partnership, where our staff are able to provide choices and products that best fit a specific business.

### 3. Offering a product that delivers

Fuel is one of the largest costs for any fleet, so it is where many look to when bidding to reduce expenditure. This doesn't just mean looking for cheaper fuel, but managing how and where drivers pay for it better.

We've developed a fuel card that can help fleet managers achieve this. It offers customers access to a network of more than 3,000 strategic refuelling stations across the UK for maximum flexibility and bunkering services, where they can use Keyfuels' buying power to purchase cost-effectively up front and draw from the network when needed, as well as reporting and journey management technology.

This ensures drivers can source cost-effective fuel and operate on the most efficient routes, minimising unnecessary deviations which affect productivity.





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## Driving sustainability with new Civica TranSend platform

**Compliance, cost control and asset availability are some of the key challenges facing fleet managers today. The added pressure of increasing customer demands and the net zero deadline is making the job harder than ever.**

For more than 35 years, Civica has helped customers manage their fleet more efficiently to drive productivity and meet the paperless agenda. With an expert view on the real issues facing the sector, we continuously innovate to help meet these challenges.

It's why we've launched the new Civica TranSend platform to increase fleet operations resilience both today and in the future. With TranSend, organisations can manage fleet, delivery and route planning in one place. The cloud software saves time and money, while making the most out of all assets, helping to ensure compliance and ultimately delivering improved services.

Using the cloud, TranSend is flexible, scalable, quick to set up and easy to use. It offers complete visibility and control to maximise vehicle availability and provides better insight to support organisations to make timely decisions to overcome key challenges such as:

### **Adapting to hybrid working**

COVID has brought a new-norm of hybrid working. To run operations effectively with this new way of working, organisations need to have instant access to their performance data. TranSend provides real-time visibility and control of operations which supports fast responses to reduce risks and costs, such as booking in vehicles instantly that need urgent repairs. Teams can work anywhere, using any device.

This keeps users connected to their business, suppliers and customers to make timely decisions and fix problems fast.

### **Building sustainability**

Cost-efficiency and decarbonisation are high on the agenda for everyone. To achieve these objectives, organisations must first gain an in-depth understanding of their current spend. With better fuel management and effective route planning, TranSend helps to make this onerous task more achievable. It captures data accurately to provide total life cost per asset with ease, helping to identify cost-saving opportunities and reduce carbon emission through better route planning. With better understanding of fleet expenditure, organisations can control costs and build robust business cases for the move to electric vehicles.

### **Maximising resources**

Resource availability is at the heart of every organisation. To keep services running, it's imperative to ensure vehicles and equipment are in the right place, at the right time. TranSend brings all maintenance and tracking of fleet and equipment into one platform, making it much easier to manage without the need to manually cross-check every asset. It significantly reduces administration time, risk of data duplication and non-compliance issues, allowing teams to focus on business improvements and delivering more efficient services – a key reason why **Mid and West Wales Fire chose TranSend.**

Just as we expect from services in our personal lives, the future of fleet and delivery management is about connectivity, ease of data access and making things simple. By using cloud software, with a single view of data available at a touch of a button, transport teams can transform services and outcomes for customers into the future.

*"Working with Civica as a trusted partner, this platform will meet all of our fleet and asset needs. TranSend will mean we have the right appliances and equipment in the right place at the right time, ensuring a better, safer service for the communities we serve right across Mid and West Wales."*

**Stephen Davies, Head of Fleet, Engineering and Logistics at Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service**





# CIVICA

## Introducing **Civica TranSend**, the unique platform for fleet & delivery management

Using cloud software, you will:

- Maximise assets and resources
- Capture indisputable proof of delivery
- Simplify compliance management
- Optimise every journey.

## [ Accelerate your fleet, optimise your journeys

Fleet Management | Delivery Management | Route Planning

[Civica.com/transend-launch](https://Civica.com/transend-launch)



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Headline strategic partners







## TOP TIPS FROM BUSINESSES IN THE KNOW

For any fleet manager charged with the task of implementing a new product or service, the number of suppliers jostling for their attention can be quite overwhelming.

Clear and concise advice at their fingertips is what they need most when trying to plough their way through the wealth of information available.

Companies that offer such advice stand out from the crowd and cement their place as key industry voices – it's these businesses that quickly gain a

reputation for being leading experts in their field.

How fleets want to receive such advice also differs; some fleet managers prefer it in print, others online or from an email newsletter, or via social media.

*Fleet News* uses all of these mediums and more to convey information to those who need it most.

Sharing your expertise can really make a difference to fleet policy implementation and puts your business front and centre in the minds of decision-makers and influencers.

DRIVER TRAINING • VEHICLE RENTAL • SOFTWARE  
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## How to stay safe on 'all-lane running' smart motorways

**W**e all think we know how to drive on motorways. Well, 'smart motorways' present unique challenges to motorists and it's crucial that everyone knows how they differ so we can all stay safer when driving.

A smart motorway is, essentially, a section of motorway that uses traffic

management measures to increase capacity and reduce congestion along particularly busy stretches.

One controversial element of smart motorways is 'all-lane running', which removes the hard shoulder completely and converts it into a usable lane.

These have been widely discussed in media recently, fuelled in part by several

deaths and injuries which have been directly or indirectly attributed to smart motorways.

Here's DriveTech's key piece of advice to help drivers stay safe when travelling on a smart motorway. First, in the event of a breakdown go left and try to reach an Emergency Refuge Area (ERA) to safely leave your vehicle and call for help.

If you must remain in your vehicle, leave the ignition on, and engine off. This will allow airbags to be deployed in the event of a collision. If you and all occupants can safely exit your car, do so on the left and wait behind the barrier.

Before leaving an ERA contact the regional operations centre who can assist your safe exit.



