News: PLUG-INS POISED FOR **SUBSTANTIAL RISE** IN FLEET UPTAKE

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This allows a direct comparison between different manufacturer models but may not represent the actual fuel consumption achieved in 'real world' driving conditions. Fuel consumption and CO_2 figures correct
emissions data (which may also affect the amount of Vehicle Excise Duty payable and therefore the ROTR price) – check with your local Audi Centre. Images for illustration purposes only. Model shown is the Audi

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audi.co.uk/business
Audi Vorsprung durch Technik
56.5 (5.0) – 80.7 (3.5), Combined 47.9 (5.9) – 74.3 (3.8). CO2 emissions: 134 – 99g/km. Fuel consumption and CO2 figures are obtained under standardised EU test conditions.
at time of print [November 2016]. More information is available on the Audi website at www.audi.co.uk and at www.dft.gov.uk/vca. Choice of wheels and other options may affect fuel consumption, BIK and
A3 Sportback S line 2.0 TFSI 190PS with optional metallic paint (£550.00), black roof rails (£250.00), privacy glass (£375.00).

REASONS TO CHOOSE A ŠKODA OCTAVIA SE TECHNOLOGY

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P11D £20,295

CO_2 FROM 99g/km

skoda.co.uk/fleet

Model shown is ŠKODA Octavia SE Technology Hatch 1.6 TDI 110PS, £20,350 OTR. Information correct at time of print (01/12/16)

Official fuel consumption for the ŠKODA Octavia SE Technology range excluding GreenLine III in mpg (litres/100km): Urban 67.3 (4.2) – 72.4 (3.9); Extra Urban 78.5 (3.6) – 83.1 (3.4); Combined 76.4 (3.7) – 80.7 (3.5). CO_2 emissions for the ŠKODA Octavia SE Technology range are 106 – 99 g/km. Standard EU Test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.

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Fleet demand for EVs rising at 'a rapid rate'

Some major manufacturers have agreed to improve the number of charging stations available

Greater choice, improved range and more attractive taxation are three reasons future looks bright for EVs

By Simon Harris

Plug-in cars could be poised for a substantial increase in take-up by businesses from 2017, as fleets and drivers take advantage of increased choice, improved battery capacity and lower taxation.

The range of plug-in hybrids and electric vehicles (EVs) is set to double in the next five years, while benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax rates are likely to remain substantially lower (even before the dramatic falls in 2020/21 for EVs), maintaining their attractiveness to drivers as company cars.

Manufacturers will be introducing plug-in cars for the first time, while others will be boosting their numbers of products with EV capability, or renewing their efforts to offer attractive ultra-low CO_2 options.

Although there were major changes to the plug-in car grant in 2016, with a reduction in the amount of cash available and a graded structure based on the EV range and emissions of hybrids, it doesn't seem to have deterred customers.

When it was launched, all qualifying plug-in cars were eligible for a £5,000, whereas now, fully electric cars can claim £4,500, with plug-in hybrids earmarked for £2,500 off, provided they meet the requirements of plug-in range, CO_2 emissions and price.

For example, a Volvo XC90 T8 qualified before the 2016 changes, but, although it meets the CO_2 and plug-in range criteria, the maximum value of a hybrid qualifying for the grant is now £60,000.

While company car drivers choosing plug-in cars will see the steepest percentage increases in BIK tax payments in the next few years, compared to drivers of similar conventional cars, many of them will remain better off.

The table below shows that anyone choosing a plug-in car with CO_2 emissions of up to 50g/km will pay BIK tax at 9% for 2017-18 – a significantly lower rate than cars without EV capability.

And while drivers stand to benefit, many fleet operators will also be able to run a plug-in car at a lower cost than a conventional fuelled car. In the table, the Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV has a slightly higher overall running cost over four years/80,000 miles than the diesel version.

But, taking account of the employers' National Insurance contributions, the equation swings back in favour of the PHEV.

Jaguar recently revealed a compact crossover EV, the I-Pace, which is destined to be transformed into a production car by 2018. Since Jaguar will be using the technology, it's likely EVs will feature in sister brand Land Rover's future model strategy, to take advantage of economies of scale with battery and motor technology, although no formal announcement has been made.

"Since 2011 more than 80,000 plug-in hybrid and pure electric cars have been registered in the UK"

Poppy Welch, Go Ultra Low

Volkswagen Group already offers plug-in hybrids in the Volkswagen, Audi and Porsche ranges, as well as two Volkswagen EVs. The group has committed to 20 cars with EV propulsion by 2020, which will see choice expanded greatly over the next few years, and even includes plug-in hybrid technology in the Bentley Bentayga luxury SUV.

And some of Europe's biggest car manufacturers are planning a major investment in improving the infrastructure for super-fast charging across the continent, making longer journeys by electric vehicles more achievable and boosting the take-up of the next generation of plug-in cars.

The network will be based on Combined Charging System (CCS) standard technology. The planned charging infrastructure expands the existing technical standard for AC and DC charging of electric vehicles to the next level of capacity for DC fast charging with up to 350kW. EVs that are engineered to accept this full power of the charge stations can recharge in a fraction of the time of today's plug-in cars.

PLUG-IN RUNNING COST COMPARISON

**post-grant, before discount **four years/80,000 miles ***four years/40,000 miles*

	Volkswagen Passat	Volkswagen Passat	Mitsubishi Outlander	Mitsubishi Outlander	Renault Zoe	Renault Clio
Model	**1.4 TSI 218 GTE auto**	2.0 BiTDI 240 GT auto	**PHEV GX4 auto**	2.2 DI-D GX4 auto	**Dynamique Nav**	1.5 dCi 90 Dynamique Nav
P11D	**£36,695**	£35,270	**£39,399**	£33,499	**£27,890**	£17,660
Plug-in car grant	**£2,500**	0	**£2,500**	0	**£4,500**	0
Transaction price*	**£34,195**	£35,270	**£36,899**	£33,499	**£23,390**	£17,660
Residual value 4yrs/48k	**£6,925**	£7,850	**£9,700**	£9,025	**£5,450**	£5,750
Total depreciation**	**£27,270**	£27,420	**£27,199**	£24,474	**£17,940*****	£11,910***
SMR**	**£3,200**	£4,096	**£4,512**	£4,248	**£1,760*****	£4,096***
Fuel**	**£5,656**	£8,232	**£6,712**	£8,688	**£2,880*****	£5,240***
Running cost**	**£36,126**	£39,748	**£38,423**	£37,410	**£31,839*****	£33,810***
Total Class 1A NIC 3yrs	**£1,924**	£4,772	**£2,066**	£4,762	**£1,462**	£1,633
CO_2 (g/km)	**39**	144	**42**	154	**0**	92
BIK tax band 2017/18	**9%**	30%	**9%**	32%	**9%**	20%
BIK tax band 2018/19	**13%**	32%	**13%**	34%	**13%**	22%
BIK tax band 2019/20	**16%**	35%	**16%**	37%	**16%**	25%
Total BIK tax 3yrs 20%/40%	**£2,789/£5,578**	£6,842/£13,684	**£2,994/£5,988**	£6,901/£13,802	**£2,119/£4,238**	£2,366/£4,732

Ford, BMW, Daimler and VW Group (including Porsche and Audi) have agreed to help boost the number of charging stations from next year. An initial target of about 400 sites in Europe is planned, and, by 2020, customers should have access to thousands of high-powered charging points.

The objective is to enable long-distance travel through open-network charging stations along major routes, which has not been feasible for most EV drivers to date. The charging experience is expected to evolve to be as convenient as refuelling at conventional filling stations.

While hydrogen cars are still hampered by cost and the lack of infrastructure, choice of models is also likely to increase. Now only Toyota and Hyundai offer hydrogen models for sale or lease, but Honda will introduce the FCX Clarity in 2017 (in low volume), while others are working on innovative solutions to the lack of infrastructure.

Mercedes-Benz, for example, is seeking to launch a hydrogen fuel cell car with a rechargeable battery that can deliver 30 miles of range when the hydrogen level is low and reaching a refuelling point is doubtful.

Organisations supporting the uptake of plug-in vehicles believe they will become an increasingly common feature of fleet choice lists.

Poppy Welch, head of Go Ultra Low, said: "Fleet registrations for electric vehicles are growing at a rapid rate, and even faster than plug-in vehicle uptake among private consumers.

"There have been 22,784 fleet registrations so far in 2016, outstripping the total recorded this time last year by 54%. Since the introduction of the Plug-in Car Grant in 2011, more than 80,000 plug-in hybrid and pure electric cars have been registered in the UK with consumers and businesses benefitting from low running costs and beneficial taxation.

"Our research shows only 25% of UK businesses offer EVs to employees as company cars – with almost 70% of user-choosers saying they would consider an electric car if the technology was made available to them.

"With recent Government investment in workplace charging initiatives, as well as improving technology from vehicle manufacturers, we expect EVs to be even more popular with businesses and their employees next year and beyond."

KEY PLUG-IN CARS EXPECTED TO LAUNCH BY 2020

Manufacturer	On sale now	Expected by 2020
Audi	A3 e-tron	A4 e-tron A6 e-tron A8 e-tron Q5 e-tron Q6 e-tron Q7 e-tron
Bentley		Bentayga PHEV
BMW	i3 i8 225i xe Active Tourer 330e 740e	5 Series PHEV X3 PHEV X1 PHEV i5
Citroën		PHEV expected after 2020
DS		PHEV expected 2019
Fiat Chrysler Automobiles		Potential for vehicles based on FCA plug-in platform currently used by Chrysler in North America
Ford		Focus EV Mondeo PHEV
Honda		Jazz EV
Hyundai	Ioniq Plug-in Ioniq EV	I40 PHEV Tucson EV
Jaguar		I-Pace
Kia	Optima PHEV Soul EV	
Land Rover		PHEV or EV expected
Lexus		PHEV likely
Mercedes-Benz	C 350e E 350e GLE 500e S 500e B-Class Electric Drive	
Mini		Countryman PHEV
Mitsubishi	Outlander PHEV	Compact crossover PHEV Compact crossover EV
Nissan	Leaf e-NV200	
Peugeot		PHEV expected after 2020
Porsche	Panamera S E Hybrid Cayenne S E Hybrid	EV expected
Renault	Zoe	
Škoda		Kodiaq PHEV
Smart	Smart Electric Drive	
Tesla	Model S Model X	Model 3
Toyota	Prius Plug-in	
Vauxhall		EV expected after 2020 Insignia PHEV
Volkswagen	e-Golf e-Up Golf GTE Passat GTE	Tiguan PHEV Touareg PHEV
Volvo	XC90 T8 S90 T8 V90 T8	XC60 PHEV S60 PHEV V60 PHEV

FLEET FACTS AND FIGURES

OPINION POLL

Should drivers who cause death by dangerous or careless driving face a life sentence?

FleetNews view:
Our poll supports the proposed changes to sentencing by 2:1 (see story, page 10). Although we agree that this ultimate sanction should be available to the courts, we certainly don't believe that every case should result in a life sentence. Each should be considered individually within its own specific circumstances and punished accordingly, much as happens within the current law.

This week's poll: Following the salary sacrifice announcement in the Finance Bill, how likely is your company to introduce or retain a salary sacrifice scheme?
fleetnews.co.uk/polls

MOST COMMENTED ONLINE

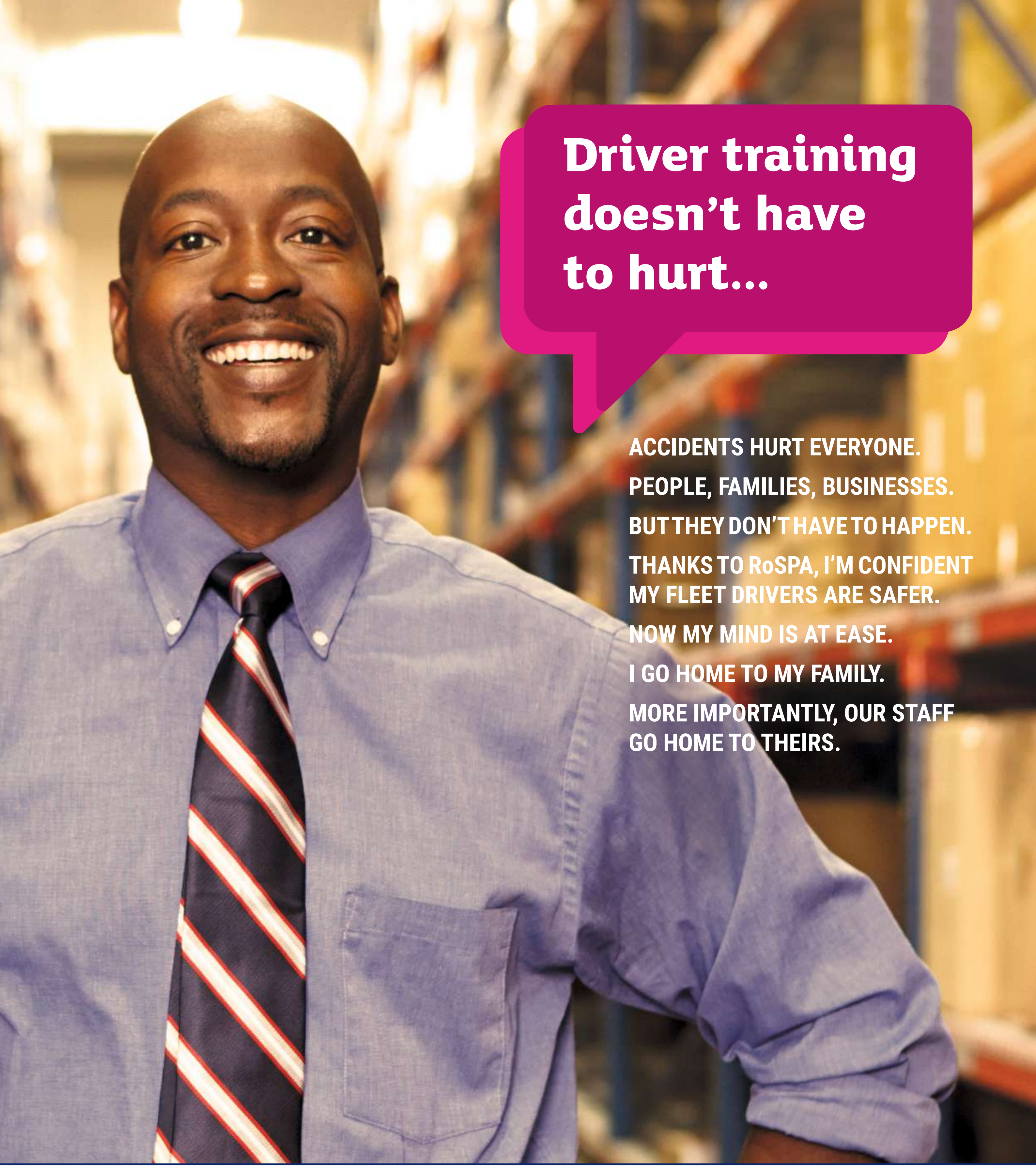
Road safety expert Will Murray dies

fleetnews.co.uk/news

UK AVERAGE FUEL PRICES

Diesel (ppl) 116.28 ↑
Unleaded (ppl) 113.72 ↓

fleetnews.co.uk/costs/fuel-cost-calculator



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Vauxhall fires are 'matter of deep concern', says transport committee

Pressure grows to recall almost a million Corsas as TSC considers inquiry

By Stephen Briers

The influential Transport Select Committee (TSC) has described as "a matter of deep concern" reports that a second Vauxhall model is at risk of catching fire.

