

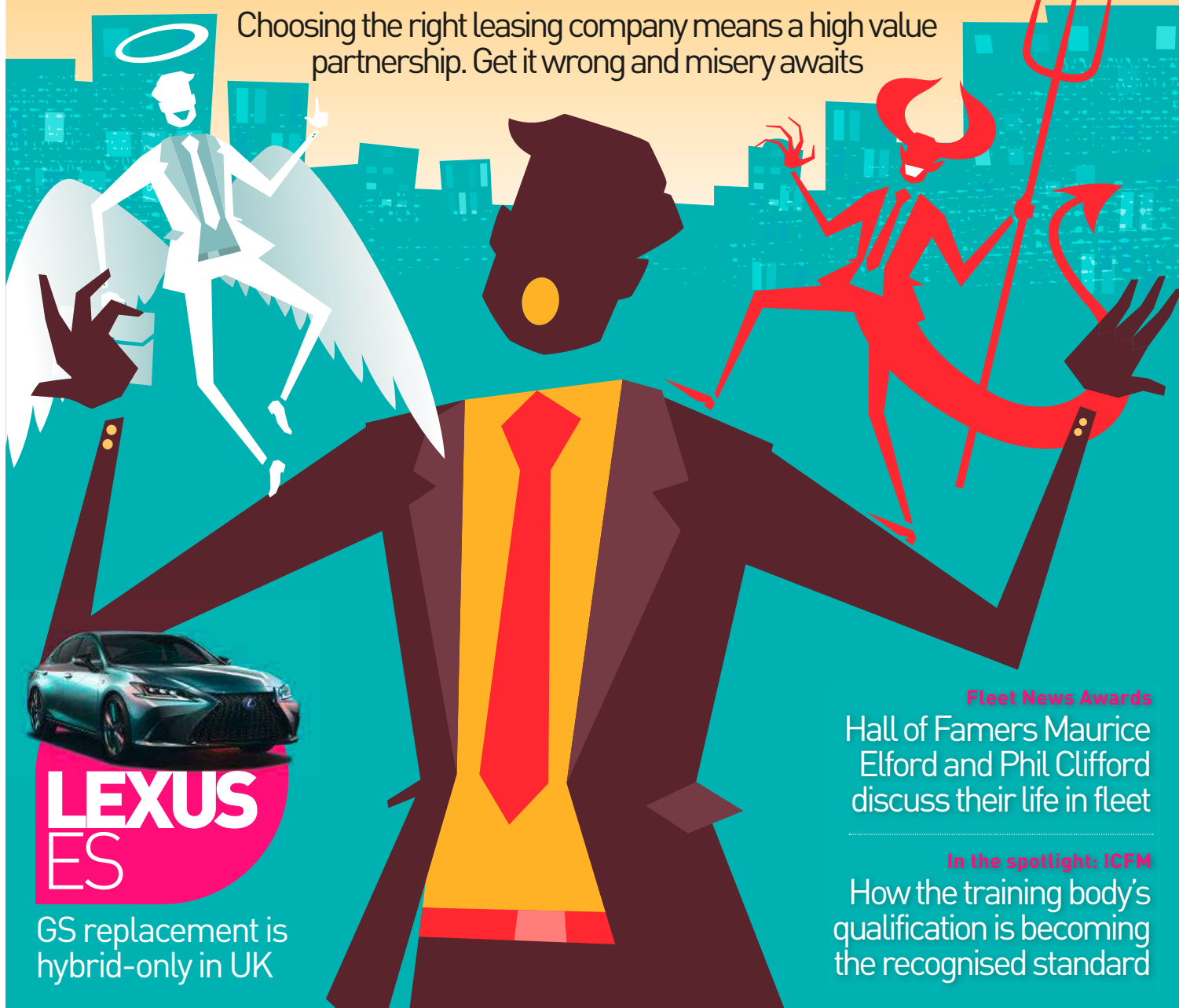
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Three months to get licence-checking consents up-to-date

DVLA ditches old system and issues new mandates to comply with GDPR legislation

By Gareth Roberts

Employers have three months to ensure more than two million fleet drivers have signed new driver licence-checking consent forms.

Documents have to be revalidated under the provisions of new data protection legislation – the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) – which comes into force on May 25.

GDPR requires businesses to comply with a new set of rules designed to safeguard personal data. Driver consent forms from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) for licence-checking by third-party companies fall under the legislation.

DVLA-licensed providers are able to allow employers access to the DVLA driver database using a 'blanket' type of consent that can last for up to three years. Known as the D796 driver

mandate, it allows multiple checks against the database.

However, the form has been ditched by the DVLA because it doesn't comply with GDPR. Instead, drivers must sign a new form – the D906 Fair Processing Declaration – for the consent to continue to be valid.

The Association for Driving Licence Verification (ADLV) estimates two million drivers will have to sign the new form. Non-compliance could see firms hit with heavy fines imposed by the Information Commissioner.

A DVLA spokesman told *Fleet News*: "In readiness for the introduction of GDPR, DVLA has reviewed the Access to Driver Data and Driver Licence Check services which allow employers and other third parties to request driving licence data.

"Consent will no longer be the basis upon which DVLA releases data under GDPR.

"Requests for driving licence data via these services must be supported by a completed and signed D906 Fair Processing Declaration. These forms ensure that drivers understand who is requesting their driving licence data, what the data is, how it is being requested, and for what reason."

The validity of the new D906 form will expire three years from the date of the driver's signature or when the driver stops driving in connection with the company, whichever occurs sooner.

THREE-MONTH WINDOW

The DVLA says that in recognition of the need for employers and fleet managers to meet their duty of care obligations, and the "significant task" in transferring to the new fair processing declaration form, the current consent forms will continue to be valid for a three-month transitional period, from May 25 to August 25.

Malcolm Maycock, chairman of the ADLV, said the industry faced a "mammoth task in a short timeframe" to ensure that all processing is correct and complies fully with the new GDPR legislation.

"The good news is that the new data processing declarations will continue to remain valid for three years from the date permission is granted," he said.

Employers and fleet managers, who are legally obliged to check a drivers' entitlement to

drive, will be under enormous pressure to hit the August deadline.

For its part, the ADLV says its members are advising customers on the implications of the change and how they can ensure compliance with the new DVLA requirements.

However, technical director of the ADLV, Kevin Curtis, said: "This is a huge shift for the DVLA and, indeed, the driving licence checking industry as a whole.

"From a technical and compliance perspective,

all employers and third parties who are responsible for licence checking will need to be able to demonstrate that the new fair processing declaration has been signed by the driver. This will need to be stored in a way that can be audited to ensure compliance with the new GDPR legislation."

The employer will need to show evidence of a clear process where the driver has agreed and signed off the data processing, with a date and time of the declaration.

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Employers, says Curtis, also need to be careful if they are considering using the DVLA's 'view my driving licence' service without obtaining an auditable consent given by the employee.

STORING DATA

He also warned they need to consider how driver information is being stored, along with grey fleet documentation, including road tax, MOT and insurance information.

In a webinar organised by risk management company Driving Monitor, Curtis said: "There are lots of considerations around driver data and identifying that personal data."

For example, it is important that data can be accessed quickly to adhere to the new rules.

"If we don't have systems to get hold of this data, it's going to be very difficult to respond [quickly], particularly if there are going to be a number of access requests coming into the business," he said.

Curtis believes that, over time, GDPR will make paper driver records redundant, because of how difficult it will be to "categorise, secure and access".

"Storing that data is one of the key aspects of GDPR," he said. "We need to look at the systems data is stored in and whether it is in a secure environment."

"For example, do you have Excel spreadsheets [with driver data] and email them around; is the email channel encrypted; are the computers those spreadsheets are saved on encrypted?"

Any paper files in cabinets will also need to be secured, says Curtis. "Paper is one of the biggest risks... you don't generally think about locking cabinets or your desk."

SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

Fleet decision-makers will also need to consider what data is passed to suppliers. Partner companies must be asked and confirm what processes they have in place for managing data and be able to show secure data treatment.

Most suppliers will be well advanced, but if 'no answer' is received, action must be taken. Contracts should state what data fleets will supply and the frequency and the purpose for which it will be used by suppliers.

Furthermore, fleet representative body ACFO says drivers will need to delete data loaded on to vehicle systems (fleetnews.co.uk, March 26).

Satellite navigation systems and mobile phones contain a wealth of data so it is vital to remind drivers to 'delete' the data or reset to 'factory setting' ahead of defleet of a company car or the return of a hire vehicle.

A recent poll of fleet managers by Masternaut revealed that only 20% of respondents were confident they would be fully compliant with the GDPR by the 25 May – 47% reported that they have a long way to go or have just started preparing.

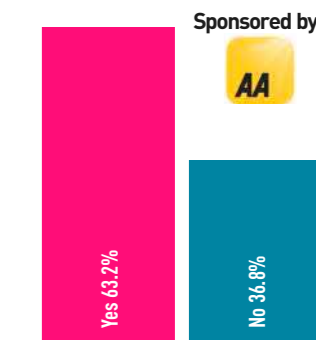
Meanwhile, a poll by *Fleet News* last week (see alongside) revealed around a third of respondents were not confident of meeting GDPR obligations to their fleet drivers.

■ See page 21 for the latest legal opinion on GDPR.

FLEET FACTS AND FIGURES

OPINION POLL

Are you confident about meeting your GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) obligations towards your fleet drivers?



FleetNews view:

The results of our poll suggest that more than a third of respondents are not confident about meeting GDPR obligations ahead of May 25. Our view is it's vital fleet decision-makers are talking to whoever is responsible for data compliance within their organisation to avoid falling foul of the law.

This week's poll: What is the main barrier to introducing (or adding more) pure electric vehicles to your fleet?

fleetnews.co.uk/polls

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"The good news is that the new data processing declarations will continue to remain valid for three years"

Malcolm Maycock, ADLV



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NEWS

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Auto Trader service will challenge established remarketing methods

Online offering aims to speed up time to sell, resulting in improved RVs and cashflow

By Stephen Briers

Auto Trader will shake-up the fleet remarketing established order later this year with the launch of an online service that enables leasing companies and larger fleet operators to sell ex-company cars direct to dealers before the vehicle is de-fleeted, bypassing the traditional auction houses.

The new and used car digital business says this will speed up time to sell, resulting in improved residual values (RVs). It also claims the system will be fairer than the current auction set-up where the buyers, typically dealers, pay for the service, not the seller.

Auto Trader believes the market is ripe for a more transparent approach with both parties sharing the fee. This would enable dealers to make more money from the car itself, increasing the appeal of the service to them.

"We expect a large proportion of cars to be sold before the lease expires," said business development director Ed Hummel.

"Last year, we sold 120,000 vehicles via our trade-to-trade sales platform and 80% were sold within four days.

"Our knowledge of local demand based on consumer search activity combined with our understanding of what dealers are selling quickly, allows us to introduce the right stock to the right dealers at the right time."

Major remarketing companies, such as BCA and Manheim, already sell a growing proportion of their vehicles via online auction. However, they also have huge legacy networks of physical sites, which Auto Trader believes is not necessary to accommodate the ex-fleet vehicles it is targeting with the new service.

"We have the UK's biggest captive audience of dealers and consumers, and we have no legacy issue of physical sites so we can charge less," Hummel said.

Around 13,000 dealers access the Auto Trader website every day. It listed 3.1 million cars to consumers last year, representing 67% of the 4.1 million used cars sold by dealers.

Initially, Auto Trader researched the auction sector by identifying 250,000 ex-lease cars sold via remarketing companies last year, tracking them from collection from the fleet through to when they appeared on its website. On average, it took 34 days.

This broke down to an average of 22 days between the car being collected to being sold at auction, during which time it was refurbished and went through several logistical movements. It took a further 12 days for the dealer to list the car on the Auto Trader website.

"We saw there was an opportunity to do things more efficiently," said Hummel. "We believe we



Ed Hummel expects Auto Trader's knowledge of the market to form a pivotal part of the new service

"We expect a large proportion of cars to be sold before the lease expires"

Ed Hummel, Auto Trader

can at least halve this time by using a proper digital, data-driven process. If we shorten the period, leasing companies will benefit from a better selling price and cash in their bank sooner."

For fleets and leasing companies wanting to sell vehicles before the lease expires, cars will be inspected a couple of weeks prior to coming off fleet, with high quality images and a condition report. This will be carried out by third parties or via Auto Trader's in-house team.

Hummel expects the majority of the cars will be sold without any refurbishment.

"Dealers are usually happy to do the refurb themselves and it's often cheaper, provided any damage is clearly itemised and reflected in the price," he said. "But if a dealer wants a retail-ready car, we have various partners who can offer this service, along with storage if required."

Auto Trader can also take care of any logistics requirement after buying MotorTrade Delivery

last year. This online business offers logistics companies the opportunity to bid for individual delivery jobs, which reduces the pence per mile delivery cost for the customer. It has 700 logistics companies on the platform and moves around 4,600 vehicles every week.