Research shows that 81% of drivers felt less safe when driving on smart motorways, so we made a handy advisory providing you with advice for driving on one. Download our driving advisory here: <https://www.drivetech.co.uk/downloads/>

DriveTech also offers dedicated smart motorways workshops and e-learning courses.



For more information, contact us –

- [tellmemore@drivetech.co.uk](mailto:tellmemore@drivetech.co.uk) ● 01256 610907
- [www.drivetech.co.uk/global-business-fleet-solutions](http://www.drivetech.co.uk/global-business-fleet-solutions)

## The replacement vehicle conundrum – and how to solve it

**O**ne of the big challenges fleet managers face concerns replacement vehicles when cars and vans are off the road for an MOT or servicing.

Traditionally, in a bid to ensure drivers are not inconvenienced, replacement vehicles are provided for one or two days, with delivery and collection included.

But is that model right for

today's financial and environmental pressures?

One or two day rentals take vehicles out of the market for three or four days. That simply doesn't make sense when vehicle supply is so limited.

The environmental impact is a concern too. Even with delivery drivers using electric cars and scooters, a delivery and collection involves at least two vehicles – double the mileage, double the emissions.



Many drivers simply don't feel comfortable having to make a choice between convenience and the environment. What they're offered when they need to get their vehicle serviced or MOTed is an area where they can make a difference. It just needs a new way of thinking.

With hybrid working becoming commonplace, there's more flexibility for employees to work from home and use other mobility solutions for vehicle

drop-off and collection – from public transport to direct access corporate car sharing solutions accessible hourly or daily.

So, next time there's a request for a one or two day rental with delivery and collection for a service or MOT, it's worth considering if there's a better alternative – better for the business budget and better for the environment.



For more information, contact us –

- [www.europcar.co.uk/business](http://www.europcar.co.uk/business) ● 0371 384 0140
- [businesssolutions@europcar.com](mailto:businesssolutions@europcar.com)



## Strategic intelligence, the Key2 success



By Martin Evans,  
managing director, Jaama

**F**leet operators need to have complete visibility of what is going on in their business in order to have full control. This is especially critical given the ever-increasing raft of legislation and best practice associated with vehicle and driver compliance.

Many fleets have multiple

sites and different depots with potentially different levels of diligence and working practices. The risk of errors and compliance issues increases unless you have one system with a centralised view.

Employers face a raft of essential compliance governance requirements under legislation as well as obligations under road traffic law. What's more, government agencies including the DVSA, DVLA and HMRC are increasingly turning to digitalisation to ensure all vehicle and driver-related records are, essentially, self-policed without manual intervention.

Jaama managing director Martin Evans said: "There are no short cuts to legislative and

best practice compliance. It is critical that fleet decision-makers have a holistic view of driver and vehicle compliance and have strategic reporting in order to make well-informed decisions.

"Not only is compliance critical from a legislative perspective, but it is also crucial in respect of corporate image, cost control and fleet efficiency.

Evans added: "Fleet managers can never have enough information at their fingertips. It is essential that systems are in place to collect, measure, manage and process all data into meaningful information that gives strategic intelligence, while simultaneously ensuring total legislative compliance."



For more information, contact us -

● enquiries@jaama.co.uk ● www.jaama.co.uk  
● 0844 8484 333

## Give employees access to the best support



By Justin Ball, Key Account Manager,  
JCT600 VLS

**Y**ou've successfully implemented your new company car policy. You've provided a number of options to your employees and they have a leading system to help them choose the vehicle that is right for them. But what happens now?

Choosing the vehicle is

only the beginning of the journey. Your employees need ongoing support to help them manage the vehicle, in line with the policy. Simple, yet effective tools such as a single phonenumber to access all in-life services with 24/7 support or having direct access to the team or individual managing the scheme, can make a huge difference in the ease of managing the vehicle.

Whether the vehicle is company provided or privately funded, your duty of care requirements do not change.

So, as well as ensuring ongoing compliance with the management of the vehicle, you should also consider an ongoing communications plan to support changes, which may affect them. Reminders of their

responsibilities, changes in law and legislation they might need to be aware of, or simply giving hints/tips on how to prepare for seasonal changes can all be built into a successful car scheme.

At JCT600 VLS, it's not just about delivering the best products, it's also about the best service, which includes proactive management of the policy as a whole. We want to make fleet management easy, and that's why we have a dedicated team with allocated account managers who are available to your drivers to provide all the support needed throughout the life of their vehicle.



For more information, contact us:

● contactvls@jct600.co.uk ● www.jct600vls.co.uk  
● 0113 250 0060

## Achieving a connected approach – why configurability matters

**M**achine vision and artificial intelligence (MV+AI) are key enablers in providing fleet managers with complete visibility over their fleet. This sophisticated technology can provide near real-time insights into what's happening both in the vehicle and on the road and can

inform fleet managers of behavioural patterns such as smoking or failing to wear a seatbelt while driving.

Traditional telematics solutions merely identify G-force triggers, such as excessive braking or swerving, for example, and do not tell the whole story.

In comparison, MV+AI

technology exposes more than regular telematics could ever do, and that's where the big gains in safety and productivity are made.

To achieve the most from a connected approach, fleet managers can opt for an offering that is customisable and can integrate seamlessly with existing solutions.

This can be achieved through best-in-class API technology which provides them with a single source of truth – bringing together large amounts of data from different sources and enabling them to draw insights from it quickly.

Having an easily configurable solution can also deliver benefits



for global fleets which must adhere to changing regulations in different countries. This can help fleet managers to remain agile and flexible – allowing them to obey local rules as well as the company's own policies.



For more information, contact us ● +44 (0) 1908 880733  
● [intlchannelsales@lytx.com](mailto:intlchannelsales@lytx.com) ● [www.lytx.com/surfsight](http://www.lytx.com/surfsight)

## EV policy: the charging ecosystem

**T**he requirement to have a home charger has disappeared from many company car policies as drivers take responsibility for their own charging.