Vauxhall recalled 220,000 Zafira models last year which were at risk of bursting into flames due to a faulty wiring loom in the heating system.

This led to Vauxhall customer experience director Peter Hope and General Motors engineering executive director Charles Klein giving evidence before the committee. The TSC hopes to publish its report in the next couple of weeks.

Now pressure is growing on Vauxhall to recall almost one million Corsa D and E (current model) cars, due to risk of fire, after an investigation by *The Sun* newspaper.

Following a BBC Watchdog programme report in November, the manufacturer recalled 2,767 1.4-litre petrol Corsa Ds for an electrical fault which led to fires.

More owners have since come forward complaining their Corsas have also spontaneously combusted.

An engineers' report from Burnley-based forensic collision firm GBB, commissioned by *The Sun,* said: "The resistive heating associated with Zafira B failure has also been identified in the heater wiring harnesses of Vauxhall Corsa D models. A fire-damaged Corsa D, with a history of wiring harness damage, was examined to reveal an origin of fire in the region of the heater system."

The wiring loom in question is believed to be similar to that in the Hummer H3 SUV, which was recalled in the US.

In a statement, Vauxhall sought to play down the claims.

"Vauxhall has no confirmed reports of vehicle fires originating in the vehicle heating and ventilation system of the Vauxhall Corsa D/E," the manufacturer said.

"Fires can occur in all makes of cars and it is important that thorough investigations are carried out before determining if there is a manufacturing defect that can relate to fire.

"Better access to vehicle fire data could help manufacturers with early detection of safety issues and we welcome any initiatives in this area."

However, this is unlikely to appease the Transport Select Committee.

Louise Ellman, TSC chair, told *Fleet News:* "Vehicle fires can be terrifying for occupiers and other road users, and constitute a serious threat to their safety. When we heard from Vauxhall earlier this year about fires in the Zafira B model, we made it clear Vauxhall must do better in identifying and rectifying any safety risks. That reports of fires in a different Vauxhall model are now emerging is a matter of deep concern.

"We will be keeping a close eye on the responses of both Vauxhall and the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) to this latest issue and we want to know how they are ensuring the safety of drivers and their families."

Ellman does not rule out calling Vauxhall executives before MPs for a second 'evidence session'. She said TSC was "keeping the pressure" on Vauxhall to update the committee on its progress to rectify the mechanical errors to the Zafira "because they have a responsibility to their drivers".

In the original evidence session, Hope and Klein were questioned about the timing of the recalls, including why the Zafiras had not been recalled earlier.

"They said 'it's because we didn't know what was causing it'," Ellman said. "And I said: 'well the fact that people are driving around in cars that go on fire, surely you need to do something?'"

The TSC was due to meet as *Fleet News* went to press to discuss whether a second inquiry is necessary.

"We made it clear Vauxhall must do better in identifying and rectifying any safety risks"

Louise Ellman, Transport Select Committee

A specially commissioned report cast doubt over the safety of the heater wiring harnesses in Corsa models

TSC CONTINUES TO MONITOR VOLKSWAGEN

The Transport Select Committee says the Volkswagen Group NOx emissions scandal is an "ongoing issue" on which it is continuing to keep a close watch.

Volkswagen Group is believed to have so far fixed around 160,000 of the 1.1 million cars fitted with the software – 508,276 Volkswagens, 393,450 Audis, 131,569 Škodas and 76,773 Seats – despite beginning the rectification programme at the start of the year.

Volkswagen Group UK managing director Paul Willis told the TSC during its inquiry that the manufacturer wanted to complete the fixes by the end of this year. However, it ran into problems getting approval from German regulators for its solution which has caused the delays.

TSC chair Louise Ellman said: "The matter is far from resolved, but I think that our actions have made the Government become much more involved in it. We're not satisfied that they've done enough and we think that our minister should be much more involved. It's an ongoing issue."

Government proposes maximum life sentences for drivers who kill

Opinion divided on whether tougher punishments will have desired deterrent effect

By Tom Seymour

The Government is planning to increase the maximum sentence for drivers who cause death by dangerous driving from 14 years to life.

Under the new plans any case with a driver causing death by dangerous driving, including those under the influence of drugs, alcohol or due to being distracted by a mobile phone, could be treated in a similar way to manslaughter.

The Ministry of Justice is collecting views on the changes with a deadline of February 1, 2017. The results are due to be published next May.

Other proposals include creating a new offence of causing serious injury by careless driving with a maximum sentence of three years and increasing the minimum driving ban of those convicted of causing death above the current two year limit.

According to Government statistics 122 people were sentenced for causing death by dangerous driving in 2015, with a further 21 convicted for causing death while driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Sam Gyimah MP, parliamentary under secretary of state for justice, said the Government recognises there is public concern around sentencing for offenders who kill or seriously injure others on the road.

He said: "We are committed to making sure the legislative framework courts operate within reflects the seriousness of offending and the culpability of the offender."

John Pryor, ACFO chairman, told *Fleet News:* "There is no excuse for dangerous driving and tougher sentencing should act as a deterrent that will help save lives in the future."

Pryor said fleet managers should look to keep drivers informed through regular newsletters and updates.

He said it is worth revisiting policies in the light of potential changes next year and "continually reminding drivers to ensure robust compliance".

The move has been welcomed by road safety charity Brake which has campaigned for a tougher stance on reckless driving.

Results of the sentencing consultation should be published next May

However, Neil Greig, IAM policy & research director, said there has been no real evidence to support that tougher sentences have a widespread deterrent effect.

He said: "Getting the balance right between prevention and punishment is difficult.

"No one expects to be involved in a crash so most drivers simply feel these serious offences will never apply to them. Stronger and stronger sentences may influence the already law abiding but most crashes are due to human error – often momentary lapses. For the minority who do intend to do harm it would appear that no sentence can be certain to stop them if they are repeat offenders."

Greig also said the current maximum of 14 years for causing death by dangerous driving is rarely used and there is no guarantee a higher maximum would be either. In 2015, the average custodial sentence for causing death by careless or dangerous driving was just under four years.

Gary Rae, campaigns director for Brake, said the proposed changes vindicate his organisation's campaigning efforts and those of victims' families calling for change.

Brake has urged the Government to unify charges for causing death by careless driving and dangerous driving as it does not believe there should be a distinction between the two. The Government has indicated that it plans to keep the two separate.

Brake also wants clarification on whether the current automatic 50% 'discount', where convicted drivers serve only half their term in jail for an early guilty plea, will apply for these proposed sentences.

The Department for Transport (DfT) has already announced that it will double fines for those caught driving while using a mobile phone following support from a public consultation earlier this year.

The DfT decided to raise the points issued from three to six for all drivers, and to double the fixed penalty to £200 for all vehicles. The changes are expected to be made in the first half of 2017.

There will be a Think! campaign that will be launched alongside the higher penalties to alert drivers to the changes and raise awareness.

Pryor said: "The trouble is people have to be caught. Like drink-driving there needs to be more Government campaigning to make people feel that using their mobile while driving is unacceptable.

"Fleets should also ensure their polices are fit for purpose, that they are monitoring and know if staff get these fines. Most will come on a stop on the road and, unlike like ANPR speeding fines, the driver may be the only one who knows. Again it is a point that fleets need to be able to check driving licences on a regular basis."

"We are committed to making sure the legislative framework courts operate within reflects the seriousness of offending and the culpability of the offender"

Sam Gyimah MP,
Parliamentary under secretary of state for justice

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Model shown is for illustrative purposes only. +Combined cycle MPG and CO_2 emissions quoted are for BlueHDi 75 S&S manual models. □BIK figure quoted of £33 relates to monthly car tax liability at 20% tax rate for tax year 2016-17 for New C3 5-door Hatch 1.2 PureTech 68 EU6 Touch. *Calls are free of charge from all consumer landlines and mobile phones. If you are calling from a business phone, you should check with your provider whether there will be a charge for calling an 0800 number.

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*Provisional technical data, subject to final homologation. MPG's and CO_2 figures are preliminary and subject to confirmation. Fuel consumption and CO_2 figures are obtained under standardised EU test conditions. This allows a direct comparison between different manufacturer models but may not represent the actual fuel consumption achieved in 'real world' driving conditions. More information is available on the SEAT website at www.seat.co.uk and at www.dft.gov.uk/vca. Model shown: Excellence 2lr 4 drive. 129g CO_2. 25% BIK.

SG Fleet acquires Motiva Group to move into the FN50 top 20

Group's second purchase in four months reduces its reliance on sal/sac

By Tom Seymour

SG Fleet has acquired the Motiva Group, provider of contract hire, short-term rental and fleet management services, for A$20.7 million (£12.4m).

The acquisition follows its purchase of Fleet Hire in August and takes SG Fleet into the FN50 top 20 with a fleet of 13,374 vehicles.

SG Fleet has seen rapid growth in the UK since its Australian parent launched the operation in 2007. It moved from 43rd in the 2015 FN50 with a total risk fleet of 2,250 to 21st in this year's listing with 8,570 vehicles. Adding Motiva's risk fleet now makes it the UK's 17th biggest leasing company.

Fleet Hire was the larger acquisition of the two, but the deal with Motiva represents an almost six-fold increase in its risk fleet.

Motiva group managing director Peter Davenport will remain with the business.

David Fernandes, SG Fleet UK managing director, said: "Motiva brings further skills in the specialist light commercial vehicle segment and daily rental operations as well as an increased footprint in the contract hire market."

Fernandes said Davenport remaining with the business will help deliver SG Fleet's "strategic plans in the UK".

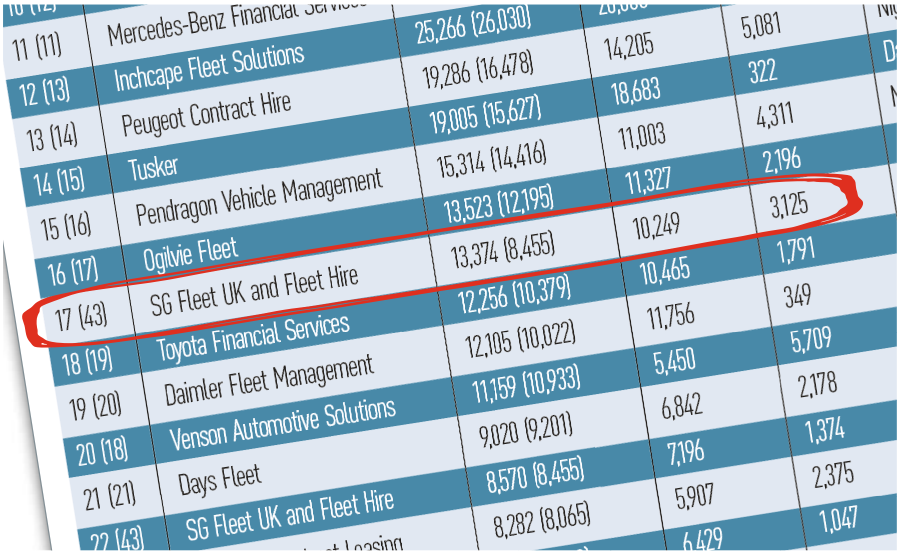
He declined to comment further at this stage on what impact the addition of Motiva would have on SG Fleet due to the business working on integration plans over the next few weeks.

As highlighted by Fernandes, the immediate benefit from the Motiva acquisition is its greater exposure to van customers, with Motiva having 1,751 commercial vehicles on its risk fleet, more than SG Fleet and Fleet Hire combined at 1,374.

The acquisition also further reduces SG Fleet's reliance on salary sacrifice. In 2015, 43% of its 2,250 vehicles were offered through this funding method.

However, after the Government announced plans to revise the tax treatment of salary sacrifice in the autumn statement – since softened with the removal of ultra-low emission vehicles from the proposals – SG Fleet is now in a stronger position to cope with any resultant uncertainty.

SG Fleet offers salary sacrifice through its Novalease product and is a market leader in its home market of Australia, where it funds more than 23,000 vehicles.



11 (11)	Mercedes-Benz Financial Services	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
12 (13)	Inchcape Fleet Solutions	25,266 (26,030)	20,[illegible]	[illegible]
13 (14)	Peugeot Contract Hire	19,286 (16,478)	14,205	5,081
14 (15)	Tusker	19,005 (15,627)	18,683	322
15 (16)	Pendragon Vehicle Management	15,314 (14,416)	11,003	4,311
16 (17)	Ogilvie Fleet	13,523 (12,195)	11,327	2,196
17 (43)	SG Fleet UK and Fleet Hire	13,374 (8,455)	10,249	3,125
18 (19)	Toyota Financial Services	12,256 (10,379)	10,465	1,791
19 (20)	Daimler Fleet Management	12,105 (10,022)	11,756	349
20 (18)	Venson Automotive Solutions	11,159 (10,933)	5,450	5,709
21 (21)	Days Fleet	9,020 (9,201)	6,842	2,178
22 (43)	SG Fleet UK and Fleet Hire	8,570 (8,455)	7,196	1,374
[illegible]	[illegible] Leasing	8,282 (8,065)	5,907	2,375
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	6,429	1,047

SG Fleet UK's new FN50 position after aquisition of Fleet Hire and Motiva this year.

Motiva did not offer a salary sacrifice product, which means the combined SG Fleet business now funds 1,367 vehicles from its total risk fleet through salary sacrifice, representing just over 10% of its UK business.

Fernandes told *Fleet News* in a previous interview that his ambition to move SG Fleet into the top half of the FN50 was closely tied to the success of the Novalease product in the UK.

This hasn't turned out to be the case, although the company remains committed to further organic growth via Novalease.

SG Fleet CEO Robbie Blau said the acquisitions would give the company access to a broader customer base for its salary sacrifice products as well as access to a wider panel of funders. "We now have the scale, the products and the expertise to establish ourselves in this market," he said.

SG Fleet's purchase of Motiva also raises its presence in the rental market, thanks to Motiva's M-Way rental division, based in Stoke-on-Trent.

M-Way provides help to corporate customers managing short and long-term rentals with a network of more than 80,000 vehicles spread over 400 locations in the UK. This will add incremental rental business for SG Fleet in addition to Fleet Hire's daily rental division.

SG Fleet has been pressing forward with its integration of Fleet Hire, with both companies recently moving into one office in the Midlands at Hampton-in-Arden.

Davenport said the investment in Motiva would add value to its service proposition for customers.

Fleet Hire chief executive, Graham Hale, echoed those sentiments, adding: "Since joining the SG Fleet family in August, we have made significant progress with our customers and our product offering. Motiva will undoubtedly contribute and benefit further from this trend."

Peter Wright and Matt Hill are also continuing in "key roles" at Motiva Group.

John Lindsay, fleet consultant at JLSR, said: "Clearly, with acquisitions of this type, SG Fleet will be looking to consolidate the businesses over the medium- to long-term to ensure they can maximise their returns."

Lindsay said it is possible there could be more consolidation in the leasing sector next year as businesses look to grow by acquisition.

He added: "Although I think businesses are becoming more selective and the fit has to be right, both strategically and culturally. SG Fleet's acquisition of Fleet Hire and Motiva Group falls squarely into this line of thinking."

Motiva said back in August last year that it had ambitions to double the size of the business by 2017. It had grown its total risk fleet by 2.2% year-on-year in 2016, according to latest FN50 data.