The new, as-yet unnamed, remarketing proposition is undergoing small-scale pilots with a full launch planned for October. Hummel expects to be listing around 40,000 vehicles per month by the end of the year.

"The response we've had from the [Fleet News] FN50 and the top five rental companies has been extremely positive," he said.

The service comes at a time when leasing companies are considering new ways to sell ex-fleet cars direct to dealers or the public.

LeasePlan has announced a 'clicks and bricks' service through a new business subsidiary CarNext.com for ex-fleet vehicles and has indicated that it will phase out selling cars through third party auction sites.

CarNext.com is available in three countries but will expand across Europe, including the UK, over the next few years.

Meanwhile, Arval has been selling cars direct to dealers in the UK since 2010 via MotorTrade. It offers around 500 ex-fleet cars on the site.

However, direct remarketing hasn't always been a success. Lex Autolease abandoned its national remarketing operation, including two used car supermarkets, in 2006 and signed an exclusive deal with BCA.

HMRC urged to publish mileage rates for EVs and plug-in hybrids

Fleet body believes take-up of plug-ins would increase if AFRs were in place

By Gareth Roberts

Fleet decision-makers are being urged to back a petition calling on HMRC to publish mileage reimbursement rates for plug-in cars.

Proposed advisory fuel rates (AFRs) for 100% electric vehicles (EVs), range-extended EVs and plug-in hybrid petrol and diesel models were submitted by fleet representative body ACFO last year (fleetnews.co.uk, May 11, 2017).

However, HMRC refused to change tax rules. Instead, hybrid cars continue to be classified according to the type of fuel used in the hybrid system and pure EVs remain in limbo, because electricity is not regarded as a fuel in law so the fuel benefit charge cannot apply.

ACFO claims the absence of defined mileage reimbursement rates for pure EVs, range extended EVs and plug-in hybrids is a handicap to some organisations including plug-in vehicles on their company car choice lists.

ACFO chairman John Pryor said: "The Government is driving fleets along the plug-in road, but corporate take-up is not in the fast lane. One reason, ACFO believes, is due to there being no definitive mileage rate."

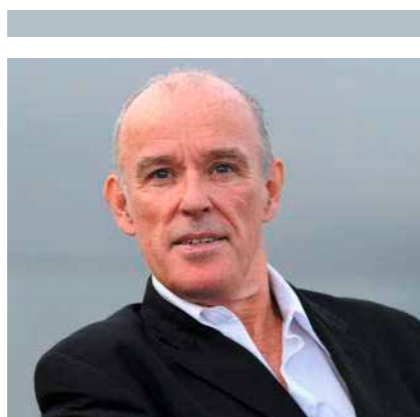
The organisation has launched the petition on its website – www.acfo.org – and via its LinkedIn and Twitter channels, and is planning to collect signatures at Fleet News's Company Car in Action (CCIA) event at Millbrook Proving Ground in Bedfordshire on June 12 and 13.

Pryor said: "Plug-in hybrid vehicles are at their most efficient when driven for as many miles as possible on electric power. Therefore, publishing lower advisory fuel rates for plug-in cars will help encourage drivers to use the car in the optimal environmentally-friendly way."

It is possible for businesses to calculate rates themselves and then obtain permission from HMRC to use them to reimburse drivers.

However, Pryor said: "It can be extremely time-consuming and difficult to obtain all the relevant data to undertake those calculations. Far better for HMRC to publish official figures as it does for petrol, diesel and LPG cars."

AFRs apply where employers reimburse employees for business travel in their company cars, or require employees to repay the cost of fuel used for private travel. Published quarterly, they provide a range



"The Government is driving fleets along the plug-in road, but corporate take-up is not in the fast lane"

John Pryor, ACFO

of rates based on engine size and fuel type (petrol, diesel or LPG), and, when followed, are deemed to be tax-free.

ACFO says company car drivers should be paid from 4ppm (pence per mile) for pure EVs and from 5ppm for plug-in hybrids.

"The figures we have calculated deliver a simple pence per mile mechanism that is both cost-effective for employers so they are seeing a benefit from the more efficient technology, while employees are being fairly reimbursed for business mileage based on the capabilities of the plug-in vehicle technology," said Pryor.

The calculations for plug-in cars follow a similar format to existing AFRs and account for the mean battery capacity from manufacturers' information, weighted by available models and average battery capacity (kWh).

Electric mileage range, adjusted downwards by 15% to take account of real driving conditions and impact on manufacturers' stated range, also helps determine the rates, as does the average battery recharge cost.

It allows the plug-in rates to use the same AFR bandings based on engine capacity; they are simply adjusted for electric mileage range. The greater the zero-emission mileage range of a vehicle, the lower the reimbursement rate.

More than eight out of 10 respondents to a Fleet News poll said mileage reimbursement rates which reflect real-world driving for hybrid company cars should be published by HMRC (fleetnews.co.uk, November 2, 2017).

ACFO says it intends to keep up the pressure on HMRC and hopes that fleet decision-makers and the wider industry will support the petition.

Pryor said: "We will submit the petition to HMRC in early autumn in the hope that the Government will make an announcement in this year's Budget that it will introduce advisory fuel rates for plug-in cars."

ACFO argues it is vital that rates are published, particularly given company car benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax rates for ultra-low emission vehicles from April 2020 will be linked to a car's zero-emission mileage range.

"Advisory fuel rates for plug-in cars are essential," concluded Pryor.

"The rates we have provided to HMRC and the details as to how the figures were arrived at are as straightforward to apply as the current simple-to-use system for petrol, diesel and LPG cars."



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CO ₂ EMISSIONS G/KM	41	179	149	133	112
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1. 13% BIK compared to the average rate of 30% for the other vehicles shown. 13% BIK rate for the 2018/19 tax year.

2. Official EU MPG test figure shown as a guide for comparative purposes and is based on the vehicle being charged from mains electricity. This may not reflect real driving results. 3. Up to 33 mile EV range achieved with full battery charge. 542 miles achieved with combined full battery and petrol tank. Actual range will vary depending on driving style and road conditions.

4. Domestic plug charge: 5 hours, 16 Amp home charge point: 3.5 hours, 80% rapid charge: 25mins. 5. Congestion Charge application required, subject to administrative fee. 6. On The Road prices shown include the Government Plug-in Car Grant and VAT (at 20%) and First Registration Fee. Model shown is a 18MY Outlander PHEV 4h with pearlescent paint at £39,605 including the Government Plug-in Car Grant. On The Road prices for an Outlander PHEV range from £32,305 to £43,555 and include VED, First Registration Fee and the Government Plug-in Car Grant. Metallic/pearlescent paint extra. Prices correct at time of going to print. For more information about the Government Plug-in Car Grant please visit www.gov.uk/plug-in-car-van-grants. The Government Plug-in Car Grant is subject to change at any time, without prior notice. Fuel figures shown are official EU test figures, to be used as a guide for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.

Outlander PHEV range fuel consumption in mpg (lts/100km): Full Battery Charge: no fuel used, Depleted Battery Charge: 51.4mpg (5.5), Weighted Average: 166.1mpg (1.7), CO₂ emissions: 41 g/km.

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Vehicles may be obliged to have CO₂ monitors fitted as standard

Vehicles that fail in-life emission testing could be recalled

By Gareth Roberts

New cars and vans could be fitted with real-world CO₂ monitoring technology and regularly tested to check they are complying with emissions targets.

The plans, from the European Commission, are aimed at further tightening new vehicle emissions-testing legislation - the Worldwide harmonised Light vehicle Test Procedure (WLTP).

Vehicles would have to provide drivers with accurate real-world figures for fuel economy and CO₂ emissions through standardised hardware or software.

Martin Ward, manufacturer relationships manager at Cap HPI, believes fitting the new emissions-testing technology could come at a cost to the fleet market.

"The downside," he said, "is the smaller, cheaper car, which doesn't have an on-board computer, would have to have one fitted. That will come at a cost and the manufacturer will more than likely pass that cost on to the end-user."

Fleet News has seen discrepancies in test vehicles when real-world fuel economy figures from the on-board computer have been compared to actual fuel used and miles driven.

The problem, according to Nick Molden, founder and CEO of Emission Analytics, is the fuel economy figure currently provided by a vehicle's on-board computer could, theoretically, be



"We aim to better protect our health and environment"

Elżbieta Bieńkowska, European Commission

a random number. He explained: "The legal requirement at the moment is to have a dashboard mpg reading, but it doesn't stipulate that it has to be accurate."

The commission has also proposed that type approval authorities will have to check the emissions of vehicles already in circulation - so called 'in-service conformity' testing.

It says the tests will apply to customers' cars and vans up to 3.5 tonnes approved after September 1, 2019, and registered after September 1, 2020, for the first five years or 100,000km (62,000 miles), whichever is sooner.

The required minimum of vehicles to be tested will be 5% per manufacturer, per year, with test vehicles requiring a full service history and only original manufacturer parts used for the replacement of any emissions-related parts.

If the sample size fails the emissions test, the maker would have to get type approval to fix the problem, which could, in turn, lead to a recall.

"ACFO welcomes measures to improve air quality and reduce the impact on our environment from vehicles," said chairman John Pryor. "But we still lack the clarity of strategy and operational implementation, and ongoing management of the changes."

"There are many unanswered questions here that Government must tackle to enable us to understand exactly how this will be delivered."

"How will these devices be deployed and, more importantly, how will the in-life measurements work? This needs careful handling or could result in yet more confusion for fleets and retail consumers alike."

Fleet decision-makers are already concerned how new emission values will impact company car costs (*Fleet News*, April 19).

The Government previously announced the new WLTP drive-cycle will replace the former NEDC test for tax purposes from April 2020.

However, the Treasury told *Fleet News* last month, it still has not made a decision over how company car tax and road tax will take account of the new emissions-testing regime.

The UK's largest vehicle leaser, Lex Autolease, says the lack of clarity around the longer-term tax implications for fleets is causing buying decisions to be delayed and contracts extended.

All recently launched and facelifted models have been tested under the WLTP regime since September, while it will be used for all new cars registered from this coming September.

The Commission's new CO₂ monitoring plans, which have been rubber-stamped by the EU, will be scrutinised by the European Parliament and Council over the next three months. If approved, they will be adopted from January 1, 2019.

European Commissioner Elżbieta Bieńkowska said: "By continuously tightening the screws on the way emissions tests are conducted, we aim to better protect our health and environment, restore consumer confidence, and add yet another incentive for a quick shift to zero emissions vehicles."



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Fleets should prepare for rapid shift to new technologies

One-in-10 vehicles will be a plug-in within five years, says charging firm director

By John Maslen

Fleet decision-makers need to prepare for "dramatic changes" caused by a rapid shift to new technologies, including electric vehicles (EVs), experts have warned.

A shift to a so-called 'ACES' fleet (autonomous, connected, electric, shareable) will require expert management, particularly in terms of retraining employees to use new vehicles safely and efficiently.

Industry analyst Chris Jones, vice-president of Canalis, told a 'Driving the Future - Electrifying the Industry' conference in London: "The eco-system is changing dramatically, and it is becoming very much more complex."

"Vehicles will be more autonomous, connected, electric and shareable and managing the fleet will be a challenge."

Some of the most immediate issues facing fleet managers relate to EVs.

For example, managing how vehicles are used is important, including retraining drivers to adapt their driving styles to make the most of battery power and building trust in new technology.

Training requirements could include drivers who are reluctant to use electric vehicles because of concerns such as range anxiety.

Stephen Irish, managing director of EV specialist Hyperdrive Innovation, said: "Range anxiety is a concern because most people presume they are driving more miles than they actually are. If you provide a battery-powered vehicle capable of completing a long journey that the driver only makes twice a year, then you are carrying that around for the rest of the time."

Fleets also need to be able to review the potential benefits of EVs and how they can be used to meet business needs.

Recent analysis of data by leasing company ALD proved the viability of EVs in most cases. Its research showed 77% of daily journeys completed by its company car drivers were

"The eco-system is changing dramatically, and it is becoming very much more complex"

Chris Jones, Canalis

less than 100 miles a day, well within the range of the latest electric vehicles, and 52% were less than 50 miles a day (*Fleet News*, March 8).

The conference heard that, during driving, constant rapid acceleration or allowing batteries to fall to a very low state of charge can damage the power unit and its residual value.

Irish warned that an abused battery may only retain one-third of its potential charge compared to one that has been treated properly.

This could raise training challenges for fleet operators if they are to maximise a used EV's value and the value of its batteries for second-life use in sectors such as home energy storage. Irish said: "Battery pack performance is governed by the weakest cell, so there is work on grading battery packs for second life."

Price guides are reviewing how to grade used EVs to assess both the vehicle and the condition of the battery when setting a value.



While internal combustion engines currently dominate fleets, companies may be tempted to put any concerns about preparing for a zero-emission future to one side, but new model plans are set to drive explosive growth in the UK parc of plug-in vehicles.