If not from home, they can charge in public spaces or there may be courtesy charging at an office location. This simplifies the role of the employer in enabling adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) while supporting drivers with advice and access to appropriate infrastructure.

However, for business-critical fleets the charging ecosystem is something that requires planning. One of the main challenges is how to support essential fleets without access to a central office location.

You can do this by paying for infrastructure at their home as a non-taxable benefit and transferring ownership, which also removes liability. For people who don't take their vehicles home or have a driveway, bookable charge points are emerging, as well

as more innovative solutions such as mobile charging.

Companies needing charging infrastructure are entering into partnerships with their customers, suppliers and charge point operators who have space to accommodate as hubs for the community. This helps generate revenue and increases footfall in the charge point locations. If essential infrastructure in your central business operation areas is a requirement, the good news is you won't need a CapEx injection. The initial outlay can be recouped via the cost of the energy consumed by the charge points.

Access to the public network is also improving with roaming solutions covering 75% of the country's charging infrastructure, simplifying access and enabling



*By Alan Bastey, customer relationship director, Zenith*

reporting across the charging ecosystem.

You also have the option to pay for the energy centrally with corporate billing solutions. You won't even need to ask your people to submit expenses claims; your company can pay directly for the energy each EV uses.



For more EV insights and advice, contact our EV experts.  
● 0344 848 9311 ● [oneteam@zenith.co.uk](mailto:oneteam@zenith.co.uk) ● [zenith.co.uk](http://zenith.co.uk)



# CommercialFleet



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By Gareth Roberts

**W**ith the number of parcels delivered in London expected to double by 2030, the delivery boom will become unmanageable without a sustainable approach, a new report has suggested.

It contends that commercial fleets should be forced to consolidate deliveries made to high streets and be encouraged to switch to electric vehicles (EVs) through a new pay-per-mile road user charging scheme.

The report – *Worth the Weight: Making London's Deliveries Greener and Smarter* – from the Centre for London think tank also argues that the capital's councils should review

the London Lorry Control Scheme (LLCS) to allow quiet deliveries to take place during evenings and at night.

Furthermore, it says that Government should fund upgrades to power distribution networks, as well as charging facilities in commercial premises such as depots, with forecasts suggesting at least 4,000 rapid charge points will be needed in London by 2025, an 800% increase from the 500 in the city at the end of last year.

#### SCALE OF POLLUTION

Currently, freight represents 15% of total vehicle miles travelled in London, but 34% of the nitrogen oxide (NOx) and 27% of fine particu-

late matter (PM2.5) emissions from road transport.

Freight and deliveries also account for a quarter of London's total carbon emissions from transport.

To combat this, the report recommends that the Mayor of London and London boroughs should ensure space is available for logistics hubs near homes and embrace dynamic and digitalised kerb management.

It is also calling on the Mayor of London to work with parcel delivery companies to put 90% of Londoners within 250 metres of a universal parcel pick-up/drop-off point by 2025, equivalent to installing 65,000 in-store pick-up points or lockers across the city.

Fewer than one-in-five parcels (17%) are delivered this way at present. Introducing more of these pick-up points, the report says, would allow companies to deliver large numbers of parcels at once to fewer locations, reducing vehicle traffic on the roads and having a knock-on effect on air pollution and congestion.

#### DELIVERIES FIRST TIME

It would also mean that Londoners receive their parcels the first time: an estimated 60% of untimed home deliveries end in failure.

If progress on setting up universal pick-up points is too slow, the report also recommends that the Mayor of London is given new powers to





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already have plans to make their journeys more sustainable, but we need to encourage them to deliver to and from fewer places and support more of them to switch to cleaner vehicles. This means creating space for pick-up points, consolidation centres and EV charging points. "They won't be able to do this alone. The Mayor of London and London's boroughs need to take action to make freight journeys as green and clean as possible, alongside serious investment from the Government too."

#### ELECTRIC CARGO BIKES

Earlier this year, the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, highlighted the issue of increasing home deliveries at a meeting of the London Assembly following the publication of a report into the potential of electric cargo bikes.

He said: "Transport for London (TfL) is working with the freight industry to reduce the adverse impacts of freight traffic."

"As part of my Civic Innovation Fund, TfL's FreightLab project is trialling approaches to implementing green last-mile delivery concepts, including cargo bikes. TfL has also worked with several Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to fund trials of cargo bike schemes."

The Mayor of London told Assembly members that a cargo bike delivery scheme in Hammersmith signed up 125 businesses and made more than 3,600 deliveries, which is estimated to have saved around 788kg of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Since 2018, TfL has used the Healthy Streets Fund for Business to help business groups reduce freight and van traffic.

The fund has also aimed to improve air quality by setting up

local consolidation hubs and using electric cargo bike schemes.

StreathamLIN – one of the BIDs that received funding – collaborated with Balfes Bikes to run a shared e-cargo bike service for local businesses.

Additionally, through the Mayor's Civic Innovation Fund, TfL has set up the London FreightLab, which partners with a range of businesses to trial sustainable and safe freight solutions that will reduce congestion.

Meanwhile, its Freight and Servicing Action Plan champions the strategic role of London's railways and water networks, given their potential for making the movement of goods more efficient and less carbon-intensive.

The Thames and its wharves already move large volumes of construction materials and every 1,000-tonne barge on the river takes the equivalent of 100 lorries off the road.

#### IMPACT OF RAIL FREIGHT

Additionally, one freight train removes up to 76 lorries from the road, and in London there are already 32 rail freight terminals in use.

Together, rail and river freight in London represent around 10% of goods delivery miles – but capital investment, says the report, could unlock greater use of wharves, piers and railways for deliveries.

There are also new light freight services such as parcel deliveries coming into central London piers and then using cargo bikes for last-mile delivery.