"Motiva brings further skills in the specialist light commercial vehicle segment and daily rental operations as well as an increased footprint in the contract hire market"

David Fernandes, SG Fleet UK

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THE BIG PICTURE

By Stephen Briers, editor, *Fleet News*

2016 has been both tinged with sadness and battered by some momentous decisions.

Momentous decision one: Brexit. While exchange rates have settled down (albeit at a lower level) after the shock referendum vote, experts predict we will not be able to agree an exit plan within the two-year window after Article 50 is triggered, likely March/April.

As a result, the UK may be forced to transition to the World Trade Organisation terms of trade while negotiations are ongoing which would involve a customs border and possible tariffs.

The good news is the naysayers' forecasts of imminent recession were well wide of the mark, although a slowdown in car, van and truck sales is forecast for 2017.

"This year will also be remembered for other, more mournful reasons"

Momentous decision two: Donald Trump. The impact is unclear, but the president-elect has very different views on global issues than his predecessor which will surely have economic implications.

This year will also be remembered for other, more mournful, reasons. The deaths of Peter Cooke and John Leigh were unexpected and a loss to the fleet industry. Now, Will Murray has also passed away.

We worked extensively with Will on our events and on his pioneering benchmarking initiative, promoting the benefits to fleets of comparing their safety performance with their peers. He was a tireless promoter of safety, doing as much as anyone to raise awareness and standards.

One look at all the tributes on our website from fleet managers and others tells the story (see right). Passionate, helpful, knowledgeable and inspiring (and simply a nice guy) – he will be greatly missed.

YOUR LETTERS

ROAD DEATHS

EDITOR'S PICK

Do more about the root causes of accidents

Jack wrote:
Having read 'Brake welcomes proposal to jail killer drivers for life' (fleetnews.co.uk, Dec 5), I feel death by dangerous driving is terrible, but is sadly inevitable until people start taking the root causes of death on the road more seriously. Speeding, drinking, using mobile phones – one of these things is usually involved when someone ends up being killed. We need to take these crimes more seriously, not just wait for someone to die until we start prosecuting.

■ The editor's pick in each issue wins a £20 John Lewis voucher.

AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES

Complete waste of time and money

Colin wrote:
Having read 'Ford to start driverless car testing in Europe next year' (fleetnews.co.uk, Dec 2), I think this is a complete waste of time and money.

I have yet to meet anyone who would be willing to travel in an autonomous road vehicle.

Who is it that says they want them? Ford should spend their R&D budget on making improvements to vehicle handling, economy, safety and the like.

EUROPEAN MARKETS

Trading with Europe is not a one-way street

Roger Hill wrote:
Having read '£4.5bn tariff threat to cars if single market access lost' (fleetnews.co.uk, Nov 30), I don't see a problem. Just put an equal levy on their stuff, and you might see a positive in the form of a closing of the balance of payments with EU which at the moment is heavily in their favour. Putting 30% on a Mercedes-Benz (as a luxury tariff) will focus the mind of the carmaker's management, not least our perks users. Pressures will come to bear, and some good will come out of it. Think between the lines. It really is interesting to see how parts of the media are still seeing trade as though its only one way. And, of course, there are other markets we will be allowed to explore and pursue. Its not all gloom.

MURRAY REMEMBERED

Safety campaigner Will a big loss to the industry

Diarmuid Fahy wrote:
Having learnt of Will Murray's death (fleetnews.co.uk, Dec 6), this is very, very sad news. Will was one of the greatest forces for good in road safety, and will be much missed.

Sarah Woolley wrote:
My thoughts are with Will's family at home and at eDriving Fleet. The industry has lost one of its great minds and a genuinely lovely person.

Julie Davies wrote:
I have been to many a conference where Will was a speaker, I found him inspiring, his knowledge and presence in the industry will be missed.

Nina Hughes wrote:
Such sad news, having worked with Will for a number of years he became a great part of our extended team, giving advice and help whenever we needed it in order to help others, he will be truly missed by us all.

Alison Moriarty wrote:
Will was not only an inspirational advocate of road safety but a lovely man and a warm and caring friend.

Malcolm Maycock wrote:
Great bloke and I know all his family and friends will be extremely proud of his wonderful achievements. My heart goes out to them at this very sad time.

Aidan Rowsome wrote:
Very nice man – who was always a pleasure to work with. Will was a top professional who was a tireless promoter of road safety best practice. Very sad news – my thoughts go out to his family.

HAVE YOUR SAY Email: fleetnews@bauermedia.co.uk Comment online: fleetnews.co.uk
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Burning question:
Which food do you dislike/hate the most?

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Reducing costs tops agenda for round table delegates

Participants share best practice advice on fleet management at meeting in Leeds

By Andrew Ryan

Reducing costs continues to be a key area of focus for fleet managers. The operators who attended a recent *Fleet News* round table, sponsored by Shell, are taking different approaches to saving money while maintaining operating efficiencies.

These ranged from reducing fuel use and vehicle wear and tear through introducing telematics, to cutting down on service, maintenance and repair costs.

> "We are trying to see if we can go direct to the dealer for repairs rather than through a leasing company"
>
> Lianne Farr, Hermes

How do you save on service, maintenance and repair?

Paul Holden, fleet manager, Yesss Electrical: Fleets seems to automatically use the Epyx 1link system and those types of accounts with suppliers, but they are paying too much money. We've got accounts, for example, with ATS Euromaster and Kwik Fit but we never use those unless it's an emergency. If our drivers need tyres then they go to ATS or Kwik Fit who ring our office for authority. They'll ask for our account number, but, instead, we ask for the cost if we pay for the tyres then.

The account people admit they cannot get the prices as low as what we can pay on the day. For example, if you go through 1link you could have a vehicle service quoted at £285 if it goes on your account, but if you say you will pay there and then on the phone, you could get £80 or £90 off, so you can reduce that cost to £200. We've got a guy in the office who does specifically that.

We do that for 600 vehicles, so we've saved huge sums of money – well beyond the amount required to pay the guys you need to run that.

Lianne Farr, fleet and motor insurance administration manager, Hermes: We lease all our vehicles, commercials and cars, and we are trying to see if we can go direct to the dealer for repairs rather than through a leasing company because, obviously, they put a percentage on to the costs.

Dean Waters, fleet and equipment manager, Ideal Heating: We find that side of it quite difficult because our engineers are all home based, from Land's End to John O'Groats. We haven't got a local person to deal with.

We tend to use a fleet management company because that gives us network coverage across the country, but I do know the mark up on that is so much higher. But if we take that in-house then that's going to take a lot of time, so that will increase our internal costs.

Paul Holden: Fleets will pay a fortune for fleet management externally.

DELEGATES


Abby Lamb fleet manager, BUPA


Mike Gadd commodity manager, Pattonair


Mark Hailwood fleet manager, GBA Services


Lianne Farr fleet and motor insurance administration manager, Hermes


Paul Holden fleet manager, Yesss Electrical


Fran White customer compliance fleet team, HMRC


Dean Waters fleet and equipment manager, Ideal Heating


Chris Charlton driver safety and performance manager, Northern Powergrid


Lin Walker fleet contract manager, Northern Powergrid


Bridget McHugh procurement officer, Cambridge University Press


Kay Till customer compliance fleet manager, HMRC


John Holford account manager, commercial fleet, Shell


Neale Gunning account manager, commercial fleet, Shell

Dean Waters: At the end of the day, the fleet management company is taking a mark-up, so the more money it costs me, the more money it is making. It's not a charity, but are the fleet management companies working for us or for themselves?

Kay Till, customer compliance fleet manager, HMRC: We've just renewed the contract with our fleet management company. We've set certain parameters so we know it goes out and beats people down and says this work will cost x, y or z, but we also have limits set so it has to come to us for approval for certain things.

We will look at those and go back and ask 'why are you doing this? Does it affect safety?'. One of the things we put a stop on was the cosmetic damage that was coming in, the odd stone chip, for example. It's amazing how much they cost and so anything with cosmetic damage now comes to us.

There are certain scenarios where we wouldn't want damage on our vehicles, so we will repair then, but for most of our fleet, such as with a pool car, we won't repair anything if it's not going to affect the value of the vehicle. We'll whack down the approval limit to £100 for any vehicle we know is due for replacement, and so we have a lot of toing and froing with our fleet management company to try to keep costs down.

As you say, they are there to make a profit, they are not a charity. They do a good job for the most part, but there are some things that, when we get wise to them, we will start putting measures in place. We have a problem with upselling, especially with tyres, at the moment. We have ours changed at 3mm but the fleet management company will ring up and say 'oh, your brakes need doing', or something else which they are trying to upsell which is something we haven't had before. It's probably in the past year it has started, so we have to make our drivers aware of it and tell them not to be pushed into it, but our fleet management company knows that and can't do anything without our approval.

2%
increase in mpg at Ideal Heating after introducing telematics

"For most of our fleet, such as with a pool car, we won't repair anything if it's not going to affect the value of the vehicle"

Kay Till, HMRC

What action are people taking to improve safety on their fleets?

Chris Charlton, driver safety and performance manager, Northern Powergrid: We've just completed installation of vehicle telematics into our commercial fleet and we've actually pushed that forward from a safety point of view. We want it to be self-financing through fuel savings, but it's not about cost saving primarily, it's about reducing the number of vehicle incidents.

We finished the install in August and so far the signs are looking quite encouraging. We've empowered all of our supervisors so they each have their own little fleet and their own department of staff that they know and work with. They have all got access to the data and will get an alert about somebody speeding or an incident of harsh braking, and will ask the driver to come to see them. It's early days to see what level of improvement that is actually making, but the indications are quite positive.

The biggest challenge in introducing telematics was from the unions which were very much against it as it can show where the vehicle is. We've had to put some safeguards in as to how the data is going to be used around that, but when drivers know they are being monitored, then there will be a significant number of journeys which will not be made because they are unnecessary. This brings savings in fuel, while there are also safety benefits as they are not exposing themselves to risk as they are not making the journey.

Dean Waters: I've been running a system for about 12 months which is about to go live and you are absolutely right that you approach it from a duty of care perspective for your drivers. If you approach it from that sense, then not only will you save fuel – we are getting a 2% increase in mpg – but changing the driving style will cut maintenance as well.

What is your policy on hands-free mobile phone use?

Chris Charlton: We have a policy that permits short duration incoming calls. It's an operational necessity, but we are planning to tighten that. We have written a draft to point out some absolute no-nos around doing conference calls and so forth.

Operationally, it's not the right time for us to introduce a complete ban which is where I'd like to be at some point. One of the key elements of our new policy will be empowering drivers to be able to say no to answering their phone and not be challenged by management if they choose not to answer it or turn it off and stick it in the boot.

Paul Holden: It's a big conflict because we all know there should be no mobile phones in vehicles, yet all manufacturers produce the necessary hardware to use your phone in your car. People shouldn't be doing it, but if the vehicles are geared up to have hands-free then the inference is that it's ok to use hands-free isn't it?

Chris Charlton: There's an awful lot of ignorance about what constitutes driving. When you pull up alongside cars at junctions and you see people's heads down you know they're looking at their phones. At that point they don't consider they are driving, but they are, and that is one of the biggest pieces of communication that needs to be done nationally.

PARKING FOR AN HOUR? CHARGE UP YOUR EV...

Erik Fairbairn aims to set up charging points wherever they are needed to ensure momentum to EVs doesn't stall, writes *Christopher Smith*

A charging point everywhere you park for an hour or more. That's the aim of Pod Point, one of the major players in the electric vehicle charging sector. The company is getting there, gradually, with around 22,000 points in operation across the UK, and 5,000 more in Norway.

Founder Erik Fairbairn set up the business in 2009, after previously establishing a couple of other businesses – before that, he was an engineer, including a spell at Ford.

Pod Point's approach to the market is logical – with the business split into home, work and public charging point divisions.

Around 17,000 of the company's UK charge points are home-based, and Fairbairn explains that the average electric vehicle driver requires the use of one and a half to two charge points in their daily driving life.

"Each driver needs one charge point at home, which is normally exclusively for their use, a share of a charge point at work, and a smaller share of public charging – perhaps one charger for every 10 vehicles – at places like shopping centres.

Pod Point is a recommended charging point provider for manufacturers including Hyundai, Nissan, Renault, Tesla, Volkswagen and Volvo, and much of its work is providing points for customers of new vehicles.

Home charging point installations currently attract a £500 subsidy from the Government through the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV), which leaves an electric vehicle (EV) driver to pay around £400 – though many manufacturers will fund the rest of the cost.

"You have to map the growth of charging facilities to the growth of vehicle sales," says Fairbairn, explaining that the rate is currently fairly proportional.

At present, financial incentives and environmental evangelism are still driving growth in electric vehicle take-up, with the necessary infrastructure following not far behind.

The recent introduction of the OLEV workplace charging grant now offers a universal financial contribution for businesses to install chargers for the first time.

There have been contributions for some public sector bodies and a few businesses in certain regions in the past, but the new programme is open to all – with some criteria.

It's not as generous as the home charging scheme – supplying £300 vouchers for the installation of up to 20 points per business (with a few complications for franchises and subsidiaries) – but it should encourage many businesses to add facilities, which Fairbairn welcomes.

In some cases, commercial installations are more challenging than a home one.

"In a perfect world, a business will tell us they want some charging, we'll look at the EV market in their area and the size of the company, and offer a steer on how many points may be a good idea.

FACTFILE

Company Pod Point
Founded 2009
Founder Erik Fairbairn
HQ East London
UK charging points 22,000
Business segments Home, work, destination

17,000
of Pod Point's UK chargers are home based

£500
current Government subsidy for charging point installations

The display on a Pod Point charger. Usage statistics are communicated to a central hub

Erik Fairbairn at one of his company's on-street charging points.

"Don't necessarily tell us where you want the chargers. Most businesses want a cost-effective install, so we can advise the cheapest and easiest places to put them.

"By all means, a company can say we'd like six points over there – but in cases where installing a few metres away would be a tenth of the cost, we'd always suggest that," Fairbairn says.

A workplace or retail installation for multiple sockets isn't just putting up a few posts and connecting them to the mains, however.

"If you're a big organisation and you'd like 100 or 200 charge points, then you might be in a situation where you can't charge all of those vehicles on full power at the same time.

Pod Point's system works on an array basis – it can manage the total load across those charge points.

"It means you don't end up having to reinforce grid connections, and other expensive stuff. It's a really efficient way of putting a large amount of infrastructure in."

The array operation offers benefits to smaller installs in terms of forward planning, too.

"If you install 10 now, it's possible you would want 50 in three years or so. We'd provide a little plan for growth to ensure the number of points can be easily scaled if needed."

Software-managed charging, as Fairbairn calls it, means a business or retailer can see an overview of their charging infrastructure across the country if they wish.

It means they can see utilisation and the stress levels of points, and work out where they need to add more.

This system is not just limited to one Pod Point customer.

Every OLEV-subsidised charging point has a requirement to report usage statistics through a sim card, but Pod Point units take this a step further, and every Pod Point built since launch is connected to a central hub.

If needed, the company can help to control and manage demand across all its units, whether that be at home, a destination or in the workplace.

"Centrally managing the roll out of charging is quite important. If 6% of vehicles were electric, and plugged in to charge at 6.30pm, we'd be close to reaching our peak generation capacity as a nation. The system could reduce power usage at that point, and spread charging out throughout the night.

"The future of a well managed grid definitely involves electric vehicles."

Fairbairn continues: "Pod Point is aiming to 'solve' charging at scale. Of course, we're delighted to help you charge one car, but the big challenge is on a countrywide scale."