Tom Callow, director of communications and strategy at Chargemaster, said there are 150,000 plug-in vehicles on the road today, but by 2022 there will be a million, rising to five million by 2027 and 20 million by 2037.

Callow said: "Five years ago, one in every 862 cars sold was a plug-in model, today that is one in 51 and in five years' time, it will be one in 10."

"Five years ago, there were just 10 plug-in models, today there are 50, but in three years there will be 150 based on current production plans and in five years' time there will be 200. Most of those new offerings will be pure EVs."

Although concerns have been raised about the impact such rapid growth will have on the power grid, speakers agreed they didn't envisage any problems with capacity.

Charging patterns show that most 'refuelling' is done at home, where cars can fuel intelligently based on grid demand and the cost of energy.

Only a fraction of drivers have a need for rapid or super rapid public charging points, which would replenish a battery in just a few minutes.

Even so, with demand expected to leap, the number of public charging points will rise rapidly. The national charging network will grow from 16,000 plug-in points today to exceed the number of traditional fuel pumps by the end of next year, as the network reaches 70,000. It will eventually rise to more than 100,000.

One concern for fleet operators will be reliability of the charging network, with Callow raising concerns that up to half of chargers in some areas are inoperative.

He urged companies to review data on the up-time of charging networks before committing to a supplier, pointing to Chargemaster's record of 98%.

Fleet operators were also urged to ensure the electricity powering EVs comes from renewable sources, otherwise pollution is just moved from the urban environment to the power station.

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Company Car in Action will provide fleet managers, decision-makers and key influencers with everything they need to know about electric, hybrid and hydrogen-powered vehicles.

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Jaguar will be present with its all-new I-Pace, the brand's first electric car

with a range of 300 miles.

Visitors will also be able to drive the new Nissan Leaf for the first time at the event.

BMW is bringing a range of electric and hybrid models to test.

Toyota & Lexus will have a full range of hybrids to drive, plus the hydrogen-powered Mirai.

With more than 150,000 plug-in vehicles on the road in the UK, and an

increasing number of manufacturers committing to a future without pure internal combustion engine models, the viability of alternative fuel types in fleets is again under scrutiny.

Industry experts from leading manufacturers and key suppliers will be on hand to discuss the shift to new fuel technologies, giving invaluable insight into the viability of an ultra-low emission fleet.

Chargemaster is sponsoring the zone. Its team will be there to discuss charging needs and concerns.

Glass's will provide the latest residual value forecasts.

Go Ultra Low will have experts at the EV Zone advice centre and Ben Wicks, senior campaign manager, will be speaking at both debates on EV grants and running a low emission fleet.

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Lexus range gives confidence
that sales goals can be achieved

Lexus expands fleet offering in bid to increase sales volumes by 50%

Manufacturer hopes new hybrid models will help it achieve 20,000 units target

By Andrew Ryan

Lexus is targeting increased registrations to businesses and fleets after revamping the way its dealers interact with these groups.

The manufacturer has historically focused its fleet business through six dealers but, from January this year, it has increased its number of business centres to 30.

Ewan Shepherd, director of Lexus, said the previous arrangement meant "the whole network didn't really try hard in reaching out to the local fleet market", because it was centred around those six dealers.

He added: "They have now refocused their attention on untapping the opportunities on their doorstep which they didn't before. But we have now engaged many more dealers in the network with reaching out to small businesses.

"All manufacturers have fleet bonus programmes, but we are differentiating the rewards for effectively selling to small businesses in their local market area and we want to do that for two reasons.

"One is selling locally, and the second reason is to give a level of service to fleet customers which is exceptional.

"We don't just check a vehicle has been sold, we check the level of satisfaction in the experience of that particular customer and we reward [the dealer] against that.

"What we are trying to get is loyalty to the centre, but also advocacy for Lexus in the area.

"We are already seeing [dealers] are realising that there is quite a lot of interest, partly because hybrid is now in the ascendancy, but also because we have got a broader range than we have had before."

"We have no big aspirations to sell big volume"

Ewan Shepherd,
Lexus



"Our brand is quite niche. We don't go into the market expecting or planning to offer big discounts and we have no big aspirations to sell big volume.

"I would see the people who have bought Jaguar XFs are those who we probably will get a few inquiries from, and I'm already hearing that this is, indeed, the case."

As a brand, Lexus has a target to increase its sales volume across Europe to 100,000 from the 74,000 it registered in 2016.

The UK's contribution to that goal is to increase its sales volumes by almost 50% to about 20,000 units by 2021. Last year it registered 12,670 cars, 1,245 fewer than in 2016.

However, this year, to the end of March it registered a total of 3,006 vehicles, a 4% increase (+118) compared to the same period last year.

Shepherd is confident this goal can be achieved, and will be aided by Lexus's wide range of hybrid models, which will include a compact UX cross-over next year.

"We see already from some of the national enquiry levels over the past 12 months that there is a natural migration to alternative fuel vehicles and petrol electric hybrids," he said.

"Our approach in general terms with fleet is that we are never going to be the biggest fleet brand in the UK market because our whole aspiration is to sell only 20,000 cars a year by 2021 and this is a fraction of the amount of our competitors.

"We don't go into the market expecting or planning to offer big discounts. We have taken a different approach.

"We want to have an appropriate foothold, but for SMEs, user-choosers and for people who want something a bit different."

Shepherd was speaking at the European unveil of the ES executive saloon, which will replace the GS in Lexus's current UK line-up at the end of the year (for more see page 46).

The seventh generation ES will be the first to be introduced to the UK and markets in western Europe.

Available from next January, the UK range will feature the ES 300h, powered by a new self-charging hybrid system.

The fourth generation self-charging hybrid drive system is coupled with a 2.5-litre Atkinson cycle four-cylinder petrol engine with a lighter, more compact and more power-dense electric motor.

Total system power is 215PS/160kW and combined cycle fuel economy is from 60.1mpg.


Shepherd expects it to sell 1,000 units for the full year – more than double the GS's 2017 figure.


He said: "ES is in a segment which is a busy one in the UK market with the three German brands in there and, of course, Jaguar.


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THE BIG PICTURE

By Stephen Briers, editor, *Fleet News*



A growing number of leasing companies are spreading their wings into the retail sector.

Arval revealed plans earlier this year to offer PCH and maintenance services to the employees of existing customers who do not qualify for a company car, while in March Zenith launched Zen Auto, which offers PCH to any member of the public. Others have their own pilot schemes.

Interestingly, Zen Auto enables someone to select, order, go through credit check and have the purchase document emailed to them all online.

Zenith believes it is the future of car retailing in the consumer market.

“Franchised dealers could see valuable sources of income eroding”

Meanwhile, LeasePlan is launching CarNext.com, a used car leasing initiative to sell ex-fleet cars to the public, and Zenith intends to follow suit once it builds up sufficient stock from Zen Auto.

Such services put pressure on franchised dealers who could see valuable sources of income from car finance and used car sales eroding. Might they evolve into agents, paid a handling fee to deliver a service?

Elsewhere, Auto Trader is heading from retail into corporate with a new service to enable leasing companies to sell ex-fleet cars to dealers before they come off lease.

They are all eyeing up the opportunities offered by broadening their reach across the UK's 37 million vehicle parc, not least as discussions hang in the air about the future of car ownership and usership and concerns about company car drivers being taxed out of the market.

As they exert greater control over a wider slice of the new car market, they will become responsible for remarketing higher volumes of used cars.

Ultimately, their influence across the auto industry will rise.

YOUR LETTERS

ROAD SAFETY

Use technology to drive down insurance costs

EDITOR'S PICK



Maria Cole wrote:

Having read 'One-third of drivers feel all cars should be fitted with dashcams' (fleetnews.co.uk, May 4), all of our vehicles are fitted with them.

There has also been a lot of discussion regarding black boxes being compulsory in all vehicles in order to gain cheaper insurance.

If you are equipped with a dashcam and black box to record driving style then you should be entitled to cheaper insurance quotes – even for younger drivers.

Insurance prices are becoming ridiculous because of those that do not abide by the law or those

scammers that stage accidents to make a claim.

This way you have video evidence and recorded data to prove the circumstance of events.

To create careful, considerate and safe drivers, don't give our new drivers the choice. Put it on all cars, make it compulsory for all vehicles, and demand consideration for cheaper car insurance from insurance companies.

I consider myself a good and safe driver, who already has dashcam on my car, and would be happy to consider telematics as well if it meant cheaper insurance.

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

DIESEL DEBATE

Mixed messages from the politicians

Billywhizz wrote:

Having read 'DS confirms all model will be electric or hybrid by 2025' (fleetnews.co.uk, May 2), diesel is the devil's work if you listen to the politicians, but fossil fuel or nuclear generated electricity is OK by them.

Latest stat says one electric charging point for every 27,000 motorists at the moment. Can you imagine the queues?



FUEL PRICES

Minimise your exposure to price changes

Andy Allen, head of BP fuel cards in the UK, wrote:

Having read 'Fuel prices to increase further after worst rise for 16 months' (fleetnews.co.uk, May 3), if you look at other industries that carry exposure to volatile oil or commodity prices they typically utilise tools to minimise their exposure to price changes and firm up margins.

Airlines are a good example. They sell flight tickets six-nine months in advance so have a fixed income but the fuel for their flights is priced on a Platts marker at the period they operate the flight. They systematically hedge their exposure to fuel prices or they would go out of business.

Derek Webb added:

The OPEC meeting last year to improve the price of a barrel of oil seems to have done the trick for the cartel – an illegal body in every other industry. The most telling comment I read was the outrageous price the motorway services charge for fuel, surely no companies allow their drivers to use them, do they?

GREY FLEET

Telematics can keep grey fleet in check

Miles Keeble wrote:

Having read 'Companies need to ensure grey fleet drivers stay safe and legal' (fleetnews.co.uk, April 24), a reasonably priced telematics solution is the way to monitor grey fleet.

The return on investment is straightforward with compliance with health and safety requirements at the top of the list. There is plenty you can do to tailor the solution to suit the drivers as well; it doesn't have to all be 'big brother'.

Eric Bristow added:

As a fleet manager, I know the importance of managing the grey fleet. However, getting this across to the senior management is proving difficult. There is a lot of "it will not happen to us" attitude to contend with.

AIR QUALITY

Particulates and CO₂ still a concern

Adam Nell wrote:

Having read 'Bosch diesel breakthrough may slow electric vehicle adoption' (fleetnews.co.uk, April 30), this new technology certainly fulfils the fantasies of the Bosch board, who stand to lose heavily from the decline in diesel sales.

Whether it works in practice, is durable and reliable and whether it is cheap enough to deploy all remain to be seen.

Meanwhile, diesels also emit particulates and CO₂ and those pollutants on their own should doom diesel technology to an early phase-out.

Gordy added:

Less talk more action. If this (breakthrough) is fact, it should be rolled out now.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Fear of the unknown

David M wrote:

Having read 'UK electric vehicle parc up by 128% in past three years' (fleetnews.co.uk, April 26), the more electric cars we see on the road, the greater the confidence will be in wanting to switch to a fully electric car.

EVs are coming down in price with Bloomberg saying their cost will fall in line with petrol and diesel vehicles by 2025.

The charging infrastructure is growing at a rapid pace throughout the UK, as, too, is the (mileage) range of batteries.

There is a natural fear of the unknown or untried that we need to overcome.

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Burning question:
What three figures from history would you invite to dinner?

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COMMENT

FLEET OPINION

DATA PROTECTION

Understanding drivers' GDPR rights

By Djamel Souici

Misunderstandings around the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) being introduced later this month (May 25) is causing something of a headache for fleet managers.

GDPR defines the processing of personal data as lawful if certain criteria apply. Consent has been the most common basis for the lawful processing of this data under its predecessor, the Data Protection Act. With GDPR, this may change.

GDPR requires consent to be specific, unambiguous and freely given and such consent can be withdrawn at any time. However, consent may prove the least appropriate basis for processing driver data by a fleet operator.

There are circumstances where a business has a legitimate right to hold certain data without explicit permission. It is important to establish and document whether there is a lawful basis for processing the data, other than consent.

The likelihood is that most fleets will avoid the need to gain driver consent and instead cite legitimate interest or the performance of a contract as the basis for processing.

'Legitimate interest' as a basis for processing means fleet operators must define their legitimate interest for the processing of personal data and there must be a necessity for the business to do so.

The operator needs to ensure a balance between its interests and drivers' rights and that drivers are informed about the processing. A legitimate interest, dependent on a case-by-case review could, for example, be fraud prevention or on safety issues.

Alternatively, it could be necessary for the performance of a contract with the data subject, for example where an employee is paid for driving time and telematics data is used to record these times. In this instance, processing is covered by the contract of employment.

GDPR is an important commitment to improving data security and the onus is rightly on companies to comply. That said, it is not intended to undermine businesses.