With investment to adapt passenger piers for freight use, it says that there is potential to scale up significantly and reduce van journeys on the roads.

## THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

By Andy Picton, chief commercial vehicle editor, Glass's



#### Stellantis

Had a great day out testing Stellantis LCV products recently. More than a dozen small, medium and large vans in both diesel and electric power

formats from Citroën, Fiat and Peugeot were made available to test drive and put through their paces.

In addition, one of the first Series 8 Ducato to arrive in the UK was made available. The new Ducato features a new and quieter engine which can be mated to either a manual or automatic transmission, a better and more intuitive cabin layout with new seats, improved infotainment and level 2 autonomous ADAS (advanced driver assistance systems). It all makes the Series 8 a much better proposition.

From next year, Stellantis will be producing vans at both Luton and Ellesmere Port where small electric vans will be made.

#### MS-RT

Received an invitation from MS-RT in Pontypool, to come to look around its facilities in South Wales. MS-RT is the team with 40 years motorsport heritage that has joined forces with Ford as a QVM (qualified vehicle modifier) to create top-of-the-range sporty-looking versions of the Ranger, Transit Connect and Transit Custom. Hand-finished at the MS-RT factory, these products are approved by Ford and sold through its franchised dealerships.

What struck me was how well-crafted these vehicles were and how hard working, dedicated, genuine, knowledgeable, professional and passionate the MS-RT team is. Its team members are full of great ideas, with plenty planned for the future.

#### ULEZ

In case anyone had forgotten, London's expanded ultra-low emission zone (ULEZ) came into force at the end of last month (October 25), affecting up to 35,000 additional vans per day.

With an LCV vehicle parc now exceeding 4.6 million in the UK, the average van age is just less than eight years old. In addition, there are still more than 500,000 LCVs in use powered by Euro 3 or older engines and 725,000 LCVs that were first registered in 2005 or earlier. However, only 14,021 battery electric (BEV) or plug-in hybrid (PHEV) vans have been registered by the end of 2020, accounting for 0.3% of all registrations.

Only Euro 6 compliance will see operators avoid charges.

**Glass's** ....

Part of Autovista Group

incentivise Londoners to use pick-up/drop-off locations. This could include an online sales tax for at-home deliveries which would also encourage delivery companies to set up more pick-up/drop-off locations across the city.

Nicolas Bosetti, head of data and insight at Centre for London, said: "Londoners may like the convenience of doorstep deliveries, but the way we currently move most of our goods comes at a high cost for our health, climate and for the businesses and workers who need to use our roads to get around."

"Many delivery companies



“TRANSPORT FOR LONDON IS WORKING WITH THE FREIGHT INDUSTRY TO REDUCE ADVERSE IMPACTS OF FREIGHT TRAFFIC”

SADIQ KHAN, MAYOR OF LONDON

# ADVICE LINE

By Ray Marshall, senior transport advisor, Logistics UK

**Q** We have got a driver who has just received their photocard driving licence back from DVLA after applying for a provisional LGV licence, but I can't see any provisional entitlement on it; is this correct?

**A** Following the abolition of the counterpart driving licence, the provisional entitlement will not show up on a photocard licence. The only way to check the driver has provisional entitlement is to go to the checking service on the GOV website to see what vehicles the driver is entitled to drive.

**Q** Can you provide some clarity on the requirements to wear seat belts? Can you confirm whether our environmental operatives when handling waste are exempt from wearing a seat belt while delivering/collecting waste door-to-door?

**A** The Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) (Amendment) Regulations 2005 state that the requirement to wear a seat belt does not apply to "the driver of or a passenger in a motor vehicle constructed or adapted for carrying goods, while on a journey

which does not exceed 50 metres, and which is undertaken for the purpose of delivering or collecting anything".

Therefore, if the driver is delivering or collecting goods and is travelling no more than 50 metres between stops, there is no legal requirement to wear a seat belt.

As always, we would suggest that a thorough risk assessment is conducted if choosing to use this exemption, as the employer still has legal obligations under health and safety law, in addition to their duty of care towards their employees.



ISTOCK/ROBERTHYRONS

## FORS Standard Version 6.0 published

The Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme (FORS) is a voluntary accreditation scheme for operators which aims to raise the level of quality within fleet operations and to demonstrate which operators are achieving exemplary levels of best practice in safety, efficiency and environmental protection.

Becoming a FORS member can bring the peace of mind that your company is managing its work-related road risk (WRRR) and demonstrates to your customers and supply chain your commitment to exceeding the industry standard.

The latest version of the FORS Version 6.0 was published on October 19, 2021.

Logistics UK has participated as a guest in the FORS Governance and Standards Advisory Group – which sets and agrees the standard – enabling the organisation to feed into the discussions about the revisions for the new standard.

The new version will be implemented in audits from July 1, 2022. Until then, the current version (5.1), will continue to be used.

The structure remains largely the same as 5.1. Annex 6 in Version 6.0 (page 96) highlights the changes between the new version and the current one.

2.1 The FORS Standard	2.2 Scope of the FORS Standard	2.3 Eligibility	2.4 Certification	2.5 Effective date
<p>The FORS Standard is a voluntary accreditation scheme for operators which aims to raise the level of quality within fleet operations and to demonstrate which operators are achieving exemplary levels of best practice in safety, efficiency and environmental protection.</p>	<p>The FORS Standard is a voluntary accreditation scheme for operators which aims to raise the level of quality within fleet operations and to demonstrate which operators are achieving exemplary levels of best practice in safety, efficiency and environmental protection.</p>	<p>The FORS Standard is a voluntary accreditation scheme for operators which aims to raise the level of quality within fleet operations and to demonstrate which operators are achieving exemplary levels of best practice in safety, efficiency and environmental protection.</p>	<p>The FORS Standard is a voluntary accreditation scheme for operators which aims to raise the level of quality within fleet operations and to demonstrate which operators are achieving exemplary levels of best practice in safety, efficiency and environmental protection.</p>	<p>The FORS Standard is a voluntary accreditation scheme for operators which aims to raise the level of quality within fleet operations and to demonstrate which operators are achieving exemplary levels of best practice in safety, efficiency and environmental protection.</p>

There are a small number of provisions, which apply with immediate effect, to support the transition between Versions 5.1 and 6.0.