The company's view of utilisation is perhaps a little different to that of a fleet manager.

"If a point is being used for seven hours of every eight-hour day, then it could either be used by one person all day, or seven different drivers for an hour each.

"A retailer's usage profile looks very different to a workplace or a long stay car park. Working out behaviours and cycle times is a big part of what we do."

As volumes of electric vehicles increase, and the demand for charging grows, the issue of who pays for the fuel is likely to become more relevant.

Fairbairn says: "You can give it away for free, and stump the cost of the energy, cost recovery which is charging customers loosely what the energy costs, or you can make a profit.

"It's not for me to tell hosts which is the right answer. In the workplace market, it's likely most employers will opt for the cost recovery basis in time as volumes increase."

Pod Point's systems, accessed by a web page or mobile app, will handle the technical process of charging, and collect payment from the user at whichever rate is desired and pass it back to the charging point's host.

Time-based charging is one of the most popular options at present.

"The average customer doesn't really know what a kilowatt hour is. Consumers are already used to paying to park somewhere per hour, so we have been emphasising the range per hour – for example, a 7kw unit can charge at up to 30 miles per hour.

Fairbairn continues: "Long term, perhaps we'll all get familiar with kilowatt hours, but at the moment, we understand time much better than we understand units of energy."

Most of the growth in charging points is in the private sector, according to Fairbairn, with retailers opting to install additional points to attract more customers – taking a lead ahead of the public sector.

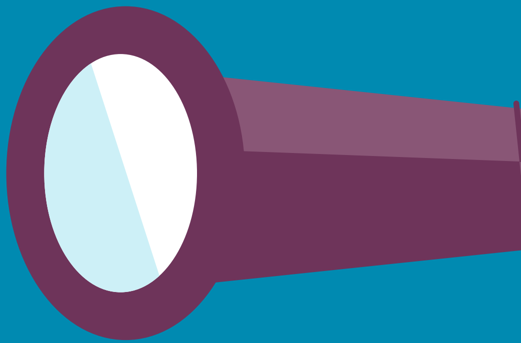
A driver may choose a particular retailer over another because of its charge point, he says, but drivers are rarely visiting a destination just to top up on power.

"Our job is to make charging as simple as possible, and to ensure there are chargers in places people want to go."

"We're delighted to help you charge one car, but the big challenge is on a countrywide scale"

Erik Fairbairn, Pod Point

Find your nearest public charging point at fleetnews.co.uk/electric-vehicles



THE CHANGING FACE OF THE FLEET MANAGER

The traditional fleet manager role is under threat in organisations large and small, but their expertise is invaluable. *Andrew Don* reports

Whether the role of fleet manager is disappearing or simply evolving is a moot point. The role could be dedicated, part of another function like finance or HR, or rolled into wider travel/mobility responsibilities, but the most efficient and effective fleet operations will always have in-house expertise – even if some companies do not fully appreciate it.

What is changing beyond doubt is the level of control kept in-house. Many companies have chosen to outsource admin functions or driver contact to a leasing or fleet management company, freeing up time for a fleet decision-maker to focus on strategy.

However, a growing number of companies have attempted to hand all control of their fleet to a third party, retaining only the slimest of KPI-based supply chain management responsibilities within a procurement or finance function.

Geoffrey Bray, chairman of the Fleet Industry Advisory Group (FIAG), is discomfited by the changes he sees happening to fleet managers.

Fleet managers knew everything about the vehicles and were the best people to make decisions that affected them when he started independent fleet management supplier Fleet Support Group in 1987, he says.

But gradually some organisations began to argue that fleet managers were no longer needed and the role became redundant in many businesses.

"In my view it was a mistake because to have the knowledge, skill and understanding of why you have transport in the first place – for whatever reason – somebody needs to take ownership," says Bray.

"While it may look cost-efficient that you allow someone else in the business, whether it's in finance, HR, or wherever, it's a mistake. You need to have that skill and experience.

"You are managing a considerable expense in terms of the vehicles you use and you need expertise to manage that consistently."

He argues the loss of fleet managers over time is a "retrograde step" and in many instances there is a need for having somebody in a business that really understands what the requirements are when it comes to setting policy and making "the right kind of decisions".

Peter Eldridge, director of ICFM, has a different take on the alleged demise of the fleet manager.

He says: "If you take black and white figures in terms of fleet managers reducing in numbers it paints an inaccurate picture because what is happening in fleet management is that the role requirements have been changing and they've been changing quickly."

So where the fleet manager used to be king and in control of every aspect of the fleet, that has completely changed, he says. "I don't think fleet managers in the strictest sense have declined in number by any significant degree," adds Eldridge. "All that's happened is the role has been expanded to embrace additional people so there's a good argument to say perhaps the numbers haven't changed at all.

"Titles haven't necessarily changed a great deal. You still have fleet managers and fleet administrators actively involved, but sitting outside of that you'll have equilibrium with finance manager, HR director, procurement manager, procurement director. The titles are almost superfluous to a point."

The reason this has happened is because the activity of fleet management has expanded in terms of the requirement, involving a host of different disciplines, because of compliance requirements and duty of care.

"The point is they now absolutely need to recognise that they have a responsibility to adopt a professional approach to the management of fleet," adds Eldridge.

The worlds of travel, payments and fleet are "colliding" for the first time.

He throws into the mix technology in terms of connected vehicles and autonomous vehicles and says the "dynamic of the fleet asset" is changing.

"Fleet managers are having to become experts in many more spheres," says Eldridge. "Whatever title you want to give them, it doesn't matter."

Employers need to recognise that management of fleet is not something you can do just spending a couple of hours a week on "as is classically believed". It's not some business add-on, he says.

"Employer and employee need to step up to the plate and re-evaluate themselves in terms of their education, knowledge, skill and accreditation," says Eldridge.

John Pryor, chairman of fleet operators association ACFO, says he heard "only the other day" of a fleet manager who had been made redundant at a household-name organisation.

"He said they're breaking it all up, bits going here, bits going there and bits going somewhere else," says Pryor.

"We are seeing this trend and, unfortunately, I suppose people don't see the value in it. Maybe they've outsourced the fleet to a lease company."

Bray says that in many cases where organisations have made the fleet manager role redundant and outsourced it, there is "a grave danger".

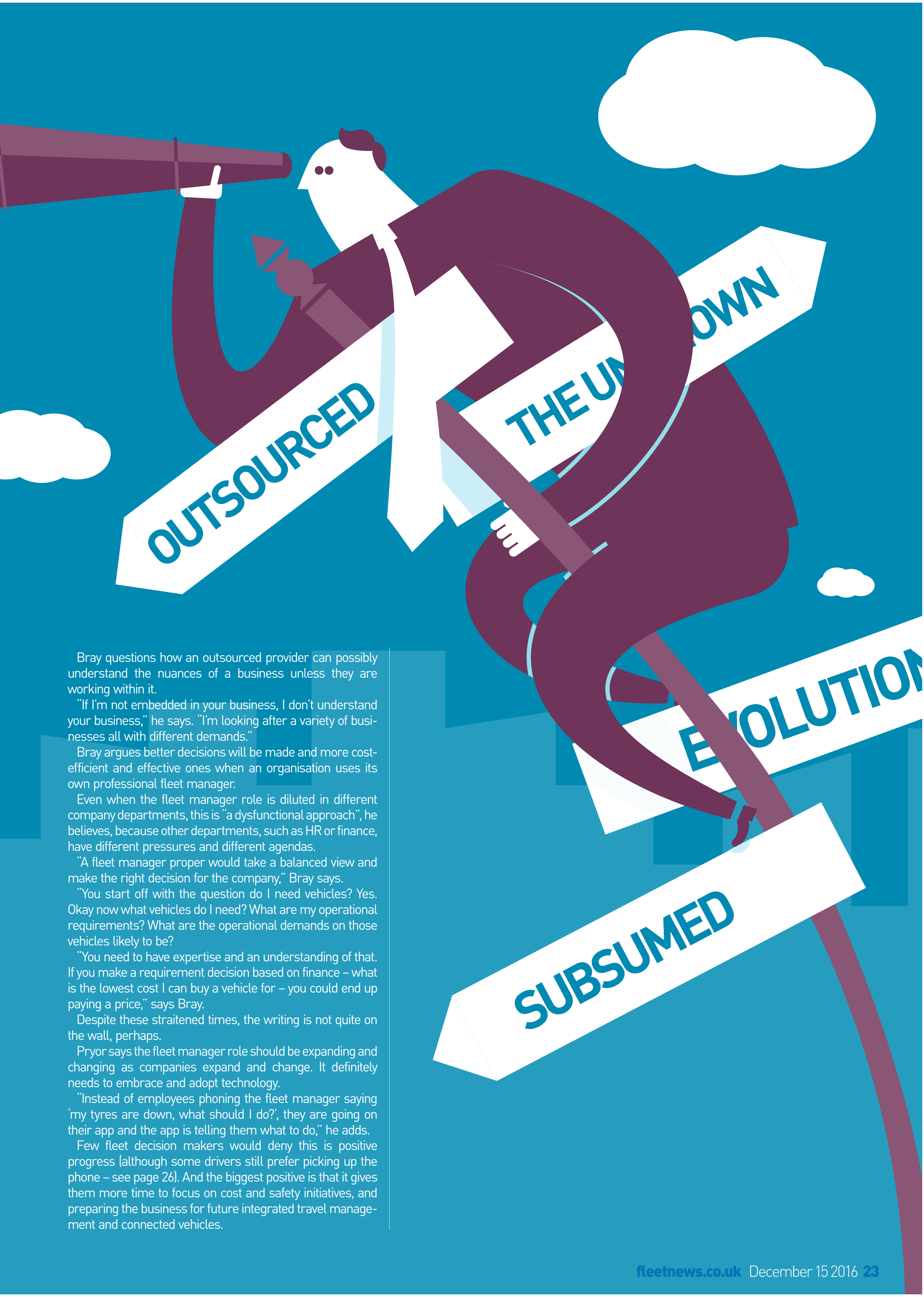
How can you possibly outsource that function effectively and still keep an element of control? he asks.

"There's nothing wrong with taking costs out of a business but who makes those decisions?" says Bray.

"Are you making a decision on cutting costs because you are aware of all the tangible and intangible costs? It is the intangible aspects where the detail is, and if you don't have a clear understanding of what's needed to fulfil your business requirements you could face a problem."

"You are managing a considerable expense in terms of the vehicles you use and you need expertise to manage that consistently"

Geoffrey Bray, Fleet Industry Advisory Group



Bray questions how an outsourced provider can possibly understand the nuances of a business unless they are working within it.

"If I'm not embedded in your business, I don't understand your business," he says. "I'm looking after a variety of businesses all with different demands."

Bray argues better decisions will be made and more cost-efficient and effective ones when an organisation uses its own professional fleet manager.

Even when the fleet manager role is diluted in different company departments, this is "a dysfunctional approach", he believes, because other departments, such as HR or finance, have different pressures and different agendas.

"A fleet manager proper would take a balanced view and make the right decision for the company," Bray says.

"You start off with the question do I need vehicles? Yes. Okay now what vehicles do I need? What are my operational requirements? What are the operational demands on those vehicles likely to be?

"You need to have expertise and an understanding of that. If you make a requirement decision based on finance – what is the lowest cost I can buy a vehicle for – you could end up paying a price," says Bray.

Despite these straitened times, the writing is not quite on the wall, perhaps.

Pryor says the fleet manager role should be expanding and changing as companies expand and change. It definitely needs to embrace and adopt technology.

"Instead of employees phoning the fleet manager saying 'my tyres are down, what should I do?', they are going on their app and the app is telling them what to do," he adds.

Few fleet decision makers would deny this is positive progress (although some drivers still prefer picking up the phone – see page 26). And the biggest positive is that it gives them more time to focus on cost and safety initiatives, and preparing the business for future integrated travel management and connected vehicles.

POWER TO THE FLEET MANAGER

In-house fleet managers offer companies many benefits which do not always show up on the company balance sheet. *Andrew Ryan* looks at the added value they provide

If you're reading this, then you probably already know the vital, often unsung, role that a fleet manager plays in the overall success of a business.

Fleet is one of the biggest cost centres in any company and one which can spiral out of control without a knowledgeable person at the helm.

However, in recent months *Fleet News* has heard of more fleet managers being made redundant for 'cost-cutting' reasons, with the entire fleet operation either completely outsourced or absorbed by different departments within an organisation.

While on the face of it this reduced headcount may result in short-term savings, it can have significant negative ramifications on the overall operation of a business which are not necessarily seen on the balance sheet.

The vehicle fleet is critical to many businesses and any weakness in its operation, whether it is excessive downtime, unsuitable vehicles, a high collision rate, driving licence compliance or something else entirely, can have a significant impact.

Of course, the work of a fleet manager can also result in major cost savings. For example, in the three years since becoming fleet manager for Genus, Adrian Davies reduced its £5million fleet budget by £500,000 through a number of initiatives.

These included negotiating improved terms with vehicle manufacturers, but for Davies reducing spend is only part of his job.

"I am employed to bring the fleet up to standard with the correct policies in place and with everyone understanding their role within the fleet," he says.

"Too many times, fleet management is a bolt-on to another job; for me, it's my role."

New roles

While anecdotal evidence suggests the number of dedicated fleet managers is declining, there have been occasions when companies have recognised the importance of having a specialised, focused operator and have created new roles.

Construction firm Wates Group, for example, has recently created the position of group fleet manager to improve its operations, while health insurance company BUPA last year reintroduced the role of fleet manager.

"We had a fleet manager in the business up until about four or five years ago, when the fleet and travel manager left the business and then the operations of fleet management went to HR, but it became purely transactional and liaising with the fleet management company," says Abby Lamb, fleet manager at BUPA.

"What BUPA recognised over time was the bigger picture, especially around risk and grey fleet management, that couldn't be handled by HR, so it brought the position back.

"Risk, compliance and health and safety are the big areas and that is where having someone dedicated to that complete knowledge and having an understanding of how the business works is actually where it's important to have a fleet manager on site."

Internal expertise

Gareth Wilsher, fleet manager at AT&T, agrees that the increased knowledge of internal and future requirements of a business an in-house operator has, compared to an outsourced supplier, gives their employer a huge advantage.

"An outsourced company will not have full knowledge of the company culture to be able to manage the fleet in the right way and in the direction that the company wants to go," he adds.

Nigel Boyle, administration and technical director at hatchery company PD Hook, where he is responsible for around 400 vehicles, says: "I have come across outsourcing where somebody is looking after maybe 20 different companies and they've all got different rules and regulations with areas such as insurance, which has led to people getting quoted the wrong thing."

It is these different rules, as well as the wide range of industry sectors and fleet requirements, which increases the value of an in-house fleet manager.

"Fleet management is not a one-size-fits-all dynamic," says Ken Needham, director of fleet and logistics at Foxtons.

"The requirements for an estate agent like us, for example, are very different to those of a large computer centre.

"We are based in central London so we have some unique scenarios that can only really be addressed by in-house operations.

"We have a very young, dynamic team of estate agents and the job of my department is to try and take the strain out of having a company car and all the issues associated with it to allow them to make the company successful.

"We have to look after the business and residential permits for them, then you have congestion exemptions, all the toll charges, parking fines, and so on.

"Too many times, fleet management is a bolt-on to another job; for me, it's my role"

Adrian Davies, Genus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"All that is dealt with by my department so we have someone in-house our drivers can go to: they are not stuck on the phone – 'press option one', 'press option two' – you actually have them speaking to you face to face. They have a human they can talk to."