Understanding the implications of the legislation really is key to ensuring you protect the rights of your drivers, while continuing to operate efficiently.



Djamel Souici
general counsel and
chief legal officer for
Masternaut



Simon West-Oliver
director of sales and
marketing at Drive
Software Solutions

VEHICLE CHOICE

Time to plan for switch from diesel

By Simon West-Oliver

When it comes to diesel fleets, vehicle make and engine choice are integral to operational expenditure efficiency and bottom-line profitability.

A move to 'cleaner' engine types seems self-defeating if it simultaneously generates higher running costs.

Many point to small numbers of pure electric vehicles (EVs) sold in 2017. Although average monthly new registrations on vehicles eligible for the plug-in car grant strengthened to 2,600 last year, an average of just 1,133 per month, only 13,597 were pure electric new registrations.

The reticence around EV buying is not simply about the limited choice, limited re-charging points and price premium compared with internal combustion engine-powered vehicles. It is also about fear of erosion of residual values (RVs).

There are simply not enough EVs in the secondhand market to know precisely what they are worth. Low RVs ramp up the total cost of ownership (TCO) which, itself, pushes up monthly lease payments – a big issue for fleets.

That said, as soon as the TCO for EVs regularises, and moves into line with diesel- and petrol-driven cars, that will clear the way for lease-dependent fleets to begin migration.

So the only question is, will the current sustained 'demonisation of diesel' cause fleet diesel devotees to move to hybrids and EVs as soon as lease replacement dates come around, or instead wait for the TCO numbers to regularise?

You could argue that, with new national tax hikes on diesel vehicles and potential local costs through clean air zones, even the cleanest and most fuel-efficient diesel models must now be looking less attractive to fleet buyers.

TCO calculations could well move against diesel vehicles if more pollution taxes get slapped on them, ICFM, the fleet management trade body, has already warned.

For larger fleets, the move away from diesel is likely to be a slow process. Defra, which has already begun migration of its 4,000-strong petrol- and diesel-powered fleet to petrol-hybrid or pure electric, reckons it will take seven years to complete the switch.

Regardless of how long it takes, it's clearly time to begin putting migration plans in place.

"Fleet operators must define their legitimate interest for the processing of personal data"

"For larger fleets, the move away from diesel is likely to be a slow process"



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Unknowns surrounding CAZs are 'such a headache' for fleet bosses

Awards finalists swap notes on how they are adjusting to EVs and clean air legislation

By Andrew Ryan

An increasing number of companies are electrifying their fleets as the need to lower vehicle emissions increases.

This may be to further their environmental credentials or to prepare for the introduction of low emission zones, which will affect many combustion-engined vehicles.

But there is still plenty of uncertainty: affected cities do not have to submit their final plans for Clean Air Zones (CAZs) until December this year ahead of their introduction in 2020, while no benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax bands have been announced post the 2020/21 tax year.

The charging infrastructure for electric vehicles is also creating challenges for fleets.

The issue dominated the debate at a recent roundtable, sponsored by Škoda, which was held at the Amba Hotel in London's Marble Arch. The discussion was attended by finalists of this year's Fleet News Awards.

"You would have thought that, the greater the concentration (of EVs), the cheaper it would become, but, in fact, we are finding the opposite"

Duncan Webb, Royal Mail

200

number of vans at Royal Mail's Mount Pleasant site suitable to go electric in terms of operating model

Fleet News: Who has already added electric vehicles to their fleet?

Duncan Webb, commercial director, Royal Mail: The electrification of our fleet is the big innovation we are trying to get through and we've probably got one of the most suitable fleets to apply that model to. We have a depot-based delivery operation and, for example, at our Mount Pleasant site we have probably got 200 vans there and every one could be electric in terms of operating model, but it just won't work in terms of the build of the infrastructure. You would have thought that, the greater the concentration, the cheaper it would become, but, in fact, we are finding the opposite. As soon as you say you want 10 electric vehicles (EVs) in a particular location, the building infrastructure or street infrastructure just can't do it, so you are having to pay for upgrades. You can get a fuel card in six minutes, but it's taken one of my guys six months to get the infrastructure built in and that's for only 100 electric vans.

Graham Telfer, fleet manager, Gateshead Council: It's the infrastructure that has really hamstrung the EV market. The vehicle manufacturers have stepped up to the plate, but there are too many electricity supply companies involved in this and too many companies with different charging posts and systems who want to bill you as well.

Fraser Crichton, transport manager, Dundee City Council: We are in a different situation in Scotland in that the Scottish Government stepped in and they have taken control of the back office. Every charging post is one card. What I see down here is that it is all over the place.

Graham Telfer: You'll never get that unified approach in the

rest of the UK like you have in Scotland because there are too many privateers involved. It should have been done throughout the UK as it is in Scotland.

FN: What changes are you making to your fleet make-up ahead of the introduction of low emission zones and clean air zones?

Duncan Webb: We fear everybody is going to have a different scheme and potentially a different back office for processing whatever emissions zone they introduce. If Birmingham or Derby says 'these are the rules, you can't use diesels here' we wouldn't have been able to cope with it, so we've had to get petrol vans in ready for 2019/20.

Paul Tate, commodity manager, Siemens: The unknowns at the moment are such a headache within our industry. We only know a certain amount about the CAZs and all these towns and cities have been pulled into plans to meet air quality targets quite quickly. We don't even know what they are yet, but we are only talking about two or three years down the line. Fleets operate vehicles for three, four, five or six years so you could quite easily make a big investment and get caught with your trousers down.

Alison Moriarty, fleet risk and compliance manager, Skanska: You don't know what the next bit of advice is that is going to overturn the last bit of advice. We were all obsessed with CO₂, but some of what we would call really clean vehicles have NOx emissions which are horrific.

FN: How have you prepared for the deployment of electric vehicles?

Duncan Webb: The drivers who are using the electric vans have had about two-hour specific familiarisation training. We've split the vans between different depots around the country and they are used by people who want to use them. We asked for volunteers so you try to get the employees who are already there from a psychological perspective.

Fraser Crichton: We got a union representative to buy into what we were doing and that was key for us.

Paul Tate: We have quite a few unions with us and as long as we engage with them at the start and explain the reasons we want to do something, they are normally quite receptive. It is when you start forcing things on people without engaging with them that you encounter the problems.

FN: How have the BIK tax increases and changing air quality legislation affected your replacement cycles?

Keith Cook, deputy financial controller, Computacenter: Where my drivers have been lucky is if they have been in interim vehicles for some time, their BIK is only committed for a six- or 12-month mini-lease.

Paul Tate: We've just introduced three-year cycles and we are looking at introducing two years as well. We are not going to alter the amount the company pays, but we will give the employee the choice of flexing.

Keith Cook: That's exactly what we are going to do. The employees should realise they can have a vehicle over four years without a trade up, or if they want it over three years it's only a £20 trade up.

Paul Tate: I saw some interesting stats indicating that often if it's a new product that comes to market and the manufacturer is trying to get it into the second-hand market, then a two-year lease is the absolute sweet spot: you can get a two-year lease cheaper than the four-year one.

Keith Cook: If there's no extra cost to the business, happy days. What we've done with special offers is that drivers can have them if they are available at the right time. If they are up for renewal in six months' time and that sweet spot has gone, that's just unfortunate, but there may be a sweet spot on another vehicle and we can get our drivers into that. Everyone gets the same grade of vehicle but if they want to experience the special offer or the sweet spot, they've got to expect there will be a disparity and they've been mature enough to say, yeah, we'll take pot luck.

DELEGATES



Keith Cook, deputy financial controller, Computacenter



Gary McRae, corporate fleet manager, Dundee City Council



Fraser Crichton, transport manager, Dundee City Council



Bob Murphy, electric vehicle administrator, Edinburgh College



Graham Telfer, fleet manager, Gateshead Council



Stewart Taylor, fleet manager, Police Scotland



Duncan Webb, commercial director, Royal Mail



Paul Tate, commodity manager, Siemens



Alison Moriarty, fleet risk and compliance manager, Skanska



Monica Guise, sustainable logistics manager, University of Birmingham



James Watson, contract hire and leasing manager, Skoda UK



Steve Hopkins, area fleet manager, Skoda UK

Paul Tate: We proposed two-, three-, four- and five-year terms to the business and it said 'let's start with three and four and see how that goes'. It's an easy switch for the leasing company and in this age of the unknowns, employees are willing to pay more for their rental so they have more certainty. You can say to the employee that if they are really concerned, then take a lesser car for two years, which will be the same cost, and then make a longer-term decision in the future when there will be more certainty.

Alison Moriarty: We fell into the trap with hybrids and electric vehicles of really pushing them, and I think the people who got them for the right reasons understand that even though the BIK tax implications will make them less attractive, it is not down to us. But the people who took them just so they had less to pay are the ones who are saying 'I want to get out of this lease now'. Going forward, shorter leasing is the sort of thing we are going to have to look at because things change so quickly. Also, because we work UK-wide, we might have a contract director who works in Newcastle and when that contract ends, he might work in central London. Although he has got a car for a certain amount of time, we have to think that, as a business, we moved him into a completely different ball game, so there is a lot for us to look at.

MEET THE UK'S TOP FIVE LEASING COMPANIES *at Fleet Live*

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9-10 October, 2018
WHERE?
NEC, Birmingham
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fleet-live.co.uk

Experts from the UK's leading leasing companies will be on hand to advise Fleet Live delegates on the wide range of issues facing fleet operators. The introduction of WLTP emissions testing and clean air zones, as well as the diesel versus petrol versus alternatively fuelled vehicle debate are high on the agenda, according to Richard Dainty, fleet marketing manager, Daimler Fleet Management.

He adds that Fleet Live will be a good opportunity for fleets to discuss, "future-proofing car/travel policies and the introduction of new mobility products".

TCH Leasing will promote its new outsourcing department at Fleet Live, showcasing the wide range of services the company can offer customers, liberating employees to concentrate on their core business.

"You can outsource driving licence checks, MID updates, issuing and renewing fuels cards, MOT and service reminders, travel abroad documentation, manufacturer recalls, mileage captures, cherished registration transfer, parking fines and speeding tickets," said Ranjit Grewal, head of business development, TCH Leasing.

With the weakness of sterling inflating new car prices during the Brexit negotiations and driving up the cost of leasing by as much as 9% over the past year, according to accountants UHY Hacker, Fleet Live offers a convenient opportunity for fleet managers and procurement staff to meet alternative suppliers and discuss solutions

to keep costs in check. Some of these solutions challenge the very concept of one driver/one vehicle, and even the idea of maintaining a fixed fleet.

Arval Car Sharing, for example, offers an alternative to a pool fleet, giving companies access to vehicles when they need them, but also taking advantage of revenue-generating opportunities to hire those cars out to employees in the evenings and at weekends. The service is due to launch in the second half of this year.

Leasing giant LeasePlan sees a growing number of customers wanting complete flexibility in their transport.

"Our customers – whether they are corporate, SMEs or private individuals – would prefer a 'Car-as-a-Service' with no strings attached in terms of car type or duration. They just want 'any car, any time, anywhere,'" said Tex Gunning, LeasePlan CEO.

Alphabet has been one of the earliest advocates of mobility solutions, from its car sharing service AlphaCity, to its zero emission solution, AlphaElectric. AlphaFlex goes even farther, empowering customers to manage a mobility budget, rather than a car allowance, to cover their travel costs, whether by public transport, cycling or taxi services. Key to all these products is the analysis of individual fleet requirements prior to implementation. Conversations at Fleet Live can start the ball rolling.

New technology is having a radical impact on fleet management services, with connected vehicles delivering valuable information second-by-second to fleet

operators, while drivers increasingly depend on apps to access fleet services.

Telematics services that were once used simply to locate vehicles, and more recently to track how they are being driven, are now accessing data directly from engine management systems. This not only enables fleet operators to monitor odometer readings, but is also facilitating the early identification of faults, reducing the risk of breakdowns and allowing for scheduled maintenance appointments.

Specialist fleet management companies are at the vanguard of these developments, helping fleet managers to make sense of the torrent of data heading their way, often from different and incompatible sources. By managing supply chains, pre-approving work and auditing invoices, fleet management companies can help fleets maximise vehicle uptime and minimise the cost of SMR, while ensuring all vehicles comply with all relevant regulations.

Several of the UK's leading fleet management experts will be at Fleet Live, including Fleet Operations, Interactive Fleet Management and VMS, while the management of cars, vans and trucks has become a core competency of a number of leasing companies.

Fleet Live gives fleet decision-makers the chance to find a partner that can understand their requirements and deliver the services that keep vehicles rolling smoothly, safely and cost-effectively.