At Bronze level, this includes allowing camera monitoring systems to demonstrate Class V and Class VI close-proximity mirror field of view.

At Silver level, regional or city vehicle permits relating to vehicle safety requirements (i.e. London Direct Vision Standard) can be included as evidence where applicable, provided they meet or exceed the FORS standard.

Finally, the noise impact assessment is no longer required to include customer locations. The details of these can be found in annex 7 of Version 6.0 (page 102).



# TRAINING CHANGES COULD HELP END DRIVER SHORTAGE

Suspending or revamping the drivers' CPC regime could help encourage more people into the transport sector.  
*John Lewis reports*



Fleet Source has invested heavily in creating its own TV studio in response to the demand for more remote training

**B**arely a day goes past without the driver shortage hitting the headlines, with much talk about the initiatives which could be introduced to recruit new drivers to the industry or encourage former drivers to return.

One way to encourage truck licence holders back who have allowed their CPC (Certificate of Professional Competence) to lapse would be to suspend the scheme, says Paul Sanders, chairman of the Association of Pallet Networks (APN).

He adds: "We're calling on the Government to take this action because the CPC requirement is deterring many older drivers from rejoining, and many from remaining in it too. We also want the Government to agree to reform or abolish it."

Licence holders cannot drive commercially without a valid CPC and maintaining this entitlement means undergoing 35 hours of training endorsed by the Joint Approvals Unit for Periodic Training (JAUPT), spread over five years.

Obtaining one from scratch can mean completing the 35 hours in a single week; a burden drivers may, understandably, have no wish to shoulder.

The call for CPC suspension is endorsed by Caroline Green, chief executive of APN member Pallet-Track.

"A CPC moratorium would be a safe and quick-fire route to get experienced, but lapsed, drivers back behind the wheel," she says.

"It would give the Government time to consult with the industry on formulating training that

would command the respect of both drivers and management, unlike the current arrangement."

The CPC is not garnering much support from the Road Haulage Association (RHA) either.

A blog on its website entitled 'Driver CPC: a barrier to truckers getting back behind the wheel' bluntly states: "As we know, drivers hate the CPC."

"They loathe it, and the idea of coming back to driving but first having to sit in a classroom being told things they know is anathema to them."

"It creates a barrier for experienced qualified lorry drivers returning to the cab."

"It puts a hurdle in the way, adds complexity and is seen by many drivers as pointless."

As yet, there is no indication the Government is planning to abandon the CPC, even temporarily. ➔

## POSTPONING TRAINING

While some businesses may be postponing sending drivers on CPC training courses because they do not want to take them off the road when demand for their services is so high, it is not a temptation many big fleets are yielding to, says Nick Caesari, chief executive officer at CPC training specialist Fleet Source.

If drivers fail to do any training this year then they will have to do twice as much next year, he adds, and three times as much in 2023 if they abandon training in 2022 as well.

"It means you're just kicking the can down the road," says Louise Elstone, product manager, driver CPC training at TTC Group.

Ultimately, there is the risk that drivers will end up trying to take all 35 hours of mandatory training a week before their CPC expires and that is a recipe for chaos.

"As a consequence, we recently had one of our biggest fleet clients book all of their training slots with us for 2022," says Caesari.

There is also the question of how that training should be delivered.

Restrictions on face-to-face contact imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a major switch to live online training, adds Caesari.

While smaller operators seem to be opting for a return to the classroom, major fleets are continuing to favour the online approach.

It means drivers no longer have to travel to training centres. "It also means social distancing can still be maintained, and it's cheaper," he says.

The shift has prompted Fleet Source to invest heavily in its own studios to create online courses that are reminiscent of a Sky News broadcast.

They are far more likely to hold a participant's attention than a talking head droning to camera in front of a whiteboard for several hours.

Not that the company has abandoned in-person training, Caesari stresses. One area it is developing is virtual reality training using headsets to address topics such as safe loading.

"The Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) is very open to this sort of idea," adds Caesari.

What neither the DVSA nor JAAPT are open to, however, is operators sending their drivers on the same cheap course year after year in an ill-advised attempt to save money.



**“WE RECENTLY HAD ONE OF OUR BIGGEST FLEET CLIENTS BOOK ALL OF THEIR TRAINING SLOTS WITH US FOR 2022”**

**NICK CAESARI, FLEET SOURCE**

Sending a driver who has committed numerous infringements on a Drivers Hours training course this year even though he completed one last year would be acceptable because he clearly didn't get the messages the first time round.

Getting somebody with a clean slate to repeat the course would not be acceptable and the DVSA has warned that any hours accrued from an unnecessarily repeated course could be cancelled.

## FOCUS ON WELL-BEING

While Drivers Hours and tachograph courses are continuing to play a key role, other topics are becoming increasingly important.

"They include driver wellbeing, which covers issues areas such as alcohol, drugs and mental health," says Caesari.

That may be because a tougher line on repetition is obliging fleets to address areas they would not necessarily have considered before, suggests Laura Nelson, managing director of training company RTITB.

"Of the courses we're running, 9% deal with physical health while 5% cover mental health," she says.

Not surprisingly, she has no wish to see the CPC abolished. Drivers still require ongoing training, she points out, and the disappearance of the mandatory CPC means that many of them would not receive it.

Elstone asks: "Should drivers really be driving without the most up-to-date knowledge? Do employers really want to take the risk?"