Other organisations have different challenges in which specialist, in-house knowledge can help.

"We are in agriculture so there are a lot of different quirks where an internal fleet team will know what is really useful," says Boyle.

"One example that comes to mind is vans and/or pick-ups with trailers coming up to the weight bracket where they need a tachograph.

"However, there is a specific get-out in the regulations for agriculture which is something we are aware of but an outsourced fleet management company may not be.

"This means we can advise people when they are choosing their vehicle to get the appropriate one to avoid unnecessary regulation, for example, rather than getting caught up in it needlessly."

The personal touch

Outsourcing the fleet management role also removes the internal contact point for drivers who have issues with their vehicles.

"It's important that employees feel looked after with the running of their car," says Boyle.

"A lot of people feel having an in-house fleet department gives them a friendly face or voice that they know: as we all know, it's easier discussing problems with somebody you know than somebody you don't."

At Foxtons, the fleet department also has a crucial role to play in keeping its sales staff motivated.

"We rotate our cars between users so we run it more like a rental fleet than a typical company car fleet," says Needham. "This means we have to have a return to base policy to keep the car safe, and you need a facility that can basically bring the cars back up to a retail refurb standard to give that car to the next person.

"You don't want to demotivate sales guys in any way, shape or form and everyone gets revved up about having a new car, but they are not always going to get a new car.

"However, if that car can be as good or better than when it left the showroom originally, then they're happy.

"If you demotivate them, they won't hit the next sales target and the company won't be successful. So it's all about understanding what makes the company tick.

"We hold our staff's hands through car choice, advice, collision management, etc. We understand the staff. Vehicle matters always comes back to us, so there are no distractions for our sales staff."

The personal contact also makes drivers feel more valued, and this has a knock-on effect to the way they treat their vehicles.

"By making sure their concerns are heard, the crews feel valued and engaged," says Michael Duda, fleet manager for Medical Services.

"This helps maintain the fleet and they tend to look after the company resources and equipment as if they are their own.

"This culture of engagement is very important to help prevent breakdowns and incidents."

The ability of an in-house fleet manager to engage with employees can also be important when it comes to acquiring the right vehicles for both the business and the driver.

"A lot of people feel having an in-house fleet department gives them a friendly face or voice that they know"

Nigel Boyle, PD Hook

"When I started I spoke to as many drivers as possible to identify basic requirements," says Davies. "Everyone south of Cheshire wanted air-conditioning and everyone to the north wanted temperature gauges to check how cold it was."

He adds: "Every driver has my mobile number and I regularly go to team meetings to talk to drivers about the issues in their area."

Managing suppliers

Keeping fleet operations in-house enables a company to get better deals with suppliers, says Needham. This may not always be about price, but getting the back office support a company needs.

"We've built up a relationship with Kwik Fit and our local tyre fitters and they all know how we operate," he adds.

"They know we have a brand match policy, we have an axle match policy, they know we change at 3mm, so we don't have these arguments 'oh you've got a couple of millimetres left, send that guy back in 1,000 miles', which is what you get from a fleet management company because it's budget-led.

"That would mean our employee is off the road again, which means they're not selling a house and it's all about that old sales ethos, that one extra sale makes the company.

"If every branch made one extra sale, your profits go through the roof. But if they're sat waiting for a car to have new tyres fitted, they are not doing that.

"Because we have those relationships, they know which tyre sizes to stock because we have a lot of the same cars."

He says employing an in-house fleet manager also gives a company control over the fleet suppliers it uses, and ensures that the companies used are working for the benefit of the fleet and not the fleet management company.

"A third party will change things because they have to," says Needham. "They may change a breakdown supplier from The AA to the RAC, but that has a knock-on effect to people who don't understand what to do in the event of a breakdown.

"Whereas if you are owning that change and you are changing for the right reasons , you can pre-empt it; it's not just done overnight."

Having an internal fleet manager allows a company to remain focused on upcoming contract renewals, with, for example, the fleet department at Wates Group working with its project teams so it knows exactly what agreements are expiring six months in advance.

"Fleet management is a challenging job and you must know the marketplace and suppliers," says Ted Sakyi, group fleet manager at Wates.

Gaining buy-in

Understanding their company culture and having personal contact with drivers, fleet managers are well-placed to gain buy-in for new initiatives.

At Wates, Sakyi was brought it to centralise the fleet function and improve efficiencies: before his appointment the construction company had seen its fleet of around 1,000 vans, 300 cars and 1,300 cash allowance drivers develop piecemeal as the business expanded.

There was no national co-ordination so across different offices some vehicles were bought and others leased, there was a mix of providers and brands on the van fleet, and operatives were speccing their own vehicles.

"The biggest challenge is always the management of change from a people perspective, so I have been engaging with employees at all levels, from the board to operatives on the frontline," he says.

"Having explained the need for change and the reasons behind the initiatives, they fully understand.

"It is for the operatives' benefit in terms of improvement in safety, comfort and drivability, and of benefit to the business in terms of cost management and reputation."

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BETTER DEALS, QUICKER.

Budgets up or down? Fleet200 responses almost evenly split

Spending on risk management and telematics is predicted to be at the top of shopping lists in 2017 as a quarter expect to make savings on fuel next year

NEED TO KNOW

- 35% anticipate a rise in the number of vans on fleet
- 29% forecast increase in the number of funded vehicles
- 39% expect to reduce short-term vehicle hire spending

By John Charles

Managing expenditure may be a major challenge for many Fleet200 organisations, but a significant number expect budgets to increase in the next 12 months with spending on risk management and telematics to the fore.

Furthermore, a number of organisations anticipate budgets to rise as a consequence of merger and acquisition activity as well as organic growth triggering increases in fleet size.

A total of 28% of 133 Fleet200 companies responding said they anticipated their overall fleet budget would increase, with 27% predicting a reduction, 39% no change and 6% unsure.

However, it is likely that savvy fleet managers are anticipating that by spending on boosting existing risk management programmes and introducing telematics solutions that the return on investment will be rewarded with financial savings.

That expectation could be why a quarter (25%) of 126 Fleet200 organisations forecast that accident management spending will reduce in 2017 – 10% predicted an increase – due to driver behaviour improvements resulting in fewer crashes.

Perhaps surprisingly, given the prevalent grip on finances, 35% of 123 Fleet200 organisations said they expected the number of vans they operated to increase (19% decrease and 44% no change) and 30% of 129 employers forecast a rise in company cars (26% decrease and 41% no change).

Given those figures, it is little surprise that 29% of 118 organisations forecast that the number of funded vehicles on their fleets would increase over the coming 12 months, with 18% expecting a reduction and 50% no change.

Fleet budgets are expected to increase at Spie UK, the French-owned business that delivers energy, safety and environmentally-focused solutions across multi-technical and support services, with fleet manager Pat Nolan anticipating that the number of company cars and vans he's in charge of rising from around 1,260 to 1,800-1,900 units as a result of acquisition before the end of 2016.

The company operated a fleet of just 300 vehicles only three years ago, but a voracious appetite for expansion and aspirations to become a £1bn turnover company from today's £650 million business is fuelling fleet growth.

However, Nolan is having to balance fleet growth with a clear focus on cost management as he seeks to drive up vehicle utilisation and remove any vehicles deemed surplus to requirements.

He explained: "The business has come from nowhere in the last three years through various acquisition as well as organic growth. Business growth continues apace and, as a result, the fleet continues to expand. However, we are focused on running the fleet as efficiently as possible and managers are charged with eliminating waste wherever they can.

"The company is leaner and fitter than it was and with regards to the fleet that means trying to take out vehicles where we can so we operate more efficiently delivering savings in acquisition and operating costs," he added.

Nevertheless, the fact the overall size of Spie's fleet will increase is a sign of an improving UK economy, with Nolan saying: "We have emerged from the recession with the focus firmly on the company's cost base and that has left the business in good shape as it expands while the economy improves."

Asked whether spending would increase or decrease across five operational areas of expenditure, 31% of 127 Fleet200 organisations forecast they would spend more of their budget on risk management (10% decrease and 50% no change).

Investment in telematics is also continuing with 33% of 118 Fleet200 companies forecasting they will spend money on

1,260
number of cars and vans on fleet at Spie UK

2,100
total of cars and commercial vehicles on fleet at Surrey and Sussex police

EXPECTATION OF CHANGE IN FLEET SPENDING IN 2016

Sector	Increase	Decrease	No change	Don't know
Architecture/construction/building	47%	13%	33%	7%
Bluelight/NHS Trusts	29%	29%	36%	7%
Business Services	19%	13%	69%	0%
Government/public sector/education/health	11%	56%	33%	0%
Heavy industries/mining/engineering/other industries	25%	25%	50%	0%
Insurance/accountancy/banking/finance/other	10%	30%	50%	10%
IT/software/leisure/media	31%	23%	50%	10%
Transport/communications/distribution	50%	21%	14%	14%
Utilities/energy/water/forestry/fishing	24%	29%	47%	0%
Wholesale/retail/food/medical	24%	41%	29%	6%
Total	**28%**	**27%**	**39%**	**6%**

NUMBER OF VEHICLES ON FLEET

Sector	Cars				Vans			
	Increase	Decrease	No change	Don't know	Increase	Decrease	No change	Don't know
Architecture/construction/building	53%	27%	13%	7%	60%	20%	13%	7%
Bluelight/NHS Trusts	14%	36%	50%	0%	7%	29%	64%	0%
Business services	19%	25%	56%	0%	31%	13%	56%	0%
Government/public sector/education/health	13%	13%	75%	0%	25%	13%	56%	0%
Heavy industries/mining/engineering/other industries	25%	25%	50%	0%	29%	14%	57%	0%
Insurance/accountancy/banking/finance/other	30%	30%	20%	20%	17%	33%	33%	17%
IT/software/leisure/media	31%	31%	38%	0%	38%	15%	46%	0%
Transport/communications/distribution	36%	14%	50%	0%	50%	14%	36%	0%
Utilities/energy/water/forestry/fishing	25%	44%	31%	0%	41%	24%	35%	0%
Wholesale/retail/food/medical	47%	13%	40%	0%	31%	15%	46%	8%
Total	**30%**	**26%**	**41%**	**2%**	**35%**	**19%**	**44%**	**2%**

'black box' technology in 2017. Given that the solution is frequently highlighted as a 'must have' tool by fleet decision-makers, it is somewhat surprising that 7% of respondents expected spending in that area to reduce (52% no change).

Fuel usage is frequently highlighted by public and private sector fleets as an area for cost management focus and utilisation of telematics is regularly cited as a tool that can help cut expenditure in that area.

Therefore, notwithstanding the forecasted changes in fleet size over the coming months and the upwards trend in fuel prices compared with those witnessed over the past 12 months, 25% of 128 respondents anticipate a fuel bill saving in 2017 (29% anticipating a rise and 41% no change.

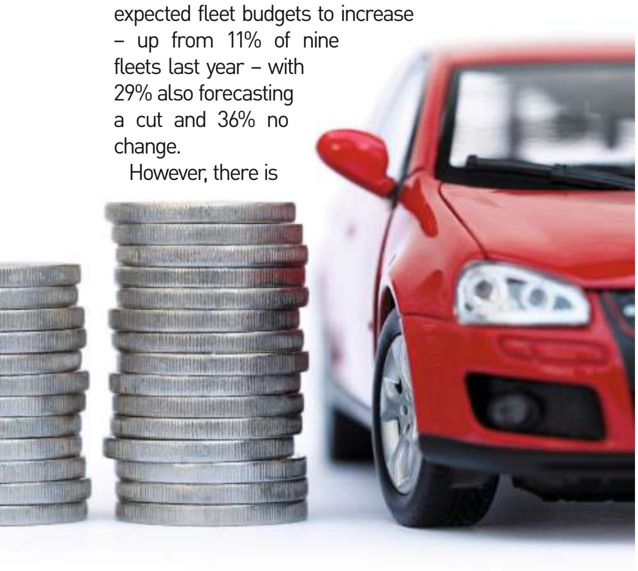
Spending on daily rental is an area where Fleet200 companies are looking for expenditure cutbacks. A total of 39% of 122 respondents expect to reduce short-term vehicle hire spending, with just 11% forecasting an increase (47% no change).

While public sector purse strings remain tight there is perhaps a glimpse of the reins being slackened and adoption of a 'spend to save' mentality.

Last year not a single fleet in the government/public sector/education/health segment forecasted a rise in expenditure, with a third anticipating a decrease and the remainder no change. However, this year 11% of nine responding fleets expected fleet budgets to increase although 56% predicted a cut and a third no change.

In the bluelight/NHS Trusts sector 29% of 14 respondents expected fleet budgets to increase – up from 11% of nine fleets last year – with 29% also forecasting a cut and 36% no change.

However, there is



"We are focused on running the fleet as efficiently as possible and managers are charged with eliminating waste wherever they can"

Pat Nolan, Spie UK

no let-up in the focus to reduce expenditure as far as Dennis Ord, head of transport, Surrey and Sussex Police Joint Transport Service, is concerned. He is in charge of 2,100 cars and commercial vehicles.

"We are looking at every opportunity to reduce the fleet and make savings in operational areas," said Ord, who this summer stood down as chairman of the National Association of Police Fleet Managers.

Forecasting a reduction in the overall fleet budget and a net reduction in the number of vehicles operated, Ord said: "All police fleets are in the same situation to a greater or lesser extent as we look to not pay as much for our vehicles and lengthen in-service times. We are all looking for more from our vehicles, but the pressure of the frontline is in competition with that. It is a balancing act."

Across private sector fleets the general feeling is that current budget levels are likely to be maintained. However, seven of 14 responding fleets in the transport/communication/distribution sector expected budgets to increase and 41% of 17 fleets in the wholesale/retail/food/medical sector anticipated a reduction.

Only among companies in the architecture/construction/building (53% of respondents), wholesale/ retail/food/medical sectors (47%) and transport/communications/distribution (36%) is it clear the number of company cars on fleet will rise.

However, that view is in direct contrast with that of 123 Fleet200 organisations operating vans where eight sectors expect the number of vans under management to generally increase. Only in the bluelight/NHS Trusts and insurance/accountancy/banking/finance/other sectors are fewer fleets anticipating growth than a decline – 7% and 17% respectively.

The expectation that the number of funded vehicles will increase is most prevalent in the architecture/construction/building (50%) and wholesale/retail/food/medical sectors (40%) with 'stay the same' the most often used response.

Scottish and Southern Energy, which operates a 7,500-strong car and commercial vehicle fleet, is seeking savings of 5-10% across its business.

That means an overall cut in the fleet budget and fleet operations manager Gemma Trew is targeting savings through a range of measures. They include: whether employees need a 4x4 commercial vehicle or if a smaller light van will meet job requirements; analysing how many vehicles need to be equipped with ancillary items such as onboard power units; and investigating the potential for increased discounts from vehicle manufacturers particularly in respect of 4x4s.

Additionally, Trew said: "I'm looking at vehicle utilisation and payroll numbers to see if the fleet is at its optimum size or whether we can identify savings."

British Gas vans spread the conservation message by putting electric vehicle advertising on the side and rear of vehicles

Utilities are in the vanguard when it comes to EV usage

Plug-in vehicle penetration puts green-aware power and energy companies ahead of other Fleet200 sectors in the drive to reduce fossil fuel consumption

NEED TO KNOW

- **Vans outnumber cars by more than 2:1**
- **Total number of vehicles remains stable**
- **No other sector employs so many plug-ins**

By Gareth Roberts

Centrica, parent company of British Gas, retains top spot in the utilities/energy/water/forestry/fishing sector, with a fleet of 3,350 cars and 12,500 vans. Its combined fleet of 15,850 vehicles is more than double that of second placed Scottish & Southern Energy, with 7,499 units, and National Grid, which sits third with 7,300 cars and vans.