"WHETHER YOU ARE IN HR OR FINANCE, IF YOU HAVE FLEET RESPONSIBILITY FLEET LIVE WILL HAVE THE CONTENT THAT WILL HELP YOU TO UNDERSTAND THE WORLD OF FLEET BETTER"

PETER WESTON, ARCUS
FLEET MANAGER AND FLEET LIVE BOARD MEMBER

FLEET LIVE

FREE TO FLEET DECISION-MAKERS

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Axle Weight Technology BMW/Mini Bott BP Oil UK Cap HPI CanTrack Chevin Fleet Solutions Chevronshop DAC Beachcroft Gefco Halfords Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions Intellidrive Interactive Fleet Management Jaama Jaguar Land Rover Mercedes-Benz Financial Services UK Mileage Count Nexus Vehicle Rental NFE Group Pertemps Reflex RingGo Corporate TTC Group Venson Automotive Solutions VMS Fleet Management Volkswagen Financial Services Volvo Zenith



"NO ONE SETS OUT TO BE A FLEET MANAGER..."

...but they should. So say 2018 *Fleet News* Hall of Fame inductees Maurice Elford and Phil Clifford as they reflect on their combined 60-plus years in the industry. *Sarah Tooze* reports

It's not surprising that two long-standing fleet managers, who both retired in January, champion the importance of organisations having someone responsible for managing fleet. But what is surprising is that more chief executives don't listen to the argument.

After all, company vehicles can be a significant spend for a business – the second or third biggest overhead in many cases – and the legal ramifications if an at-work driver is involved in a road fatality and the business is culpable are huge (fines of up to £20 million for large organisations and a potential jail term for the company director).

There is also the environmental impact of the fleet to consider. It can be one of the biggest contributors to the company's carbon footprint and, with air quality rising up the political agenda, businesses need to ensure they are running low or even ultra-low emission vehicles.

As Phil Clifford, who spent more than 40 years in local authority fleet management, points out: "You wouldn't run an organisation

without a health and safety manager yet you'll run hundreds of vehicles without a fleet manager. I don't think that's right.

"It doesn't have to be a full-time role if it's a very small fleet, but every organisation should have somebody whose sole responsibility it is to ensure compliance and I'd like to see that mandated somehow."

But more people have to choose fleet management as a career, too, and that needs to start in schools.

Maurice Elford, who spent much of his 26-year career in fleet running the Royal Bank of Scotland's (RBS) salary sacrifice, job-need and affinity car schemes, says: "I remember Sarah (Millward née Dopson) from The AA standing up at a conference organised by Lombard. She was invited to speak as a fleet manager and her opening statement was 'nobody ever left school saying, 'I want to be a fleet manager' and that's absolutely true."

"Everybody you have ever met that's been a fleet manager never set out to be one, none of us. I suspect if you went to every careers office in every school in the UK fleet management wouldn't be in there so I'd like to see it promoted as a career choice while you're still at school."

Elford has enjoyed the people aspect of fleet management – meeting drivers, suppliers, manufacturers and other fleet managers. And, he says a fleet career can be "great fun".

"Certainly with a big fleet I got to go to places, do some things that I would never have done."

"A highlight was being invited by Renault to Silverstone on Grand Prix practice day and going in to the pits and meeting Fernando Alonso. I've also been to various car launches all over Europe."

Clifford agrees: "It's a people business. Without doubt it's been tremendous fun. If you weren't dealing with people on a day-to-day basis it wouldn't be so much fun."

"I think there is a tremendous satisfaction in starting with a pen and paper and ending up with a bespoke vehicle on the road."

"And I think there is a tremendous amount of respect among your peers in the industry. It's a good group; it's a good industry."

Fleet News: How has fleet changed over the course of your careers?

Maurice Elford: The standards expected these days are far greater than previously. If you



Maurice Elford (left) and Phil Clifford, Hall of Famers who both enjoyed the people side of fleet management



think of EU directives, Euro 3, 4, 5, 6. I think the technology in the vehicles is unrecognisable from what it was 20 years ago.

I can remember going to a Ford event at Silverstone not long after I got involved in fleet and it was promoting ABS but it was an added extra. Since then, we've had ESP (electronic stability programme) and AEB (autonomous emergency braking) so vehicles certainly feel a lot safer these days.

Phil Clifford: They are. And, latterly, type approval has actually changed things considerably. Whereas years ago you would specify down to the last nut and bolt what you wanted on the vehicle, nowadays, because of type approval, you can only have what they will offer you. I think the biggest improvement is probably quality on everything.

Maurice Elford: Everything is built by computer these days.

Phil Clifford: Forty years ago you bought a vehicle and you almost budgeted for the fact it was going to give you trouble for six months until it settled down. You expected a lot of teething problems. Nowadays you buy a vehicle you expect it to be 100% from day one and, generally speaking, it is.

Maurice Elford: The other big change has been fleet management software. When I started doing fleet it was Lotus.

Phil Clifford: Lotus 1-2-3.

Maurice Elford: Yeah, and then this thing called Windows came along.

Phil Clifford: It never fails to surprise me how many small fleets still operate using spreadsheets. It doesn't work, it's too prone to going wrong.

Maurice Elford: When I got to L&Q (the London & Quadrant housing association) it was a spreadsheet. The first thing I did was get fleet software.

Fleet News: How has the fleet manager's role changed?

Phil Clifford: In the public sector in the '60s and '70s it was very clearly defined.

Before the 1974 local government reorganisation there were rural districts and urban districts and almost all of them ran their own vehicles, almost all of them had a transport superintendent. When 1974 came along, they merged a lot of those small authorities into bigger ones, what we now see as districts and boroughs. The transport superintendents were still there when I joined in the '70s but then in the '80s, when

"When you have concrete legislation to back up your argument those difficult conversations aren't so difficult"

Phil Clifford, ex-Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council

Margaret Thatcher's government came in, all of a sudden money was important and everybody was looking to save.

Transport management roles started disappearing and gradually throughout the '80s with the merging of functions you ended up with non-professionals running the fleet and doing the operations as well. Even now, you'll see a lot of job descriptions in local government will be 'cleansing and transport manager' or 'fleet and facilities manager'. Seldom is it a dedicated role anymore, which is wrong.

Maurice Elford: L&Q was a bit of a rarity in that it created the post very recently. They had never had a fleet manager or fleet professional until 2013 but they only had 17 cars and about 80 vans.

Phil Clifford: Still, not an insignificant number.

Maurice Elford: No. They knew they were going to expand, they created a DLO (direct labour organisation) so, rather than outsourcing to the likes of Mitie, Mears or whoever, they brought it in-house and there were still two regions to go when I left.

Phil Clifford: Structurally that's probably been the biggest change in the public sector. With the advent of compulsory competitive tendering in the '80s, authorities fell into one of two camps. They either thought 'to hell with it, we're going to outsource' or 'no, we're going to fight tooth and nail to keep it in-house'.

Some fell in the middle when they fought to keep it in-house and failed and it went out anyway. But those of us that did manage to keep it in-house and carried on keeping it in-house reaped the benefits long-term.

Fleet News: Have the basics of fleet management stayed the same?

Maurice Elford: Yes, you've still got to procure, run, dispose of [vehicles].

Phil Clifford: I did a presentation many years ago and I tried to simplify the role of the fleet manager and I summed it up in three and a bit: A: buy it; B: run it; C: sell it; and D: go back to A.

Maurice Elford: Repeat.

Phil Clifford: Yeah, repeat. And basically that has not changed.

One thing you can't get away from as a fleet manager today is you've got to manage your drivers as well as your fleet. Perhaps 20, 30 years ago you weren't interested in the drivers, not your problem, that was operations. But you can't divorce the two any more so it does become a bit of an issue. You used to say in local government that you got paid by responsibility. In which case, the fleet manager should be the most highly paid person in the authority because he's responsible for everybody that gets behind the wheel of the vehicle. But they didn't buy it; they didn't give me a pay rise.

Maurice Elford: The other big thing with today's fleet managers is they've got to prove they are compliant because if something happens, heaven forbid, to anybody the authorities will be able to seize computers, records, the whole lot and you've got to be able to demonstrate you've done all that you reasonably could.

Phil Clifford: I still have a copy of a trade publication where the front page headline was 'Council loses O Licence'. It was a district council and they got pulled up for a weight check, it snowballed from there. Everything about the whole fleet operation was wrong and it frightened the industry.

It's like corporate manslaughter. When a company goes down for corporate manslaughter, the Bath tipper crash or whatever, it's a bit of a wake up call for everybody. Unfortunately, somebody has to suffer in the meantime.

Maurice Elford: Bath was one of them but the other was Baldwins Crane Hire. We used the Glasgow bin lorry and Baldwins Crane Hire internally as wake up calls – were we compliant enough and did we have the processes in place if the worst happened?

Phil Clifford: The Glasgow bin lorry, I try not to refer to it as a bin lorry because at the end of the day it was a truck in Glasgow that crashed, the fact it was a bin lorry is academic,

nothing to do with the argument, but it did highlight the issue of driver management.

Fleet News: How did you handle difficult conversations with drivers?

Phil Clifford: When you have concrete legislation to back up your argument, those difficult conversations aren't so difficult. You're just telling them fact. Whether they like them or not, these are the facts.

Maurice Elford: I've had conversations with a few drivers about speeding where I've had to say 'this isn't a lifestyle choice, it's the law'. There were lots of 20mph limits and the guys were saying 'yeah, but a lot of people are flashing us' so we ended up putting stickers on the back saying 'this vehicle is monitored for speed and location'.

I did have a degree of sympathy about the aggravation they got for obeying the law.

Phil Clifford: Trying to convince somebody an incident they've been involved in was their fault was difficult, everybody denies everything.

I think the onset of technology – cameras, telematics – has helped to actually prove whether it was their fault or not. And even if it proves it was your own driver's fault it saves you time and money because you don't spend weeks investigating.

Maurice Elford: The police now, if they've got video evidence of an incident, they don't bother taking witness statements. Insurers are the same.

If someone says, 'it's not my fault' and the other insurer says, 'well, here's the video footage' it's settled in minutes.

Phil Clifford: That's made a massive difference to me. Just before I retired we started fitting cameras in the cab.

Maurice Elford: Was that driver-facing?

Phil Clifford: It was driver-facing, crew-facing, but as long as you tell them why it's there and that's the only reason you use it, then you've got grounds to use it. It's like telematics, if you say it's only there for location purposes but then you use the driver behaviour module to discipline somebody, that's wrong. Under GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) you won't be able to do that. If you tell them you're going to monitor their driver behaviour, then you've covered it. If you've got to go out and investigate incidents when you're a small organisation it's very time consuming. So technology is a great help.

Maurice Elford: TfL (Transport for London) fixed penalty notices came through like confetti at the best of times. We had one where the guy was stopped on a red route. We appealed and said the photograph showed the brake lights on. They said 'no, appeal refused. You can go to tribunal if you like'. So we got the telematics data. You could do it by the second so we could



Phil Clifford (centre) and Maurice Elford (left) receive their awards from Stuart Thomas, director of fleet and SME at The AA, which sponsored the Hall of Fame category

CAREER TIMELINE: PHIL CLIFFORD

● **October 1971 – December 1976**
vehicle mechanic,
H Clifford & Sons

● **January 1977 – November 1977**
service receptionist,
Sandicliffe Motor Group

● **November 1977 – July 1979**
technician (mechanical and
transport), Broxtowe Borough Council

● **July 1979 – March 1985**
transport manager, South
Northamptonshire Council

● **April 1985 – January 1989**
transport manager,
Worcester City Council

● **January 1989 – January 2018**
fleet and technical manager, Forest Heath District
Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council

Elford (left) and Clifford, both believe relationships are key to managing suppliers



clearly show he was stationary then 2mph, stationary then 2mph. So we could prove he was actually moving. We sent that back. Two weeks later the solicitor had looked it over – case dismissed. But that was a day's work to prove the guy was innocent. **Phil Clifford:** We had a speeding ticket from Cornwall and we wrote back to say 'it wasn't our vehicle, I can prove with telematics that it's a 26-tonne refuse vehicle. There is no way it would have got to Cornwall and back in a day'. Then they go quiet. So, obviously, the cloning of number plates is not that uncommon.

Maurice Elford: We had one where one of our vans was allegedly parked in Kensington and Chelsea, London. That's not a borough we operate in and in the photograph the van had no logos on it. I wrote back and said 'here's our van with the logos on it, here's telematics evidence'. In the end they did drop it. But it was a huge effort to prove, it went on for weeks.

Fleet News: So you've both had some admin challenges, what have been your biggest challenges in fleet and how did you overcome them?

Phil Clifford: I suppose the biggest direct challenge which I always had was trying to

get some sense of order into the grey fleet management because there is this gulf between whether grey fleet is an HR function or a fleet function. And, clearly, it is both. To try to get the team in HR to see the importance was very difficult and still, to this day, is difficult.

Maurice Elford: I had that challenge at L&Q. It sat with HR but I did at least get them to put a disclaimer on the expense system.

Phil Clifford: We ended up with online mileage claims and there was a tick box to confirm you'd got the right insurance etc. I'm never happy with that. It's not robust enough in my opinion.