Nelson, however, does believe the CPC needs reforming. "Asking drivers to sit in a classroom or in front of a screen for seven hours is a killer, a massive turn-off," she says.

She argues it would make more sense for the 35 hours to be split into five five-hour training blocks, with drivers asked to undertake the remaining 10 hours of what is, in effect, continuous professional development on their own; just as long as it is logged.

This could involve drivers engaging in online courses whenever they have time when off-duty covering topics that are important to them in their working lives.

This is the flexible attitude to continuous professional development that other sectors of industry and commerce take, she points out.



**“OF THE COURSES WE'RE RUNNING, 9% DEAL WITH PHYSICAL HEALTH WHILE 5% COVER MENTAL HEALTH”**

**LAURA NELSON, RTITB**



"Instead, drivers are being treated almost like children," says Nelson.

One significant change was made in 2020. Two hours of a seven-hour classroom course can now be completed using e-learning either the previous day or before the five hours of classroom training starts; an approach that goes some way towards the one Nelson is advocating.

Classroom training is what most of RTITB's clients are returning to unless they happen to be multiple depot operations with only two or three drivers at each site.

That can make it difficult to bring everyone together at a single location, so in those circumstances the online approach is still favoured.

## FLURRY OF INITIATIVES

Concerns over the shortage of light goods vehicle (LGV) drivers has prompted a flurry of initiatives from Government.

In a change about to be implemented at the time of writing, drivers can now take their Category





Hermes has a driving academy in Nuneaton where it upskills existing employees

C+E (large articulated lorry) test without having to pass a Category C (large rigid lorry) test first.

In another development, training organisations will conduct the off-road reversing and trailer uncoupling and re-coupling exercises rather than DVSA examiners themselves in a bid to shorten the test's duration and process more candidates.

The examiners will still conduct the on-road part of the test and ask the vehicle safety questions.

An investment up to £10 million is being made by the Department for Education (DfE) in so-called 'skills boot camps' to train up to 3,000 people who want to become truck drivers.

"The free, short, intensive courses will train them to be road-ready and gain a Category C or C+E licence," says a DfE spokesperson, adding that "an additional 1,000 people are expected to be trained through courses accessed locally and funded by the Government's adult education budget".

The Ministry of Defence is deploying its Defence Driving Examiners to work alongside DVSA examiners to increase testing capacity.

Earlier this year, funding for C+E apprenticeships was increased to £7,000 and a succession of operators have announced the opening of their own training schools or expanded their existing training activities.

#### HOME-GROWN DRIVERS

Gist has set up a training centre at Spalding in Lincolnshire which, it says, should produce up to 300 truck drivers annually for its fleet.

It funds all the costs associated with obtaining a licence which should save individuals around £3,000 annually compared with self-funding.

Michael Chambers, chief executive of Gist, says: "Training and developing home-grown drivers is the most sustainable way out of this crisis, which is likely to be with us for some time to come."

Hermes is upskilling existing employees who want to drive its trucks with training at its driving academy in Nuneaton, Warwickshire.

John Walker, a transport manager with the parcels giant, says: "It won't cost them a penny and

they will be given paid time off during their current job for the practical and theory studying elements."

However, prospective truck drivers are still facing a litany of delays before they can get behind the wheel, says Greg Ford, sales manager at RED Training.

RED runs CPC courses and provides drivers with practical training too.

"The problem is that they can be waiting for up to six weeks for their medical and the same length of time for their theory test," he continues. "We've got a backlog of 70 candidates in this situation."

"As for the practical test, we're having to rely on cancellations to get the slots we need, and we've got a team in our office constantly looking for them all over the country."

As a consequence, drivers are having to travel some distance from their home town at short notice for their examination.

"We're having to send the truck they'll need for the test a long way too," Ford adds; an extra cost nobody wants to incur.



# THE GENH2 – MERCEDES-BENZ TRUCKS HYDROGEN ARTIC

GenH2's hydrogen powertrain could form part of Mercedes-Benz Trucks's zero emissions solution

By Tim Campbell

**I**t's no secret that many truck manufacturers are developing both battery electric and hydrogen fuel cell for short- and long-range operations. In last month's road test, we looked at the latest generation eActros powered by two battery capacities, 315kWh and 420kWh, using either three or four 105kWh modules. While these are capable of distances around 350-500kms (217-310 miles), according to the Mercedes-Benz Truck team they are not the answer for longer pan-European distances.

To this end, Mercedes-Benz Trucks is developing a completely new generation of vehicles with a drive system based on fuel cells and hydrogen and this is the basis of their GenH2 truck.

The performance characteristic of a hydrogen fuel cell truck is comparable to that of a conventional diesel thanks to the use of liquid hydrogen, which has a far greater energy density than hydrogen in gaseous form. This, potentially, allows operators to use alternative-fuelled trucks on demanding trips of up to 1,000kms (621 miles) and more, without the need to stop and refill.

Indeed, according to research carried out by the company and contrary to popular belief, annual mileages for trucks 20 tonnes-plus will increase by approximately 25%-30%. Remember, long haul trucks contribute 48% of EU CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

The GenH2 is the first prototype and has been with the research and development (R&D) team from April. The first trials on the open road are due to start before the end of the year. From 2027, the first series-produced GenH2 Trucks will be handed to customers.

## Specification

The development of the GenH2 requires significant changes to the driveline and, specifically, the cooling

system of the existing diesel powered 'standard' Actros and involves the replacement of the conventional systems as well as integration of the new components.

Starting with the electric motors (eMotors), there are two powerful motors on-board rated at 230kW of continuous power and up to 330kW at their peak. The torque developed is rated at 1577Nm of continuous torque and up to 2071nm of torque at its maximum.

These are powered by a 800V voltage system, unlike many vans and cars which use 315-415V systems.