Centrica has almost four times as many vans as cars and its combined fleet puts it third in the overall Fleet200 standings, behind BT Group (31,301 cars and vans) and Royal Mail (38,000 car and vans). Scottish & Southern Energy and National Grid are also among the country's biggest fleets, sitting ninth and 10th respectively.

However, what is immediately striking about the fleet make-up of the utilities/energy/water/forestry/fishing sector is its car fleet is overshadowed by the number of vans being operated, by more than 2:1.

Total fleet size for the top 20 is 63,237, with 19,044 cars and 44,193 vans giving an average fleet of 3,162 made up of 952 cars versus 2,210 vans.

VAN FLEET DOMINATES

Van-dominant fleets are rare across the 10 sectors that comprise the Fleet200. In fact, only business services, like utilities, operates more vans than cars and then only by some 3,000 units.

However, a high ratio of vans to cars is perhaps to be expected in a sector which is reliant on an army of engineers. The van fleet is vital to day-to-day operations and that is reflected in the sector's replacement cycles, average business mileage and the need to operate an effective and efficient fleet.

Vans travel an average of 18,211 miles per year compared to a Fleet200 average of 22,140 miles. Car mileage for the sector also falls below the Fleet200 average at 14,833 miles versus 18,449 miles.

In terms of replacement cycles, vans are replaced on average every six years or 96,176 miles, with cars operating on an average replacement cycle of four years or 91,765 miles. That compares to a Fleet200 average for vans of five years or 103,110 miles and four years or 90,034 miles for cars.

Drill down to an individual fleet level and four of the top 20 fleets – Severn Trent, Yorkshire Water Services, Northern Powergrid and South West Water – replace their vans every seven years, which is the longest replacement cycle operated in the sector. The shortest cycle – four years – was employed by ScottishPower, Welsh Water and Npower.

The longest replacement cycle for cars was five years, operated by just two fleets – Anglian Water and Severn Trent. Four of the sector's fleets – National Grid, Western Power Distribution, Northern Powergrid and United Utilities – employed the shortest cycle of three years.

Van replacement mileages had a similarly broad range, with Enserve at one end of the scale running its vans for 140,000 miles compared to Centrica, United Utilities and Npower which replace their vans every 60,000 miles.

Enserve also replaces its cars every 140,000 miles – the highest in the sector – compared to Western Power Distribution and United Utilities which have a 60,000-mile turnaround.

Another key differentiator in a van-dominated sector is operators will have a keen eye on vehicle uptime, usually helped by the use of telematics.

Vehicles can have high utilisation rates and, as van fleets have been early adopters of the technology, any 'slack' in the system has more than likely been cut to an operational minimum.

It helps explain why vehicle numbers for the sector have hardly changed year-on-year. Last year's Fleet200 survey, the sector reported 63,271 cars and vans; a 2.7% increase on the previous year.

In 2014, the top 20 fleets in the sector recorded a reduction

"Dependence on public charging infrastructure is kept to the absolute minimum, because costs at some of these points are £5-7 for a rapid charge"

Colin Marriott, British Gas

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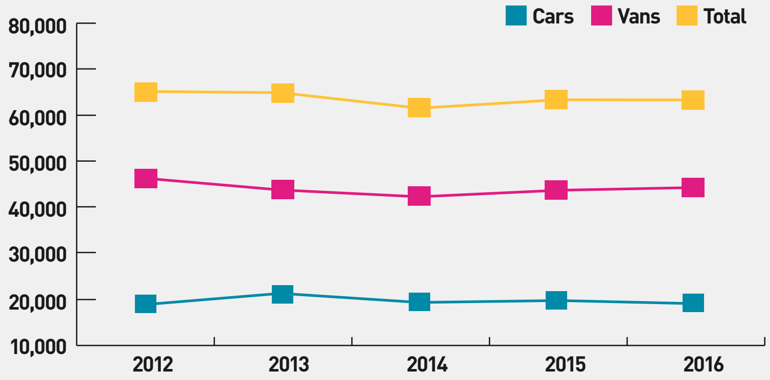
TOP 20 FIVE-YEAR SECTOR TRACKER



A rare sight among Fleet200 sectors... vans outnumber cars by more than 2:1 which makes utilities one of only two sectors where this occurs

of 5,659 vehicles, equating to an 8.4% fall. But this year, there are just 34 fewer cars and vans on the sector's combined fleet compared to 2015. The number of vans has increased year-on-year by 558 units, while the sector's company car total fell by 592.

Alistair Patterson, fleet manager at National Grid, said: "If you can't get the engineer there, cutting down the fleet too much is a false economy, so you need the right balance of core and spare vehicles."

Greater use of technology has helped National Grid. "Identifying vehicles that are under-utilised has always been a challenge for us," explained Patterson. "If you've got telematics, as we have now, this makes life a lot easier."

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

The vehicles serve an industry facing increasing pressure to reinvent itself. With greater choice and evolving needs, consumers are demanding more from suppliers. Policy and regulation changes continue to cause long-term instability, while the challenges of climate change, security of supply and population growth all have significant impacts on energy infrastructure planning.

In terms of climate change, alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs) have become part of the DNA of the sector. It easily operates the 'greenest' fleet of the 10 sectors featured in the Fleet200.

The utilities/energy/water/forestry/fishing sector's average of 66 hybrid vehicles is twice as many as the Fleet200 average of 29. It is the same for pure electric vehicles (EVs), with a Fleet200 average of five vehicles versus the sector average of 11.

63,237

cars and vans in the sector, down 34 vehicles on the 2015 total

44,193

vans in the sector, up 558 vans on the 2015 total

However, plug-in penetration is not spread evenly across the top 20 fleets. Its 'green' reputation is predominantly down to four fleets – Centrica, Scottish & Southern Energy, National Grid and Thames Water – operating 955 hybrid cars between them and Centrica's pure EV fleet of more than 120 cars and vans.

The parent company of British Gas has blazed a trail for other pure EV fleet operators and, even within the fleets featured across the Fleet200, no one comes close to it in terms of numbers.

British Gas began piloting 28 Nissan e-NV200 vans during the winter of 2013/14 as part of its 13,000-strong home service fleet.

Today, it stands at more than 110, while the choice of electric or hybrid for cars tends to be left to the driver and is more of a "niche deployment" compared with the LCVs.

Colin Marriott, head of fleet for British Gas, said: "The vans have been of greater benefit in terms of service, maintenance and repair than we had forecast."

As for total operating cost, this was running at around 7% less than for a comparable diesel, but when diesel prices dipped earlier this year it was more like 5%. In both cases, it doesn't take into account savings on congestion charges.

To maximise fuel savings, vehicles are deployed to drivers doing 50-70 miles a day. Recharging is done either at the driver's home or at one of the company's larger sites.

"Dependence on the public charging infrastructure is kept to the absolute minimum, because costs at some of these points are £5-7 for a rapid charge," said Marriott.

Just six fleets out of the sector's top 20 did not operate any pure EVs, while five fleets operated no hybrid vehicles. Three fleets – Anglian Water, Severn Trent and Yorkshire Water Services – operated neither.

Stewart Lightbody, head of fleet services at Anglian Water, believes there is potential to replace some diesel pool vehicles with pure electric for trips between Anglian Water's offices in Huntingdon, Lincoln and Peterborough.

When he spoke to *Fleet News* in July, he was trialling a Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV at Grafham Water (one of Anglian Water's reservoirs) in place of a diesel L200 as it typically travels 11 miles around the reservoir at slow speed, which means the diesel particulate filter can get blocked.

TOP 10 UTILITIES/ENERGY/WATER/FORESTRY/FISHING

	Fleet200 Ranking	Organisation	Cars/LCV fleet total	Cars	Vans/ LCVs	Job-need car to perk user ratio	CO_2 avg (cars)	No of car brands on fleet	No of van brands on fleet
1	3	Centrica	15,850	3,350	12,500	75:25	107	30	4
2	9	Scottish & Southern Energy	7,499	2,286	5,213	100:0	107	12	6
3	10	National Grid Company	7,300	4,200	3,100	70:30	108	30	6
4	26	Western Power Distribution	4,400	1,000	3,400	100:0			
5	=30	E.ON	4,000	1,000	3,000	60:40	111	12	5
6	44	UK Power Networks	2,975	1,200	1,775	100:0			
7	=62	ScottishPower	2,300	1,000	1,300	100:0		1	6
8	64	Anglian Water	2,225	625	1,600	80:20	117	3	4
9	84	Severn Trent Plc	1,820	420	1,400	80:20		3	2
10	=85	Yorkshire Water Services	1,800	700	1,100	75:25	117	15	5

Four supermarket giants have differing fleet strategies

Tesco and Sainsbury's fleets expand by combined total of 1,750 vans but Asda reduces its online fleet and Morrisons drops out of top 20 completely

NEED TO KNOW

- **Leader Tesco.com has 5,000 vans on fleet; no cars**
- **Sainsbury's has 3,900 vehicles taking it up to third place**
- **Asda fleet at 3,500, up 200 but not in its online fleet**

By Andrew Ryan

The online shopping market is one the fastest growing areas of the UK economy – and this has been reflected by some of the fleet growth in the wholesale/retail/food/medical sector.

Latest figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that the amount spent online each week in October was £1 billion, an increase of 26.8% from a year earlier.

Food retailing accounted for £149.6 million of this – a year-on-year rise of 24.9% – making it a £7.78bn a year business.

Despite this growth, online grocery sales made up just 5% of all purchases from supermarkets in October, which were worth a total of £2.9bn each week.

However, the rise in online grocery sales can be used to explain the growth shown by Tesco.com, which operates the largest fleet in the wholesale/retail/food/medical sector.

According to Fleet200 figures, during the past 12 months it has added 1,000 vans to expand its fleet to 5,000 vehicles, while also reducing the number of brands it uses from three to two. It does not have any company cars.

Fellow supermarket giant Sainsbury's also saw significant growth, taking on an additional 750 vans to give it an overall fleet size of 3,900. This now comprises 2,400 vans and 1,500 cars and meant the business climbed from fifth spot to third in our sector listing.

During the year, parent company J Sainsbury also acquired former Fleet200 business Home Retail Group (then owner of Argos and Habitat), which means the latter drops out of the listing.

The two supermarket giants sandwich second-placed Walgreens Boots Alliance (Alliance Boots), which saw its fleet grow by 570 vehicles to 4,100. It now consists of 3,000 vans and 1,100 cars, an increase of 500 and 70 respectively.

Asda's fleet now stands at 3,500 (2,000 vans, 1,500 cars), up 200 vans, though not in its online fleet.

Sean Clifton, senior manager national fleets at Asda, said: "The online fleet hasn't grown through 2016 despite continued growth of the online business.

"We are enjoying exceptional levels of good performance meaning our reliance on spare vehicles has reduced significantly.

"Essentially, we've managed double-digit growth while actually reducing the size of the fleet."

Ocado and Morrisons, which were 18th and 19th respectively in last year's sector listing, both drop out of the top 20. Ocado declined to provide figures this year, although its fleet is believed to have increased in size.

It may be a short absence for Morrisons though, as in August it struck a deal with Ocado, its online partner, which will allow it to expand its home delivery service nationwide.

> *"Essentially, we have managed double-digit growth while actually reducing the size of the fleet"*
>
> *Sean Clifton, Asda*

Morrisons's online business is currently available to about half of UK households, but does not deliver to areas such as the south west or Scotland. The new deal allows the supermarket to use its own stores to pick products for delivery from next year, doubling its reach.

The ONS figures also show that in October the amount spent at department stores grew 6.2% year-on-year to £600m a week. Within this, the value of online purchases grew 18.5% to £88.2m a week.

John Lewis saw its fleet grow by 500 cars and 342 vans to 2,842 (1,500 cars, 1,342 vans): the result of an increase in stores and distribution centres, said Jerry Ward, manager legal operations at the company.

However, despite the growth in the number of vehicles operated by these retailers, the size of the overall sector fleet fell 4.2% (1,606) to 36,604.

Year-on-year, the number of vans dropped 279 to 20,356, while the car parc declined for the fifth consecutive year, this time by 1,327 vehicles to 16,248.

This reduction is partly due to the takeover of Dairy Crest by Muller, which has led to the Dairy Crest fleet falling by 990 vehicles to 2,300. It now comprises 500 cars and 1,800 vans: last year it had 490 cars and 2,800 vans.

Pfizer's fleet has shrunk from 865 (860 cars and five vans) last year to 659 (655 cars and four vans) due to restructuring and a greater number of managers opting out of the company car scheme.

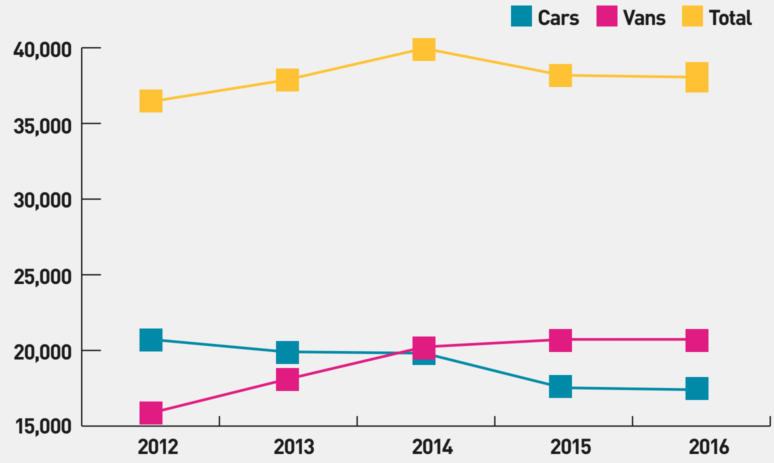
The sector's top 20 features three newcomers, with AstraZeneca, Magnet and Imperial Tobacco replacing Home Retail Group, Ocado and Morrisons.

The wholesale/retail/food/medical sector has a slightly higher proportion of perk cars in 2016 compared to last year at 36%; up two percentage points.

It has the joint third highest ratio in the Fleet200, behind insurance/accountancy/banking/finance/other (53%) and IT/software/leisure/media (39%) and is level with architecture/construction/building.

Tesco.com leads the way in the wholesale/retail/food/medical sector

TOP 20 FIVE-YEAR SECTOR TRACKER



Vans took the lead from cars a few years ago and the gap has increased only slightly this year due to a small dip on cars

John Lewis, Dairy Crest, Diageo and AstraZeneca operate more perk cars than job-need, while Alliance Boots and Johnson & Johnson have an equal split.

Average annual business mileage for cars is 20,717, a rise of 1,029 compared to last year. For vans, this year's figure stands at 25,000, an increase of 3,625.

Both average mileages are the third highest for any sector in the Fleet200, trailing transport/communications/distribution (27,031) and bluelight/NHS Trust (21,514) for cars, and transport (28,813) and business services (28,781) for vans.

The wholesale/retail/food/medical sector's average replacement cycle for both cars and vans is 48 months. This is a rise of two months for cars from last year and a fall of eight months for vans.

Three years ago, the top 20 reported a sudden turnaround in environmental efficiency. Average CO_2 emissions dropped from 144g/km to 132g/km in 2012 and continued to fall to 115g/km last year.