Maurice Elford: It's not been challenged yet.

Phil Clifford: But I always felt we should be physically checking grey fleet documents and taking copies of them.

Maurice Elford: The difficulty we had in RBS was there were 30,000 grey fleet drivers and there was no way you could physically check them all. We randomly sampled 1% of the expenses claims a month and the system was set up so you couldn't get selected again for another three years so we could, at least, check your driving licence and, if you were at risk, you'd go on a driver training course. We couldn't check all 30,000 every month but by doing a random sample of 100 every month we were going to sample 1,200 a year.

Phil Clifford: The vast majority of grey fleet drivers don't knowingly under-insure their cars, they don't understand. They've taken out a policy, it's fully comprehensive, what more do you need? And the insurance companies are their own worst enemy because sometimes they'll give you business cover insurance without asking for it and when you renew a year later they'll knock it off without telling you so I think they could be a bit more transparent on that. There is nothing wrong with grey fleet as long as it's managed.

Fleet News: What do you feel private sector fleets could learn from public sector fleets and vice versa?

Phil Clifford: It's a different world. The language is different. You talk about capital allowances, well to the public sector a capital allowance is something completely different than it is to the private sector so I don't think there is much they can learn from each other. I think they perhaps need to understand each other better because if someone joins the public sector from the private they struggle. It's a different set of rules, different protocols but that's how we do it. It's who you're answerable to as well. There is a profit motive in the private sector more so than in the public sector, which is not always the

CAREER TIMELINE: MAURICE ELFORD

• **April 1992 – March 2001**
fleet administration and management,
The Royal Bank of Scotland Group

• **April 2001 – March 2013**
group fleet manager, The Royal Bank of
Scotland, Lombard Vehicle Management

• **May 2014 – January 2018**
fleet manager, London &
Quadrant Housing Trust

best driver – excuse the pun – when it comes to running fleet.

Maurice Elford: In the private sector, fleet is always seen as a cost so you're under pressure to do the best deal that you can as a service to the shareholder.

Fleet News: What advice do you have for managing suppliers?

Maurice Elford: I always found building relationships was fairly key. Being open and honest enough to say when something wasn't working and being prepared, when push comes to shove, to say goodbye sometimes. But that's really a last resort. I tried hard, particularly with the manufacturers, to build up long-term relationships rather than just phone them up when I needed something. And software providers, that's a long-term commitment, and telematics is another one, you don't want to necessarily change that every three years because the changeover is an absolute nightmare.

So, building relationships is the best way to deal with suppliers I find. **Phil Clifford:** I think that's right. Towards my retirement so many approaches were by phone and internet rather than face-to-face and that's impersonal. You don't know who you're talking to, you can't gauge body language over the phone.

Maurice Elford: I used to get a lot of phone calls 'can we come to see you?' 'Not really any point because I don't use that service or product'. **Phil Clifford:** I think the worst one is when you get an email saying 'I'd like to come and see you to show you how I can save you money'. That drives me insane because they don't even know if I've got any money to save. They haven't got a clue. Sellers need to do their homework before they approach a company.

Fleet News: What annoyed you about fleet, Maurice?

Maurice Elford: One thing that drove me nuts was the expected delivery date for your vehicle is X. X then becomes Y. Y then becomes Z. Then it becomes AA, if you're lucky. And then you've got to tie that in with the launch of a service to an area. I had some sweats over my last three or four years on delivery times. It wasn't just getting the vehicle delivered. It was getting the vehicle

"By and large I've really enjoyed my life in fleet. But the time has come when I want to do other stuff"

Maurice Elford, ex-London & Quadrant Housing Trust

to the converters and then delivered so that drove me nuts.

Fleet News: How has networking helped your careers? Phil, you founded the Public Authority Transport Network.

Phil Clifford: I worked with Christopher Ruane, who is now with the CILT (Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport), to set that up years ago. It's proved its worth over the years; it's a good network. Not only does it bring public sector fleet managers together, it enjoys the benefit of the fact that none of them are in competition with each other, so free speech is there. If you get private sector organisations in a room they'll be cagey about what they're saying for fear of giving away their secrets, won't they?

Maurice Elford: No, I've been a member of Major Fleet Forum for a number of years and that's a mixture of public and private. What is said in that room stays in that room and everybody adhered to that and it was quite useful because sometimes you had sensitive things that you wanted to get a view on and you could express it there.

Phil Clifford: But there is a certain degree of pragmatism isn't there?

Maurice Elford: Of course, we were four or five big bank fleet managers who used to meet up two or three times a year and we were grown up enough to know there were things we weren't going to talk about.

Fleet News: What did you both learn from those networking groups?

Maurice Elford: Lots more people had the same problems as me.

Phil Clifford: I was going to say exactly the

same. You think you've got all the problems in the world but you can guarantee there is someone else worse off than you are.

Maurice Elford: Or I've said something in a meeting and I can see the look of relief on two or three faces because I've said it.

Phil Clifford: So, if you had the chance to do it all again, would you?

Maurice Elford: Yeah, there are a few bits I'd do differently. Probably some of the people I dealt with I would have dealt with differently over time.

By and large, I've really enjoyed my life in fleet. But the time has come when I want to do other stuff.

Phil Clifford: While you're still fit and able?

Maurice Elford: Yeah.

Phil Clifford: Same here.

Elford's retirement plans are simply to sail his boat to Holland in the summer (weather permitting) and to "look for something to do come the autumn, go and do some work for a charity perhaps".

Clifford intends to do some consultancy work for public sector fleets in order to fund other projects such as a procurement guide for the industry (see *Fleet News*, August 4, 2016), plus he wants to raise the profile of fleet management.

Both joke they are secretly pleased to retire before GDPR takes effect (May 25) although they have endured their fair share of legislative upheavals in their career, including the change of benefit-in-kind taxation to a CO₂-based system in 2002 and the introduction of corporate manslaughter in 2008.

With so many changes afoot – GDPR, WLTP (Worldwide harmonised Light vehicle Test Procedure) and Brexit to name but a few – how does today's fleet manager cope?

"You've got to make the effort to keep abreast of what is happening," Clifford says. "You've got to read the trade press and come to events. Don't even consider this industry unless you're committed and ambitious because fleet is not just a job; it's a vocation. Fleet management is a way of life."



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'IF YOU DON'T HAVE SOMEONE DEDICATED TO YOUR FLEET, GOD HELP YOU'

Paul Hollick believes in professional fleet management and is determined to make ICFM qualifications the recognised standard. *Stephen Briers* reports

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leet decision-makers and those with direct influence over policy and strategy have never faced such a jumble of complexity, confusion and rapid-paced change.

From once being responsible solely for managing cars, their focus migrated to managing the drivers in the 2000s, with the introduction of corporate manslaughter. Now they are increasingly responsible for managing journeys, with the onset of mobility as a service and travel management overriding the traditional fleet management role.

It's a multifaceted position, yet the responsibility for tackling a legion of decisions, legislations, processes and technologies falls to a person whose job is rarely acknowledged as a profession.

Consider the breadth: new fuel testing regime, alternative fuels, urban transport policies, air quality, car versus cash, GDPR, connectivity, autonomy, mobility, taxation upheaval. Weaving a policy that threads together all these developments, yet still considers the core fundamentals of right car/right person, driver behaviour, safety, environment and cost, is a skill that deserves recognition.

Enter ICFM. Formerly the Institute of Car Fleet Management, the not-for-profit training and accreditation body was launched in 1992 with a remit to raise the standards of fleet professionals.

Its existence is thanks, in part, to *Fleet News*. Following the publication of an article lamenting the lack of a recognised qualification for fleet managers, Peter Moxon, managing director of Emmox Vehicle Management, and Alan Myers, managing director of McKenzie Myers, came up with the idea of the Institute.

BENEFITS OF ICFM TRAINING

1. Demonstrable cost savings
2. Improved operational efficiencies
3. Better procurement practices
4. Improved understanding of legal, compliance and finance
5. Improved reputation and standing within the company
6. Ability to strategise

They reached out to several eminent fleet managers of the day, including Graham Sinclair, fleet director at White Arrow Group, Malcolm Richings, fleet manager at Granada Rentals UK, and Jim Barnett, fleet manager at Philips Electronics, drawing on their knowledge to design the constitution and structure of the ICFM.

Velo client service manager Bill Siviter was elected first chairman, Moxon was appointed company secretary and Eddie West, accounting services manager, Honeywell Control Systems, became finance director.

"They all wanted to do something for the industry and started from scratch with no money, just with an idea to professionalise the industry," says Peter Eldridge, ICFM director and company secretary who became a member in 1993. "But they were fiery council meetings – all were heavyweights with big egos and big ideas. But they shared the same core objectives."

Those objectives were – and are – twofold: to train newcomers to have the key skills to manage a fleet and to provide a progressive link to get them to an acceptable standard.

From modest roots, ICFM has built a reputation for delivering high quality training, all based on the same three core modules that

were developed at launch: introductory, certificate and diploma.

"There was nothing else like it; and today there is still nothing else," Eldridge adds. "Our certificate should be the minimum standard all fleet managers get to."

Current chairman Paul Hollick has set a goal of professionalising the fleet sector in much the same way as solicitors and accountants (as a former accountant, he should know).

"It's also for the next generation," he says. "They get best practice and they meet on our courses and go on a journey together. It becomes something that is bigger than them – it's a circle of development in the industry."

Since formation, ICFM has trained some 2,000 people and its courses are now over-subscribed. A landmark was reached in 2016 when ICFM trained more women than men. Hollick sees this as symptomatic of the changes within the sector.

"You don't need to understand what's underneath the bonnet to run a fleet," he says. "It's now about travel, occupational road risk, procurement, expenses – it's more attractive to a wider range of people. We are also seeing more HR, procurement and finance people."

Travel and mobility is the next area of development. As Hollick says: "For our members, it's about having responsibility for all travel, not management of an asset."

Member numbers used to fluctuate between 600 and 700, but over the past four years have risen to 900. That's thanks, in part, to a decision to widen the training pool to include leasing, manufacturer and dealer staff who want to better understand the fleet sector, particularly with the rise in outsourcing. However, fleet decision-makers remain the core, with the split around 60:40 in their favour.

Hollick's short-term target is to pass 1,000

Paul Hollick has 1,000 members as a short term goal but hopes to double that longer term

members; longer-term he wants 1,500-2,000. He would also like today's diploma holders to become tomorrow's trainers, but recognises there are challenges.

"The fleet industry is unusual. There is a lack of aspiration. They reach a certain level and then stop," Hollick says.

Despite growing involvement of procurement, finance, and HR specialists – "we should have all as members of ICFM" – someone has to take ultimate responsibility for the fleet, Hollick adds. "Strategy has to be in-sourced."

Never has this been more important than in the current climate of uncertainty, caused in no small part by the Government's lack of planning, especially on BIK taxation. Its policies have created confusion over diesel while there are few tangible alternatives for many fleet activities.

"We are still a best-kept secret, but we will get to be the standard as we grow"

Paul Hollick, ICFM

Also crucial is an understanding that partnerships and value-added relationships with suppliers elicit the best results, not purely price-driven contracts.

"Price is a hygiene factor; it's the difference between best value and cheap," Hollick says. "But best value is only an objective when you

CHANGING FACE OF TRAINING

ICFM training and dissertations are all made relevant to the fleet manager's own company.

In order to understand and problem-solve, they have to bridge the gap between the knowledge gained on the course and how that can be applied to their own fleet. Then they have to present back to the group.

"It's theory-based, steeped in real-life experience and deployment," says Paul Hollick. "We always invite trainees to bring their boss with them when they collect their certificate."

This engagement is important. "The company is investing in its fleet manager and understands that it's an achievement," explains Hollick.

ICFM training is constantly evolving to take into consideration the changing fleet landscape. The organisation is also looking at making entry easier, considering app technology and bite-size learning rather than the commitment to eight days in a classroom.

"We will do more online, but we will always encourage classroom as a progression because of the group learning and interaction with the trainers and your peers," says Peter Eldridge.

have someone within a business who understands fleet which is why procurement and fleet have to exist and work together. If they don't, it doesn't work and then you get hidden costs from making the wrong choices.

"Those that get it right, get it really right!"

ICFM training helps to ensure they get it right more often than not. And the qualifications are gaining traction in the sector. However, Hollick recognises that it is a constant battle to raise profile.

"We are still a best-kept secret, but we will get to be the standard as we grow," he says. "That's why inclusivity is important – everyone who touches fleet should be a member."

"Fleet is a five-year programme. You have to have a strategy for at least a cycle-and-a-half of your vehicle life. This is why it is important to have someone dedicated to looking after your fleet. If you don't, God help you!"

KEY DATES

1994: the Introductory module is launched and BCA's Tom Madden takes over as chairman.

1995: the first Diploma course is held at Loughborough University.

1996: ICFM relocates to Thame, Oxfordshire.

1996: Winners of the Fleet News Special Award.