The motors are driven by two underlying systems, one the fuel cell and the other the battery. The 300kW fuel cell system consists of two 150kW cells and the high voltage batteries are rated at 70kW with a peak of 400kW.

When Mercedes-Benz was exploring the type of hydrogen to use, there were four 'candidates':

- Liquid hydrogen (LH<sub>2</sub>)
- Compressed hydrogen gas (CHG) at 35MPa
- Cyro-compressed hydrogen (CcH<sub>2</sub>)
- Compressed hydrogen gas at 70MPa

In the end, the research and development team chose the liquid hydrogen solution, which has specific advantages including:

**High storage capacity** up to 80kg of H<sub>2</sub> without the need for additional packaging space. For instance, the compressed hydrogen gas alternative would only supply 55kg of hydrogen at 70MPa, around 30% less usable fuel.

**Energy efficient** as fuelling significantly lower power required than CHG.

**Cost efficient** as no carbon fibre tanks are required.

**The system is a lot lighter** compared with all the other alternatives.

**Scalable** as the infrastructure is relatively low cost.

## The balancing act

One of the major challenges facing the R&D team is the balance between the size of the fuel cell versus the size of the lithium-ion battery.

A smaller fuel cell results in significantly higher consumption and the fuel cell lifetime will decrease due to the higher load. This is the same for a smaller battery as a smaller one, again, increases consumption and results in reduced fuel cell lifetime.

A bigger battery has no significant impact on the consumption, but a larger battery is a lot more difficult to fit within the chassis or along the sides. A larger fuel cell system has the similar packaging issue, but has a longer life.

## On the road

From the outside, the GenH2 looks like a standard Actros, only water is emitted from the 'exhaust' and it's quiet compared with its diesel equivalent.

Inside this research fuel cell vehicle an iPad shows which parts of the system are powering the vehicle at any particular time. As the vehicle accelerates the cab noise is virtually non-existent especially when you realise it also has 'mirrorcam' so there's no door mirror noise at all.

The acceleration is astonishing even when we were fully loaded and there can be no doubt the future of long-haul trucking is going to change completely over the next decade.

## Partnerships are king in this new world

When you talk to the industry, the word you hear time and time again is 'partnership'. This has meant many links between organisations that would normally be fervent competitors. An example is the development of the hydrogen infrastructure involving Mercedes-Benz Truck group company Daimler AG and another traditional competitor Volvo Group.



# LAND ROVER DEFENDER HARD TOP

As its name suggests, those seeking a stylish CV will find this Defender hard to top



By Andrew Ryan

**T**he commercial version of the original Land Rover Defender has long been a fixture on many business fleets for its mix of practicality, off-road ability, ruggedness and – in more recent years – image.

The new Defender was launched late in 2019, but conspicuous by its absence was a commercial version: this has now been remedied with the Defender Hard Top – reviving a nameplate first used by the brand in 1950.

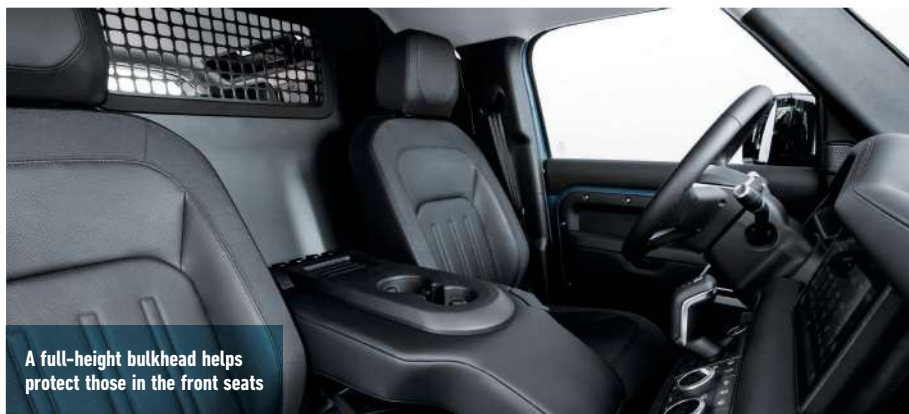
New Defender Hard Top is available in two body styles: 110 and the short-wheelbase 90.

Both feature a side-hinged rear tailgate with the 110 obviously offering greater practicality. It can carry 2,059 litres of cargo, compared with the 90's 1,355 litres, and is also able to accommodate a standard Euro pallet.

The maximum load length measures up to 1,472mm for the 110 and 1,030mm for the 90. The load floor is completely flat with up to six integrated lashing points, heavy-duty rubber mats and a set of lockable storage areas providing 58 litres of underfloor stowage.

## FLEET PICK LAND ROVER 90 HARD TOP

SPECIFICATIONS	
CV OTR price	£37,788
Power/torque	200PS/500Nm
Payload (kg)	670
Gross vehicle weight (kg)	2,950
Load volume (cu m)	1.037
Fuel (pence per mile)	19.18
SMR (pence per mile)	6.65
Running cost	68.52ppm
Fuel economy (mpg)	32



A full-height bulkhead helps protect those in the front seats

The 110 has an additional underfloor area where the footwells of the Defender passenger model would normally be found, providing an extra 155 litres of space.

Payload for the 90 is 670kg, with the 110 providing 778kg to 800kg.

The load area is separated from the driver and passenger by a full-height bulkhead, and this helps to preserve a car-like refinement as well as boosting safety and security.

Up front, there are a few signs that you are driving or riding in a commercial vehicle: there are plenty of hardwearing materials and rubber flooring is fitted, while both 90 and 110 can be specified with an optional jump seat, so three can travel in the front.

But many of the features which make the passenger car so good remain. These include the latest version of Land Rover's Pivi Pro infotainment system with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, while the optional ClearSight Rear View camera provides an uninterrupted view out of the rear of the vehicle regardless of whether the load space is full.