This downwards trend ended this year, however, with average CO_2 rising to 117g/km, putting it just above the average of 116g/km for the whole of the Fleet200.

Despite this, there are some high achievers in the wholesale/retail/food/medical sector.

For the second consecutive year, Coca-Cola has the lowest emissions in the sector at 104g/km – a fall of 1g/km from last year – with Alliance Boots reporting 107g/km.

£7.78bn
the size of the food retail business per annum

£600m
a week spent at department stores in October

Magnet is the only other fleet with a sub-110g/km average, with 109g/km.

Last year, wholesale/retail/food/medical was the third best-performing sector for CO_2 emissions. This year it is the eighth best, with only bluelight/NHS Trusts (128g/km) and heavy industries/mining/engineering/other Industries (122g/km) having higher averages. Government/public sector/education/health is the sector with the lowest average emissions of 102g/km.

Despite the slight increase in average CO_2, the number of alternative-fuel vehicles operated in the wholesale/retail/food/medical sector has more than doubled from 170 last year to 371 now.

Hybrid cars account for 329 of these, electric vans 36, with electric cars the remaining six.

Sodexo has more than half of these alternative-fuel vehicles as it operates 150 hybrid cars and 30 electric vans.

The Co-operative Group runs 50 hybrid cars, while John Lewis and Ashfield Healthcare both have 40.

Contract hire dominates funding for cars, with 59% of respondents saying it is their main funding method, although that is 10 percentage points lower than last year.

Outright purchase, finance lease and operating lease are each favoured by 12% of companies as their main funding method.

This indicates a shift away from outright purchase as last year it was the preferred choice by 19% of fleets.

In 2015, operating leases were the main method for 13%, while no respondents said finance lease.

Contract hire is also the most popular option for vans, with 53% of fleets saying it is their main funding method, a fall of seven percentage points from last year. Outright purchase remained at 27% with finance lease static at 7%. Flexible rental was favoured by 7% of respondents.

Overall, companies forecasted the size of their fleets to either increase or stay the same. When asked for their expectations, 47% said their car fleet would grow, with 40% saying it would not change. For vans, 31% said LCV numbers would rise with 46% saying they would stay the same.

However, this predicted growth was not reflected in fleet budgets: 41% of respondents said the amount they would spend would decrease, 29% said stay the same and 24% felt it would increase.

Telematics and risk management were both areas which several fleets expected to increase their spending, with 31% and 38% of respondents respectively identifying these for extra investment. Spending in these areas is forecast to stay the same for 46% and 44% of fleets.

Daily rental was identified as an area for reduced spend by 53% of respondents; 40% expected it to stay the same, while 7% said it would increase.

TOP 10 WHOLESALE/RETAIL/FOOD/MEDICAL

	Fleet200 Ranking	Organisation	Cars/LCV fleet total	Cars	Vans/ LCV	Job-need car to perk user ratio	CO_2 avg (cars)	No of car brands on fleet	No of van brands on fleet
1	20	Tesco.com	5,000	0	5,000	0	0	0	2
2	28	Walgreens Boots Alliance	4,100	1,100	3,000	50:50	107	4	1
3	33	Sainsbury	3,900	1,650	2,250	n/a	n/a	30	1
4	38	Asda Group	3,500	1,500	2,000	n/a	n/a	7	2
5	45	John Lewis Partnership	2,842	1,500	1,342	40:60	n/a	20	3
6	=62	Muller Milk and Ingredients	2,300	500	1,800	25:75	n/a	6	3
7	65	Celesio (AHH Pharmaceuticals)	2,220	620	1,600	90:10	120	5	1
8	89	Compass Group	1,739	1,198	541	60:40	n/a	n/a	n/a
9	90	The Co-operative Group	1,700	1,200	500	70:30	118	30	2
10	=107	Johnson & Johnson	1,400	1,400	0	50:50	117	3	0

SE L 2.0 TDI 150

ŠKODA KODIAQ

First foray into SUVs includes a 131g/km seven-seater aimed at user-choosers

NEED TO KNOW

- **Prices from £21,495 to £34,895 without options**
- **Key fleet engine delivers 56.5mpg and 131g/km**
- **Seven-seat option available but space is cramped**

£860
price difference between the 150PS and the 190PS

By Matt de Prez

Škoda has pledged a full-scale attack on the SUV market with the new Kodiaq, the brand's first foray into this sector. Prices are extremely competitive with base models starting from £21,495, but Škoda expects the £30,395 2.0 TDI 150 SE L to be the model of choice for most customers.

In this mid trim you get the all-important third row seating, connected services with sat-nav, heated seats and LED headlights. The 150PS 2.0-litre diesel engine, which many will be familiar with from other VW group cars, is perfectly mated to the Kodiaq's bulk.

It never needs to be worked hard and will return a respectable 56.5mpg on the combined cycle. CO_2 emissions of 131g/km are the most attractive in the model range with this engine.

We also tried the 190PS unit which is a better choice for those wanting more performance, with a 0-60mph time of 8.9 seconds, but isn't really worth the extra benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax and the additional £860 over the equivalent 150PS version.

The models with two-wheel drive and a diesel engine have the lowest emissions, but these are only available with the seven-speed DSG automatic transmission. That's no hardship, however, as it's one of the best auto-boxes on the market and suits a car of this size better than the manual. Shifts are seamless and the more involved driver is rewarded with steering wheel-mounted paddles.

Four-wheel drive is optional on all but the base spec S model with either a six-speed manual or the DSG, but even when it is selected the rear wheels are used only when grip is limited to minimise fuel consumption.

On our choice engine (2.0 TDI 150) CO_2 jumps to 142g/km for the manual 4x4 and 147g/km for the DSG 4x4, while mpg drops to 53.4 and 50.3 respectively.

It's unlikely many Kodiaqs will venture over more than a patch of wet grass but there is an 'off-road' button which alters the power delivery and traction control system. It also enables the use of the 360-degree camera system while on the move, so you can see obstacles along the way.

We ventured down a loose surface farm track and the car performed impressively.

Our test model was fitted with the 18-inch wheels (standard on SE) and ride quality was reasonable if not somewhat stiffer than on a Škoda Superb, but body roll was better than expected for a car of this size.

That said, it also had optional adaptive dampers which offer comfort, sport or normal settings, allowing the driver to adjust the ride comfort as required. Models

For full running costs, visit fleetnews.co.uk/running-costs

Rear wheel drive only used when grip is limited to minimise fuel consumption

Take your hands off the wheel and the vehicle warns you to stay in control

> *"Škoda has included more than 30 of its 'simply clever' features in the Kodiaq"*

on standard springs are likely to be less compliant.

The steering is light and direct and the Kodiaq is relaxing to drive. A host of assistance technology is available including adaptive cruise control and lane assist.

With all the systems engaged, the Kodiaq offers a semi-autonomous drive. The lane assist provides a continued steering input which takes some effort away from the driver but take your hands off the wheel and the car immediately warns you to stay in control.

Five-seat models benefit from the biggest boot in this class offering 2,065 litres of space with the rear seats folded (720l without) which shrinks to 270 litres in a seven-seater with all seats in use.

The third row of seats is only available on SE models (£1,000 option) or SE L and Edition variants (standard), but they don't make the Kodiaq a rival for the likes of a Seat Alhambra. Legroom is restricted and the seats themselves are small, plus the rear windows are fixed and there is no ventilation system for those rearmost passengers – it's best to think of it as a five-plus-two.

Škoda has included more than 30 of its 'simply clever' features in the Kodiaq, including umbrellas stored in the front doors, an ice scraper that resides in the fuel filler flap and, perhaps the most useful feature for a family oriented car, the door-edge protection system. It has small rubber trims that deploy automatically when opening the doors, minimising the risk of damage.

Most Kodiaqs are expected to go to retail customers, while Škoda is expecting around 30% to be taken by fleet. The current engine range doesn't include an ultra-frugal option yet but the 2.0-litre TDI 150 still trumps rivals such as the 1.6-litre Nissan X-Trail (133g/km) and Hyundai Santa Fe (159g/km) for CO_2 emissions.

COSTS

P11D price	£30,210
BIK tax band (2016/17)	26%
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£1,571
Class 1A NIC	n/a
Annual VED	£130
RV (4yr/80K)	n/a
Fuel cost (ppm)	n/a
AFR (ppm)	11
Running cost (4yr/80K)	n/a

SPEC

Power (PS)/torque (Nm)	150/340
CO_2 emissions (g/km)	131
Top speed (mph)	123
0-62mph (sec)	10.1
Fuel efficiency (mpg)	56.5

KEY RIVAL

Nissan X-Trail 1.6 dCi 130 Tekna (7 seat)	
P11D price:	£31,540
BIK tax band (2016/17)	26%
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£1,640
Class 1A NIC	£1,132
Annual VED	£130
RV (4yr/80k)	£8,175
Fuel cost (ppm)	9.72
AFR (ppm)	11
Running cost (4yr/80k)	43.87ppm

Running cost data supplied by KeeResources (4yr/80k)

THINKING CAP

By Martin Ward, manufacturer relationships manager

cap hpi

Monday/Tuesday Over to Rome to drive the all-new Suzuki Ignis, a small SUV that measures just 3.7 metres but has loads of interior space (see P37 for first drive).

Suzuki sold 2.75 million vehicles globally in 2015, and aims to sell even more this year.

It has a heritage of producing small SUVs, including the Jimny. The Ignis is powered by a 1.2-litre, four-cylinder Dual-Jet petrol engine that produces 90PS and goes from 0-62 mph 13.5 seconds, and 11.4 for the SHVS. The SHVS is Suzuki's 'mild-hybrid'. It does not actually allow the car to run on pure electric, but does give it a bit of a boost on take-off, which reduces power from the engine and saves fuel. The 1.2-litre engine is incredibly quiet, so much so that I did not hear one coming at me in the car park. The Ignis is available with front-wheel drive, and AllGrip 4x4. Three models are available: SZ3, SZ-T and SZ5, the base car has five seats and a rear bench seat, the other two have two individual, sliding rear seats. Prices range from £10,000 to £14,000 so looks good value for this attractive small SUV.

> *"The 1.2 engine is so quiet I did not hear one coming at me in the car park"*

Thursday Driving something which measures 5.321m so is a bit bigger than the Ignis and nowhere near as easy to park – the refreshed Volkswagen Amarok. It gets revised bumpers and front grille, plus an all-new infotainment system, similar to that in VW's passenger cars.

More importantly, it loses the 2.0TDI engine, but gets a brilliant 3.0 V6 TDI with a choice of power outputs: 204PS and 224PS and, dependent on power, a choice of six-speed auto or a very smooth eight-speed auto. I drove the Amorak on country roads, and on the M40 near Banbury and you do feel 'King of the Road' in this workhorse that appears quite luxurious when you are in the cabin.

Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS
NHS Trust

Head of Fleet Services

Band 8b - £46,625 - £57,640 per annum

Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust covers almost 6,000 square miles of varied terrain, from isolated moors and dales to urban areas, coastline and inner cities. It employs over 5,000 staff and provides 24-hour emergency and healthcare services to a population of more than five million people. The Fleet Services Department supports frontline delivery by commissioning, maintaining and managing 1,200 vehicles.

An exciting opportunity has arisen for a **Head of Fleet Services** to undertake the leading role in the strategic management and transformation of the fleet function across the Yorkshire Ambulance Service area. The post-holder will responsible for developing and managing Trust-wide strategies that deliver the performance, objectives and efficiency targets required by the Trust Board through periods of ongoing change and will be required to develop fleet and logistics strategies, policies and work plans, co-ordinating and managing the department in line with the Trust's vision and values.

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For an informal discussion, please contact Emma Bolton, Director of Fleet, Estates and Facilities, on *01924 584546* or email *emma.bolton@yas.nhs.uk*

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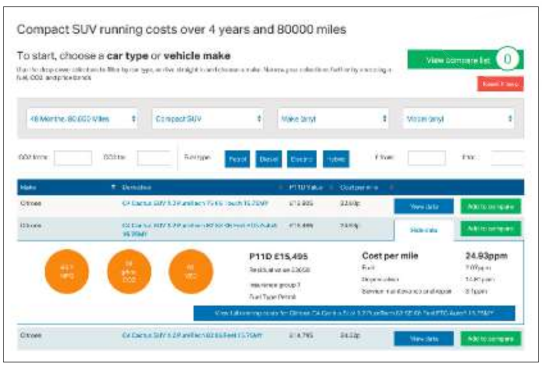

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1.2 85 ZETEC

FORD KA+

Bigger and more refined than predecessor but can it compete in a crowded sector?

The new Ka+ was developed by Ford Brazil and built in India to keep costs down

NEED TO KNOW

- Third-generation Ka is larger and more refined
- Uses current Fiesta underpinnings like original
- Five-door model for the first time; no three-door

By Simon Harris

If recent reports on the size of the average car parking space being too small had relevance – and few doubt it – this can be further illustrated by Ford's newest small car. The Ka+ is the third-generation of this model which replaces its Fiat 500-derived predecessor. Like the original, the Ka+ uses older Fiesta underpinnings to help keep costs down (this one is related to the 2002-2009 Fiesta), but has also seen this model increase in every dimension over its predecessor.

It comes only as a five-door model, unlike the previous Kas, which were three-door, and is almost 0.27metres longer, 0.1m taller and with a wheelbase 0.19m longer.

Rather than competing with city cars such as the Vauxhall Viva, Hyundai i10 and Volkswagen Up, its dimensions are in line with budget small cars like the Dacia Sandero.

Although there were numerous differences between the Fiat 500 and Ford Ka, both cosmetic and mechanical, the problem with that scenario is Ford could never have full control of the product.

The Ka+ has been developed by Ford Brazil and is built in India, to help keep production costs low. But, unlike the Ecosport, the previous global Ford product developed in Brazil, Ford of Europe has taken a greater interest in the Ka+ from the outset, aiming to avoid the frosty reception the compact SUV had on this side of the Atlantic.

Ford sales director Kevin Griffin said: "We don't want to be 'cheap', but we want to drive 'true value' for the customer."

Ford is aiming to sell 15,000 a year in the UK, predominantly in retail, but there is likely to be a high proportion of courtesy cars and Motability.

COSTS

P11D price	£10,240
BIK tax band (2016/17)	19%
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£389
Class 1A NIC	£268
Annual VED	£0 then £30
RV (4yr/80K)	£2,825/28%
Fuel cost (ppm)	9.39
AFR (ppm)	11
Running cost (4yr/80K)	22.1ppm

SPEC

Power (PS)/torque (Nm)	85/112
CO_2 emissions (g/km)	114
Top speed (mph)	104
0-62mph (sec)	13.6
Fuel efficiency (mpg)	56.5

KEY RIVAL

Hyundai i10 1.2 SE	
P11D price:	£10,520
BIK tax band (2016/17)	19%
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£400
Class 1A NIC	£276
Annual VED	£0 then £30
RV (4yr/80k)	£2,725/26%
Fuel cost (ppm)	9.21
AFR (ppm)	11
Running cost (4yr/80k)	21.66ppm

Running cost data supplied by KeeResources (4yr/80k)

Interior space in the Ka+ is one of its more notable features

Power comes courtesy of a 1.2-litre petrol motor with a choice of 70PS and 85PS power outputs, and there are two equipment grades. The entry-level Studio is only available with the 70PS engine, while Zetec is offered with both.

Early orders reflect a high take-up of the more powerful engine, and therefore also the higher Zetec, while options include heated front seats, electronic climate control, City Pack (rear parking sensors and heated, power-folding door mirrors), and rear electric windows.