1999: original admin manager Lynn Eldridge rejoins and ICFM relocates to Chichester, West Sussex. Fast Track intermediate level programme launches.

1999: Peter Moxon retires from the ICFM. The Training Achiever of the Year Award was later named The Peter Moxon Award in his honour.

2005: Introductory On Line Course launches.

2006: Roddy Graham becomes the ICFM's third chairman.

2008: BVRLA commissions ICFM to run its Professional Fleet Consultant Development Programme.

2010: Wins the Fleet News Training Award

2014: Paul Hollick becomes the fourth and current chairman.



Choosing the right leasing company can open the gates to a blissful relationship, but the wrong decision can lead to a miserable and costly experience. *Andrew Ryan* reports

Selecting the right leasing provider can have a dramatic effect on the efficient and effective operation of an organisation's fleet.

Get it right and it can lead to a long, hassle-free agreement for both fleet decision-makers and their drivers, as well as reducing costs and future-proofing against changing trends.

Get it wrong, though, and it can lead to years of unnecessary additional costs, unsuitable vehicles, poor customer service and an awkward relationship with a supplier who cannot meet the needs of your organisation.

But there are steps a fleet decision-maker can take to ensure it enters into a fruitful agreement.

"It's all about the preparation," says Paul Holmes, director of fleet consultancy Fleet Managers' Friend. "For me, the most important part of the process and when so many people get it wrong is at the outset.

"Do your homework, be clear about what you want, and when you start the agreement know what to expect en route and at the end."

FIRST STEP

The first vital step a fleet decision-maker should take is to determine what they want from a leasing agreement and provider.

"Ensure you clearly define the purpose of the exercise," says Caroline Sandall, director of ESE Consulting and deputy chairman of fleet operators' association ACFO.

"What are you seeking to achieve? Better service? Cheaper cost? Consider what a successful outcome might look like."

To do this, a fleet decision-maker should engage with other stakeholders in the organisation to ensure the tender meets current and future organisational needs.

This may include other services an organisation wants from its supplier, such as fleet and accident management.

"Working with your stakeholders is the most impor-

tant thing as it helps get your requirements as accurate as you possibly can," says Colin Hutt, category and contracts manager (fleet and insurance) at the CITB, which went through a leasing company tender process last year.

"That means you get a better response from suppliers, that they understand more about what you want, and it gives you the best chance to evaluate them properly and appoint the best company."

He adds: "It helps to be as open and honest as you can and clear about what you want from this contract."

DECIDE WHICH SUPPLIERS TO APPROACH

Contract priorities can differ dependent on the size and type of fleet, its requirements and whether the organisation is in the public or private sector.

"The process has got to be relevant to the size of the operation, so if you had six vehicles, the probability is that someone in the office would ring round and get some quotations, that's the reality," says Holmes.

"If you have 25-plus, then that is where you start getting into some sort of mini-tendering exercise, so you say to the supplier 'come in and talk to us about what you do'.

"When you get past the 100-vehicle mark is when you are getting into a meaty arrangement and invite six or seven people in.

"I wouldn't go much further than that because you could get bogged down with the tender exercise and the cost of that would outweigh any savings."

However large the exercise, the same best practice guidance applies when selecting which suppliers to contact.

"Consider whether that company can fulfil your requirements and provide the quality of service required," says Sandall.

"Formal confirmation of capability should include obvious items like BVRLA (British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association) accreditation, but also include some basic financial checks and industry checks – contact other fleets to discuss their services, via organisations like ACFO. You want to gauge their reputation."

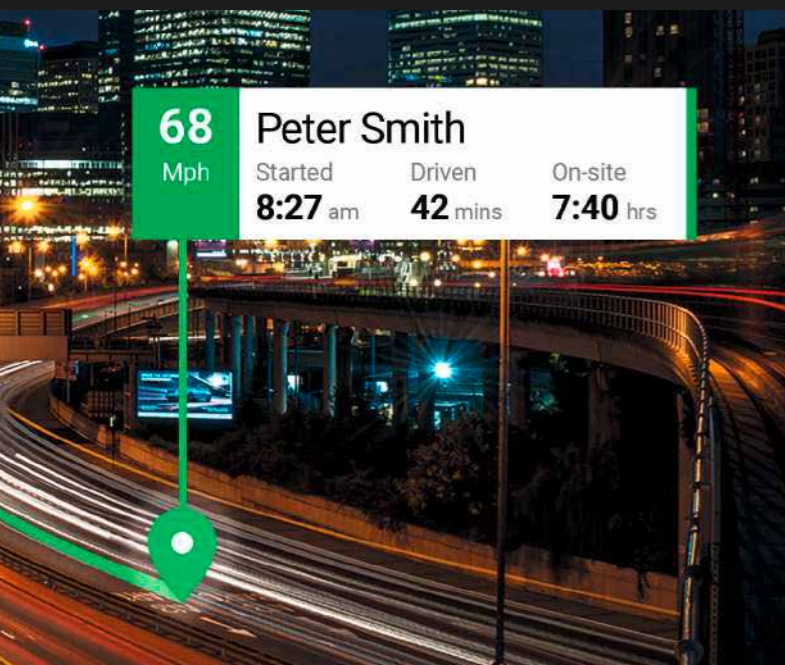
Holmes adds: "Go to networking events, talk to other users and say you get your vehicles from such and such, what is the service like, what did they do? Recommendation is far stronger than any advertising or marketing campaign."

The size of a leasing company alone should not overtly influence a decision. What is more

■ Procurement best practice is one of the many topics which will be covered at Fleet Live in Birmingham on October 9-10. For more on the event see page 26.

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INSIGHT: TENDERING



important is that the potential suppliers have the capability, capacity and competence to deliver the services the fleet needs.

"Increasingly we are seeing requests for evidence of equality policies and other corporate social responsibility measures," says John Webb, principal consultant at Lex Autolease. "This is all part of procurement leaders seeking to develop a sustainable supply chain."

Public sector fleets can tender for leasing suppliers through procurement frameworks such as the Crown Commercial Service, where bids are sent to a number of pre-selected suppliers.

SINGLE OR MULTIPLE LEASING PROVIDERS?

Fleets can either source their vehicles from a single leasing company or from a number of providers: each approach has its pros and cons.

"Without a shadow of a doubt, there are definitely good reasons for a business to go for a solus arrangement as much as there is for a fleet to go multibid," says Jayne Pett, sales and marketing director at Fleet Operations.

"It just depends on what the company is looking for and looking to achieve, what its business model is and how it is structured."

"Clearly, with some larger fleets they can negotiate some very good terms on a solus arrangement that suits their business."

"Also when it comes to pan-European fleets it can be advantageous when you've got a leasing provider that covers many of the European coun-

tries as well so they can bring everything under one policy."

However, she says the strategy of using multiple leasing companies is commonly used to drive down costs and limit rental creep.

For example, using dual or multi-supply enables a fleet to sense-check the funding quotes of one leasing company against another.

Multiple suppliers will also sometimes be used by organisations which have very specialist requirements which only a few leasing companies are able to manage. Using multiple funders can increase administration for a fleet decision-maker as they will be receiving reports from a number of different companies instead of just one, as well as having several points of contact for their vehicles.

They can simplify this by using a fleet management company which will coordinate the contracts and provide a single source of contact to the leasing companies.

FUTURE-PROOFING

An agreement with a leasing company is not just for the present: most last for three years or more, so it is important to ensure it will be fit for purpose in the future, too.

Peter Eldridge, director at ICFM, says: "It is still key for fleet professionals to meet financial and operational requirements, but the ICFM believes these should now be considered as simply the 'hygiene factor'."

"What fleet professionals need to focus on now is to have the right tools for the job in hand and that means looking to the future and being able to react to and set policies that bring into play more strategic considerations, covering a broader range of mobility solutions."

"Coupled with this is the need to have a firm grasp on the associated environmental, power-train and compliance challenges that go hand-in-

hand with this fast accelerating brave new world of transportation development."

"The supply chain is absolutely key to this development and high on the leasing company selection and suitability list should be the clear demonstration that they are providing real innovation and driving the changing face of the sector."

"In summary, it's time to raise the bar and look to create a new and exciting template for leasing company selection and choice."

Pett adds: "Most businesses will have a key idea of their vision, and I think vision is a good question to ask any leasing provider and also their strategy that fits around it."

"There is no point saying 'today we are looking at this and that is how we are going to stay forever'. It is an ever-changing world with things like GDPR and WLTP, so a fleet decision-maker should consider what the future may hold and look at that when they are putting a leasing provider in place."

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO ASK

Key questions should focus on operational delivery. Others should look at quality and reliability, speed and flexibility, value for money, strong service delivery and clear communication, and financial security.

Questions can be broken down into five categories: price, service, capability, references and user experience.

■ **Price:** Fleets should consider creating a representative basket of





vehicles for quoting, breaking out the key elements of the rental/ services – depreciation, cost of funds, maintenance and tyres, admin/management fees etc., so they can compare each area of spend across all suppliers. They should also ask about rebates, end-of-contact profit sharing, mileage pooling etc. The fleet decision-maker should ask about all possible costs and fees and, if they have specific requirements such as high volume of vehicle reallocations, consider adding further templates to capture these costs for comparison between suppliers. Questions around end-of-contract damage, how any damage waivers operate and what the leasing company's track record is, can also be asked.

■ **Service:** Fleets should ask questions to challenge how the leasing company ensures consistently high levels of service – how does it target first call resolution? How does it manage call volume, staff incentives and training?

■ **Capability:** Fleet decision-makers should make sure they cover each area of the services to be provided – quotes and orders, dealer management, servicing and maintenance including tyres and breakdown, accident management, data and MI (management information) etc. They should ask challenging questions and avoid those that will result in a yes/no answer: they want the supplier to demonstrate there are controls, it ensures the driver is managed, it looks at the root cause etc.

■ **References:** Requesting references should be standard, but a fleet should always ask for lost clients as well as existing ones. It should take up those references and ask that organisation what issues they experienced, what they would change if they could, etc.

■ **User experience:** It is vital a fleet views the service from a driver's perspective. How easy is it to quote? What information is made available to drivers? How will they support those who need to discuss their options? A fleet decision-maker should think about the end-to-end experience, from the first point of contact, through quote to order and delivery, service and maintenance, collisions and damage. Also ask what happens when things go wrong and how vehicles are managed at contract end.

Webb says: "Questions need to be clear and unambiguous so that meaningful

evaluation can be made and there is genuine competition."

ASSESSING THE BIDS

When the tender document is developed, each question should be weighted to highlight their importance to the operation of the fleet.

"This makes it 100% clear when the suppliers are looking at the tender what they are supposed to do," says Hutt.

"They can see how many percentage points that question is worth. If we are giving a total of 60% overall for this section of the tender and one question pops up as coming up at 10%, they think that 'actually, I'd better make sure that this answer is really good because it is going to count a lot towards the total for this tender.'"

Many scoring matrices are available, says Sandall, but a structured approach should always be used, not only to ensure the end result is robust, but to also provide a framework to enable the fleet decision-maker to clearly differentiate between suppliers in a formal manner.

Overall, when scoring a tender response, questions relating to price should account for 25% to 40% of the total scorecard, adds Danielle Tilley, business development director of Venson Automotive Solutions.

"Anybody who scores more than 50% for price – unless it is a very simple commodity – is missing a trick and making price too important," she says.

"The fact is that there are so many other things in supplier relationships that will be ignored by scoring price so highly. Equally, if the price is suspiciously low, ask why.

"In life you generally get what you pay for and that includes when tendering for fleet services. If a supplier can significantly undercut its competitors there is usually a very good reason for it, which is why it is vital to look at value for money and monitor contract performance against measurable standard."

CITB usually has a panel of three or four people who evaluate the completed tender documents. They separately score the answers with comments about why they have awarded that mark.

They then meet and discuss the answers before agreeing on a consensus score for each question.

Shaun Sadlier, head of consultancy at Arval UK, adds: "Sometimes, when all the analysis has been finalised, it is worth asking a simple question. 'Can I work with this company and its people?'"

"If the answer is yes, then there is a very high likelihood of future success."

MONITORING AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE

Service level agreements (SLAs) should be introduced to monitor and measure the key elements of the services being delivered to a fleet.

"A well thought out and constructed SLA will, from the customer's perspective, identify the limits of acceptable service and, for the supplier, will provide a continuous incentive to improve its performance," says Sadlier.

"SLAs should be limited in number, clear and concise, measurable and achievable, and should include a definition of the service.

"I have experienced requests for SLAs that have run into the hundreds, something that is totally unmanageable and unusable by either party.

"There should, instead, be a small number of key measurements that can be considered by both fleet and leasing company.

"Also, when both parties feel confident that a measurement is consistently achieved, they should delete it from the list and add another.

"In this way, the SLA can clearly be a fluid tool for both parties to achieve high satisfaction."