Defender Hard Top is packed with the same driver

safety technology as the passenger car and it also shares its road manners: it's excellent to drive and its electronic air suspension provides an extraordinary level of comfort: it's easy to forget you are behind the wheel of a commercial vehicle and not a luxury SUV.

The 90 is available with a diesel engine with 200PS and 500Nm, while the 110 comes with either 250PS/570Nm or 300PS/65Nm engines. All are fitted with an eight-speed automatic gearbox and can tow up to 3,500kg.

All models' off-road ability, as would be expected from a Land Rover, is prodigious. On some tough and very muddy off-road routes it felt unstoppable. It also has the ability to wade through water up to 900mm deep.

There is, however, a price to pay for this quality and ability, and that is the fairly significant premium it costs over a typical commercial vehicle or pick-up.

The starting price for the 90 is £37,788 (excl VAT) and £43,012 for the 110, but it is bound to find plenty of buyers: no other commercial vehicle can offer the same upmarket feel, looks and image that the Defender Hard Top can.



# THE LAST WORD

## ASH CONNELL

HEAD OF SALES AND CUSTOMER SUCCESS, R2C ONLINE

Connell is into home renovation and would like to build his own house one day. In the meantime, he is happy playing his part in building business at the r2c online fleet software company

My first memory associated with a car? My dad has had a lot of cars over the years which is probably where my passion for them has come from. Him pulling up in a bright red MGB GT to pick me up when I was six or seven with Roy Orbison's *Pretty Woman* blaring out is a particularly embarrassing early memory – unfortunately not a one-off either.

If money was no object: Too many things to choose from, but probably a large yacht.

My favourite movie quote is: "I'm gonna make him an offer he can't refuse" – Marlon Brando in *The Godfather*.

A book that I would recommend others read is: *The Simple Way* by Simon Tyler.

If I were made transport minister for the day I would allow reputable HGV workshops to carry out MOTs on HGVs. I would also ensure everyone was on a digital compliance system and pre-use checks were carried out on all vehicles before they were taken on a journey.

My hobbies and interests? When the sun is out I play golf quite badly; other than that it's spending time with my family and renovating our home.

The advice I would give to my 18-year-old self is: buy lots of shares in Apple – they were \$3.75 in 2007 (about \$150 [£111] today).

The song I would have on my driving playlist is the one that is usually on in our car – my three-year-old daughter's favourite – *I'm Still Standing* by Elton John.

Given I am incredibly impatient I would say people who procrastinate is a pet hate.



**Why fleet?** I have always had a passion for cars and from an early age I knew I wanted a career within the automotive industry.

**How I got here:** I began at a classic car restoration business where I learnt basic mechanics, bodywork and fabrication skills. However, I caught the sales bug when I sold my first car and moved out of the cold workshop into the warm office. After some years I moved to Epyx to begin my time in fleet software, starting with the support team and later moving to manufacturer account management. I joined a Vauxhall dealer group as aftersales business development manager but, after five years, I decided I wanted to get back into software and joined r2c online.

**Latest products, developments and achievements:** We have just re-launched our Stock Management product which gives workshops real-time intelligence of their stocks and needs. We also have a full roadmap ahead with three new products coming available next year – Incident Management, Tech Assist and Driver V2.

**My company in three words:** Innovative, fun and enthralling.

**Career influence:** Most important to me is my uncle who has shown me that hard work pays off and how to conduct yourself within a business environment.

**What makes a good leader?** Someone who listens. I see a good leader as someone who orchestrates and makes choices based on feedback, market conditions and experts which are usually their colleagues on the front line.

**Advice to fleet newcomers:** Don't be afraid to challenge the status quo. I have seen automotive industry change for the better over the years because people have challenged current workings and pushed for change.

**If I wasn't in fleet?** I would like to be a property developer. I have a passion for architecture and would like to build my own house at some point.

**Next issue:** Andy Page, head of sales and marketing at Sofico UK



# WHICH EV IS BEST FOR **YOUR FLEET?**

84 kWh

Range:  
250 miles

Price from:  
£52,343

1%  
BIK  
tax

Whether you are beginning your research or you have a good idea of what you're interested in, the electric car and van data tool can help you with all the essential information, from range, tax and charging data\* for electric cars and vans to stats on acceleration, cargo volume and the number of seats.



[www.fleetnews.co.uk/ev-data](http://www.fleetnews.co.uk/ev-data)

\*Data supplied by EV-Database (EVDB)

## Job Opportunity: Customer Services and Fleet Operations Manager with RED

RED Driving School operates throughout the UK and provides fully maintained training vehicles to more than 1,000 RED Driving Instructor franchisees. We are seeking an experienced customer services and operations manager to lead a small team that delivers an excellent fleet service to these franchisees.

### Main responsibilities

- Management of an internal support team, external logistics suppliers and our own body shop and repair facility.
- Overseeing third party suppliers and providing support in negotiations and service level agreements.
- Control over budgets and the production of KPIs and other management reports.
- Maintenance of up-to-date records and cost analyses of the vehicle fleet.
- Making recommendations for improvements to the service and cost efficiency of the operation.

### About you

- You will have a very strong customer service orientation and will have commercial leadership experience in a busy B2C office environment.
  - You will be well organised and an excellent communicator.
  - You will be a confident user of Microsoft Excel, Word and PowerPoint.
  - You will be a self-starter and happy in a hands-on environment.
- Candidates with an ADI background will understand the high levels of customer service required to be successful in this role.
- Fleet management experience would also be advantageous, but commercial and administrative skills are essential.

**This is a full-time and permanent managerial role at RED that offers a competitive salary and other benefits. The role requires the job holder to be based at our Billingham and Stockton sites for at least 3 days of the week.**

**Please apply with a CV and covering letter to [jobs@go-red.co.uk](mailto:jobs@go-red.co.uk)**



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