The most striking feature of the Ka+ is the interior space, with exceptional headroom and legroom, as well as a large boot. It's refined and comfortable for short trips although the driver's seat perhaps lacks sufficient lumbar support for high mileage.

It doesn't have the go-kart feel of the original, but it is still nippy enough around town, while the 85PS engine is also relaxed on the motorway.

In a much more crowded sector than when the original Ka was launched 20 years ago, it will be interesting to see if the Ka+ can repeat its success.

VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.0 ELITE NAV

Regular readers of our long-term reports will note our Astra has spent quite a while in the care of Vauxhall or our local dealer, mostly for an issue with the brake lights.

This has now been fixed, thankfully, but yet another problem has appeared – a warning message mentioning the transmission, and instructing me to 'service soon'.

Vauxhall's in-car assistance service Onstar can offer a remote diagnostic service, and a press of the blue button in the headlining connected me to Miles, their aptly-named operator.

He informed me of an error code, but couldn't diagnose further, and told me to get in touch with the local dealer.

"The Astra was returned with a health check on key parts and areas of safety"

Having called on a Friday, an appointment was offered on a Monday.

As before, the Marshall Vauxhall dealership in Peterborough was busy, but friendly and helpful, and a lift to work was provided.

The cause of the error? Likely the driver riding the clutch at some point – the dealer reset the message, and tested the car to ensure it didn't re-appear. Four hours later, I took a phone call explaining the work, was collected from the office, and the car was handed back, washed and hoovered.

The Astra was also returned with a vehicle health check, for which the dealer looked at key consumable parts and areas of safety, like brakes, tyres and fluids. As to be expected with a car less than a year old, all was well, but it's reassuring to know nonetheless.

Christopher Smith

The look of the Kadjar has drawn mixed comments from *Fleet News* staff

RENAULT KADJAR 1.5 DCI 110 S NAV

Smaller wheels equals bigger savings on BIK tax

COSTS

P11D price	£24,790
BIK tax band	19%
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£942
Class 1A NIC	£666
Annual VED	£0
RV (4yr/80k)	£7,000/29%
Fuel cost (ppm)	6.93
AFR (ppm)	10
Running cost (ppm)	32.41ppm

SPEC

Engine (cc)	1461
Power (PS)	110
Torque (Nm)	260
CO_2 emissions (g/km)	99
Fuel efficiency (mpg)	74.3
Max speed (mph)	112
0-62mph (sec)	11.7
Test mpg	60
Current mileage	15,500

Running cost data supplied by KeeResources (4yr/80k)

By Matt de Prez

It's difficult not to look at our long-term Renault Kadjar test car and think 'the wheels are too small'. Its imposing front end and high-riding body just looks out of place on the 17-inch caster wheels our car is fitted with.

There is, however, a good reason we selected this no-cost option over the 19-inch black and silver wheels that are fitted as standard on this Dynamique S model.

It's all about CO_2; with the more tasteful, larger wheels fitted, the Kadjar emits 103g/km, but swapping to these smaller ones means our car emits 99g/km, dropping it into the 19% benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax band.

This saves the driver around £50 per year in company car tax – admittedly not a life-changing saving, especially when Renault gives no money back for not taking the nicer wheels.

Nonetheless, it means there is no annual VED to pay (otherwise £20) and for those with a 100g/km CO_2 cap it might just put the SUV within reach.

I tried a Kadjar with larger wheels and found grip levels to be better. There was also less body roll, making for a more confident drive.

In part, this may be down to the tyres. On 17-inch wheels the car rides on high-profile Continental EcoSport's, whereas the larger rims are shod with lower-profile SportContact5 rubber.

For the sake of £70 per year, I would prefer to go for the latter.

The Kadjar's looks have been a point of frequent discussion in the *Fleet News* office and my opinion has been swayed.

At first I thought the car looked too bulbous and less prestige than rivals but the car has grown on me, especially in the fetching Flame Red metallic paint. It just stands out as an attractive SUV among more humdrum rivals.

As we have just taken delivery of a new Seat Ateca, one of the Kadjar's key rivals, it will be interesting to pitch the two against each other in the coming months.

"This (smaller wheels) saves the driver around £50 per year in company car tax – not a life-changing saving, especially when Renault gives no money back"

TEST TIMELINE

Start End

Efficient or dynamic, the XE offers both driving experiences

JAGUAR XE

PORTFOLIO 2.0 I4 180PS RWD

Jekyll and Hyde XE becomes an 'ex' as we hand it back

COSTS

P11D price	£46,886 (as tested)
BIK tax band	22%
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£4,126
Class 1A NIC	£1,423
Annual VED	£0, then £30
RV (4yr/80k)	£15,045
Fuel cost (ppm)	7.61
AFR (ppm)	11
Running cost (ppm)	52.5ppm

SPEC

Engine (cc)	1999
Power (PS)	180
Torque (Nm)	430
CO_2 emissions (g/km)	111
Fuel efficiency (mpg)	67.4
Max speed (mph)	140
0-62mph (sec)	7.8
Test mpg	51
Current mileage	6,642

Running cost data supplied by KeeResources (4yr/80k)

By Stephen Briers

So it's farewell to the XE as we take delivery of the Land Rover Discovery Sport (look out for the first review in the February 2 issue).

Pitched against the BMW 3 Series, Audi A4 and Mercedes-Benz C-Class, the Jaguar had its work cut out to make a lasting impression.

The fact that it did is less about its high quality, well-designed interior – preferable to its three rivals, although the sat-nav can take a frustrating 30 seconds to yawn its way into life – than it was its on-road performance.

The XE rivals the sector-leading 3 Series for its handling prowess. I'd even argue that it just edges the BMW, although views in the consumer media are split on this.

However, there is an element of Jekyll and Hyde about the car. In Eco mode it harks back to the oak-panelled, gentleman's brigade of 1980s Jags: reserved if not downright aloof to the suggestion of 'putting your foot down'.

Of course, while a dull driving experience, this behaviour is perfect for economy, as noted in an earlier test when we enjoyed a 10mpg uplift.

In normal mode, the car is the optimum balance between punchy delivery and fuel-sipping efficiency – effectively you decide where to draw the line. It's also extremely comfortable and refined – perfect for motorway driving.

However, flick into sport, and the shackles are removed for German-baiting performance.

The throttle response is sharpened and steering weighting increases for a far more dynamic driving experience. Auf wiedersehen BMW, et al.

The only mode we've not been able to properly test is the ice/snow setting, which automatically dampens acceleration and applies more gradual traction for slippery conditions, mainly because we've had a pretty mild winter to-date.

It'll be typical that the frosty weather will really set in now the car has returned to Jaguar.

Oh wait, didn't I mention the Discovery Sport has arrived...?

TEST TIMELINE

Start – End

MAZDA CX-3 1.5D SE-L NAV

The Mazda CX-3 was named best compact SUV at the 2016 *Fleet News* Awards and compact it is: rear leg room is a restrictive 888mm, which is pretty similar to the Mazda 2 and some way behind key crossover rivals. Also the boot is quite small at 350 litres (although average for the sector).

Having previously driven the Seat Alhambra, the Mazda feels like a toy car in comparison and my kids constantly kicking the back of my seat by accident is fast becoming a frustration.

I also find the driving position cramped and no matter how many adjustments I make to the seat and steering wheel position I just can't quite get comfortable. If you frequently transport rear seat passengers or luggage, then the bigger CX-5 would be a more suitable alternative.

With winter upon us the heated front seats are a welcome addition. But on a particularly frosty morning I noticed ice on the inside of the windscreen (see below) which perhaps points to a seal failure?

On my first long journey the sat-nav proved a little laggy, making roundabouts in particular more challenging as the screen could not keep up with the car's actual road position. Perhaps this was a one-off glitch but worth keeping an eye on.

Luke Neal

AT A GLANCE – THE REST OF OUR FLEET

Seat Ateca SE 1.6 TDi Ecomotive

\+ Sharp bodywork gives kerbside appeal

\- CO_2 values less competitive than rivals

Mini Clubman Cooper 2.0D 150

\+ Significantly larger than the five-door Mini

\- Twin rear doors restrict view

Ford Focus 1.5 tdci titanium

\+ Heated front windscreen

\- Front seats are hard

ANDREW COPE

EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, ESSENTIAL FLEET SERVICES; NON-EXEC, SYNERGY AUTOMOTIVE

Andrew Cope is a great believer in being active and feels that building a strong team around him is important. If he were in 10 Downing Street he would make daily exercise compulsory

I would tell my 18-year-old self to slow down – you have a lot more time than you think to achieve what you want. I was always in too much of rush and should have enjoyed things more. I'd also say you're unlikely to achieve goals – personal or professional – without hard work and determination.

My favourite film is *A Matter of Life and Death*, a romantic fantasy set in England during World War II, starring David Niven and Roger Livesey. Critics rightly named it the second greatest British film ever made behind *Get Carter.*

The most pivotal moment in my life was meeting and working with my first boss and Zenith founder, Henry Dean. An inspirational man who gave me a powerful insight into the type of person I could be.

The book I would recommend to others is *Kidnapped* by iconic Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson – it's the ultimate boy's own novel.

I have hundreds of pet hates. One is semi-detached houses which put stone cladding on one side but not the other which looks incongruous.

If I was Prime Minister for the day I would make two hours of daily exercise compulsory for five-25-year-olds. Being fit brings a wealth of benefits which include being more energised and confident.

My earliest memory associated with a car was when I was about nine. I recall my uncle Richard coming to see us in a green E-type V12 Jaguar which thoroughly impressed and excited me.

The three vehicles I would like in my garage? A useful tractor, a Range Rover because it's the best car ever and a Golf GTi Convertible to savour the summer sunshine.

I enjoy outdoor pursuits like fishing and shooting. I work out at the gym and used to play a lot of competitive sport.

I'm sceptical of those who need to have a legacy. I'd want to be remembered by my children as being a good father and by those who knew me as someone they would miss.

First fleet role In 1988 aged 22 I was a sales assistant with CD Bramall Fleet Services. Still in the sector after all these years, I am fascinated by the industry's seismic changes – and how people access vehicles now compared to then.

Career goals Having started out as a team player before progressing to be team captain, I now see myself in a coaching role where my remit is to drive and support the strategy, development and growth of Synergy Automotive and Essential Fleet Services.

Biggest achievement in business Three key milestones – heading the first management buyout (MBO) of Zenith in 2003. I'm still a shareholder. Leading Zenith's fifth MBO in 2014. The third highlight is re-energising and growing FMG, where I was executive chairman/ investor for its sale to Redde plc at the end of 2015.

Biggest mistake in business Pivotal to success in business – particularly in a service industry – is building and retaining a quality team around you, acting fast and respecting your gut instinct when things aren't right. My biggest mistakes have been made when I stuck with people who did not complement the team dynamic.

Leadership style I work on the adage of never asking someone to do a job that I would not do myself. I'm also a great believer in giving people responsibility and accountability – provided it's within structured parameters – and letting them rise or fall on their own merit.

If I wasn't in fleet I would probably be in music or the visual arts. I've played guitar at hundreds of gigs across the North over the years and enjoyed regular pub residencies.

Childhood ambition When I was kid I wanted to be a farmer or an explorer – like many people I'm more fascinated by the natural world than the world of business.

Next issue: Simon Jackson, managing director, Vehicle Quality Solutions

Area Fleet Sales Managers - 3 Locations

IMPETUS
automotive
customer-driven performance

About Impetus Automotive:

Based in Warwick, the Company is a long established and well regarded consultancy, and part of an AIM-listed Group. As a market leader we provide end to end solutions tailored to our clients' needs, purely within the automotive industry. We support a blue chip client base of vehicle manufacturers through the delivery of consultancy services, IT / data solutions, business process improvement (BPI) and business process outsourcing (BPO). We work within six core channels; parts, service, new vehicles, fleet, accessories and used vehicles. The bespoke solutions we offer afford us a unique position within our sector.

Our Client

Toyota & Lexus Fleet Services is a department within Toyota Great Britain (TGB). Responsible for the Fleet vehicle sales growth across both Toyota and Lexus vehicle brands, this innovative and rapidly growing area of the business is seeing exciting growth driven by new model introduction and occupying an industry leading position in the development of hybrid powertrain vehicles.

Due to growth and the subsequent expansion required within the Fleet Team, we now have the exciting opportunity for individuals who excel within a fast paced, challenging and hugely rewarding environment as Area Fleet Sales Manager's.

The Role:

Deliver a personal sales objective for your own geographical area by both prospecting for new leads and continuing to develop existing accounts. Support all local and national Fleet activities as part of a national sales team. Contribute to the continued development of the Fleet Services offer, to ensure customers and prospects recognize the compelling attributes of the vehicles and have access to the most appropriate method of acquisition.

Target Profile / Experience:

- The successful candidate will be highly motivated by the achievement of their sales objective.
- They will be self-motivated with the perseverance and drive to secure new customer appointments through their own prospecting activity.
- Being in front of the customer is the only way to achieve sales targets, consequently the successful candidate will want to exceed their weekly customer/prospect visit targets.
- An attention to detail with scrupulous planning, measurement and control of a wide variety of activities will be essential to ensure all elements of this role are delivered.
- Sales professionals with credibility and gravitas will excel in this role benefiting from working with an industry leading Global Manufacturer.
- A demonstrable track record of growing sales, overachieving business objectives and understanding/ managing margin is essential.
- Whilst fleet knowledge would be a benefit, a high performing, high calibre sales person with strong commercial acumen is more desirable.

Ideal Locations:

Milton Keynes/Luton, St Albans/Slough, Ilford/Romford

Remuneration:

Competitive salary & Benefits

To apply please send us a copy of your cover letter and CV to
recruitment@impetusautomotive.com

Fuel consumption information is official government environmental data, tested in accordance with the relevant EU directive. New Mokka X range fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km): Urban: 32.8 (8.6)-64.2 (4.4), Extra-urban: 49.6 (5.7)-78.5 (3.6), Combined: 42.2 (6.7)-72.4 (3.9). CO_2 emissions: 155-103g/km.

Official EU-regulated test data are provided for comparison purposes and actual performance will depend on driving style, road conditions and other non-technical factors. 2016-17 tax year. General Motors UK Limited, trading as Vauxhall Motors, does not offer tax advice and recommends that all Company Car Drivers consult their own accountant with regards to their particular tax position. New Mokka X Design Nav (non-ecoFLEX) model illustrated features Amber Orange two-coat metallic paint (£555) and premium LED Adaptive Forward Lighting (£1160), optional at extra cost. * = Includes 12 months of OnStar services from date of first registration and a 3 month/3 GB Wi-Fi free trial period (whichever comes first) effective from the date the customer accepts the nominated network operator Wi-Fi T's&C's. Destination download feature only operates on models fitted with Navi 900 IntelliLink satellite navigation system. The OnStar Services require activation and are subject to mobile network coverage and availability. ** = Wi-Fi Hotspot service requires account with nominated network operator. 4G is subject to mobile network coverage and availability. Charges apply after the free trial period. The OnStar subscription packages could be different from the services included in the free trial package. Check www.vauxhall.co.uk/onstar for terms and conditions, details of availability, coverage and charges. Apple CarPlay and Apple are trademarks of Apple Inc. registered in the U.S. and other countries. Android is a trademark of Google Inc. † = Terms and conditions apply and vehicles are subject to availability. Please call 0870 240 4848 for full details. All figures quoted correct at time of going to press (November 2016).