A fleet decision-maker should also have a structured plan for meetings with its supplier. This may involve a monthly review of management information and performance, a weekly operational call to deal with any issues or trends, plus a more formal in-depth annual review where they can also agree the strategy for the forthcoming year.

"Benchmarking should be a part of the contract, but there are limits to what can be done outside a competitive tender situation," says Sandall.

"You will want to gain some comfort that your charges are competitive, but this is not straightforward to measure on an ongoing basis."

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE BUSINESS AND PROPERTY COURTS OF ENGLAND AND WALES COMPANIES COURT (ChD)

CR-2017-009254

IN THE MATTER OF AXA INSURANCE UK PLC AND RIVERSTONE INSURANCE (UK) LIMITED AND IN THE MATTER OF THE FINANCIAL SERVICES AND MARKETS ACT 2000 NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, on 17 April 2018, AXA Insurance UK plc (the "Transferor") and RiverStone Insurance (UK) Limited (the "Transferee") made an application (the "Application") to the High Court of Justice, Business and Property Courts of England and Wales, Chancery Division of the Companies Court in London (the "Court") pursuant to section 107(1) of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (as amended) ("FSMA") for an Order:

- (1) under section 111 of FSMA sanctioning an insurance business transfer scheme for the transfer to the Transferee of a portfolio of public liability and employers' liability insurance policies written by the Transferor (see footnote) on or before 31 December 2001 (the "Transferring Business") carried on by the Transferor (the "Scheme"); and
- (2) making ancillary provision in connection with the Scheme pursuant to section 112 and 112A of FSMA.

A copy of a report on the terms of the Scheme prepared in accordance with section 109 of FSMA, by an Independent Expert, Mr Philip Tiffin of KPMG LLP, whose appointment has been approved by the Prudential Regulation Authority, (the "Scheme Report"), a statement setting out the terms of the Scheme and containing a summary of the Scheme Report, and the full Scheme document are available free of charge at <http://www.axa.co.uk/help-and-advice/business/insurance-transfer/>. Supporting documents and any further news about the Scheme will be posted on this website so you may wish to check for updates. You can also request free copies of any of these documents by writing to or telephoning the Transferor using the contact details below.

The Application is due to be heard on 14 September 2018 by a Judge of the Chancery Division of the Companies Court of the High Court at The Rolls Building, Fetter Lane, London EC4A 3NL, United Kingdom. If approved by the Court, it is currently proposed that the Scheme will take effect on 1 October 2018.

Any person who claims that he or she may be adversely affected by the carrying out of the Scheme has a right to attend the hearing and express their views either in person or by a legal representative.

Any person who claims that they may be adversely affected by the Scheme but does not intend to attend the hearing may make representations about the Scheme by telephone or in writing to the solicitors named below or the Transferor using the contact details set out below.

Any person who intends to appear at the hearing or make representations by telephone or in writing is requested (but is not obliged) to notify his or her objections as soon as possible and preferably at least five days before the hearing of the Application on 14 September 2018 to the solicitors named below or to the Transferor using the contact details set out below.

If the Scheme is sanctioned by the Court, it will result in the transfer to the Transferee of all the contracts, property, assets and liabilities relating to the Transferring Business; notwithstanding that a person would otherwise be entitled to terminate, modify, acquire or claim an interest or right or to treat an interest or right as terminated or modified in respect thereof. Any such right will only be enforceable to the extent the Order of the Court makes provision to that effect.

17 May 2018

Transferor contact information:

Telephone number: 01473 337100 (or, if resident outside the UK, on +44 1473 337100). The helpline will be open from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. on Monday to Friday UK time (excluding bank holidays).

Postal address: The Company Secretary, AXA Insurance UK plc, 5 Old Broad Street, London, EC2N 1AD, United Kingdom

Email: partvii.UK@axa-uk.co.uk

Transferee contact information:

Telephone number 01273 792475. The helpline will be open between the hours of 9.30 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. on Monday to Friday UK time (excluding bank holidays).

Postal address: F.A.O. Fraser Henry, RiverStone Insurance (UK) Limited, Park Gate, 161-163 Preston Road, Brighton, East Sussex, BN1 6AU, United Kingdom

Email: axatoriuk@rsml.co.uk

Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP

Postal address: 65 Fleet Street, London, EC4Y 1HS, United Kingdom

Ref: 166187-0002 (GHFS)

Solicitors for the Transferor and the Transferee

Note: The Transferring Business comprises business carried on by the Transferor under previous names: Provincial Insurance Company Limited; UAP Provincial Insurance Plc; AXA Provincial Insurance Plc; and business assumed by the Transferor from Orion Personal Insurances Limited; The State Assurance Company Limited; Guardian Assurance plc; AXA General Insurance Limited (under former names United British Insurance Company Limited, GRE (UK) Limited and Guardian Insurance Limited); Guardian Eastern Insurance Company Limited; The Royal Exchange Assurance; Caledonian Insurance Company Limited; British Equitable Assurance Company Limited; Atlas Assurance Company Limited; AXA Insurance Company Limited (under former names Hodge General and Mercantile Insurance Company Limited and Westgate Insurance Company Limited); The Dominion Insurance Company Limited; Essex and Suffolk Insurance Company Limited; The Motor Union Insurance Company Limited; British Equitable Assurance Company Limited; Legal and General Insurance Limited; and Guardian Royal Exchange Assurance plc.

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"Lots of fleets are thinking about how they can make the best choice now for the near- and long-term (on diesel)"

Owen Gregory, Ford

WINNER: FORD FIESTA / FORD S-MAX

Ford adjusts as its popular Fiesta and Focus are renewed

Carmaker resists temptation to plug registration gaps with short-cycle business; 'great' driver response to PHEV trials

By Stephen Briers

Ford is going through a transitional phase with the renewal of key models such as the Fiesta impacting on sales, which dipped by almost 10% last year in a market down 5.6%.

More disruption is to come, with the company's biggest fleet car, the Focus, due for replacement this year. In the space of 12 months, Ford will have renewed its two biggest sellers.

Managing run-out of old product and introduction of new is rarely an exact science, but Ford resisted the temptation to plug registrations gaps with short-cycle business.

Its rental sales last year fell by almost 7%, or 2,595 units, as part of a strategy to be more targeted in its relationship with the low-profit segment, according to Owen Gregory, director, fleet operations.

"We did see a softer market in corporate last year but some of it is where we are in our product cycle," he says. "We were expecting rental volumes to be down. We will serve the market in a way that supports strong residual values (RVs)."

Fleet News: How well did you manage the changeover from old Fiesta to new, and how has it been received by the market?

Owen Gregory: It always takes time to settle when you are coming out from an old model into a new one. It is also positioned differently to the previous vehicle. I was delighted with the recognition at the awards [Fiesta was the *Fleet News* small car of the year] and also with the RV guides which puts us in a strong position. There was an initial uplift and that is now solidifying. The decisions we have made about how we went to market and the channels we are in have paid off. Fiesta is now out of that challenge but Focus is going into that phase, which comes with disruption. Our target is making that happen smoothly.

FN: What are your forecasts for 2018?

OG: We have no strategic change to our corporate strategy, but we will be busier than usual with the

product launches. We expect the market to be down a little because there is still some uncertainty. We need clarity on diesel. It has a role to play, although there are also opportunities with other solutions such as hybrid in real-world roles.

FN: And vans?

OG: We expect to see pick-ups strengthen this year and the Ranger will drive our share up. Small vans are softening as we stopped selling the Fiesta van – it was 4,000 units a year – but when the new van comes in [by the end of the year], that sector will pick up. Customers are holding off, waiting for that model. Medium and large vans are broadly stable.

FN: You have refreshed your van line up; what are the big improvements?

OG: We have to keep customers up-to-date and help them understand the improvements we have made, especially around real-world fuel economy. With the changes to WLTP [the new fuel/emissions testing programme], some of the significant moves forward in economy do not come across in the figures. But six-speed transmission, active grille shutter and other technologies are going into these improvements.

The other journey is on connected vehicles. We have introduced FordPass Connect on the Transit Connect and (forthcoming) Fiesta van, which helps drivers to be



Ford Fiesta was voted best small car by FN Awards judges



Owen Gregory, director, fleet operations, Ford Motor Company (centre), picked up the award from Christopher Macgowan OBE, chairman of the judges (right) and event host Huw Edwards

more efficient. It includes online vehicle health checks, Wi-Fi hotspot and live traffic updates. Through the phone app, you can load multiple vehicles with basic information on location, security, tyres and oil levels, which gives benefits to small fleets now. Later this year, we will announce features that are more focused on large fleet operators.

FN: Ford opened its smart mobility innovation centre in London last year to much fanfare. What innovations have been introduced as a result?

OG: Our smart mobility ideas are forming something real. We have a last mile delivery concept that pulls together technology to create innovative future solutions for urban areas. On this pilot, the van decides how fast or slow the hub is moving and makes a decision whether to de-camp and use bikes or continue on foot. We also have a chariot initiative where minibuses go to places where public transport doesn't go. As the urban environment becomes more focused on emissions and congestion, we have to think about how fleets can continue to deliver services by bringing technology and the vehicle together.

FN: How does this link in with your plug-in hybrid pilot [Ford began testing Transit Customs PHEVs a year ago in London]?

OG: Innovative solutions for urban areas has to come together with plug-in hybrid technology. Our project is going well with our 16 fleet partners. We are learning about how the product performs, such as real-world range with a fully laden vehicle and how they fit in charging throughout the day, and driver feedback is

great. By the end of the trial, we will have a lot of insight to go into the production vehicle in 19 months.

FN: Last year you told us Ford could become more than a supplier of vehicles by providing consultancy advice to fleets. Is this now happening?

OG: We are working on clear and simple-to-understand guides on the big questions, for example, choice of fuels to help fleets understand their options, where diesel is the right solution and where other powertrains have a role to play. We want to give fleet managers the confidence to lead the discussion within their own organisations. We will also be looking to bring clarity to WLTP.

FN: Speaking of fuels, are you seeing any increase in demand for petrol vehicles?

OG: Petrol vans are of growing interest and we are seeing smaller fleets buying them. But it still represents a small part of the market. On small vans, such as Fiesta van, it will be a popular choice, and for low mileage, urban use, it could become the dominant choice. For longer journeys, diesel is still the right choice.

Ford is seeing a lot of uncertainty in the market, with the diesel debate, confusion over future taxation and access to urban centres among the causes.

"Lots of fleets are thinking about how they can make the best choice now for the near- and long-term," Gregory says. "It's a hot topic and we hope to bring some clarity to these big questions to help drive the thinking in the industry."

FACTFILE

Total car sales 102,071 (↓15.4%)
Total car fleet sales 46,672 (↓28.6%)
Fleet market share 10.51% (2017: 13.46%)
Total van sales 36,157 (↓0.32%)
Market share 39.54% (2017: 38.19%)

JUDGES' COMMENTS BEST SMALL CAR

The Fiesta is a big step forward for an already excellent car. It has a broad range of models that are suitable for all fleet applications with value for money derivatives and equipment levels. Wholelife costs are very competitive, CO₂ levels are low and the car appeals to drivers.

JUDGES' COMMENTS BEST PEOPLE CARRIER

The S-Max combines driver appeal and practicality. It is car-like to drive and is just as comfortable as an upper-medium hatch as it is ferrying seven people around. Spacious inside and with ample boot capacity, it has strong residual values and competitive costs.

314 CDI L2 H1 FWD

MERCEDES-BENZ SPRINTER

Next generation Sprinter is a staggeringly good overall package



By Simon Harris

New vans are relatively rare when compared to launches in the car sector. A proliferation of co-developed vehicles to help reduce cost, and longer lifecycles mean the next generation of a van is always worthy of a fanfare.

The new Sprinter brings with it some big changes, including, for the first time, a front-wheel drive version, lowering the entry point to the range, and allowing the van to compete on price with front-wheel drive rivals.

There are now more than 1,700 possible variants encompassing all possible body and powertrain options.

New front-wheel drive increases payload by 50kg (thanks to the absence of a driveshaft running along the length of the van to the rear wheels) and also offers an 80mm lower sill for easier loading and access.

All come with six-speed manual transmission as standard. The front-wheel drive version is offered with a new nine-speed automatic transmission, while rear-wheel drive and four-wheel drive models come with a seven-speed gearbox when automatic is selected.

For the Sprinter variants with a diesel engine and rear-wheel drive, maintenance intervals are up to 37,000 miles or two years, while front-wheel drive versions require a service after a maximum of 24,500 miles or two years.

Engines are carried over from the outgoing Sprinter, although there is slightly more power available.

The four-cylinder 2.1-litre comes with outputs of 114PS, 143PS and 163PS, while the front-wheel drive version has a higher-output third variant of 177PS, reserved exclusively for the camper van sector.

"The van is also available with the Mercedes-Benz new user interface (MBUX), revealed earlier this year"

There is also a six-cylinder 3.0-litre option with 190PS, up from 184PS in its predecessor.

Mercedes-Benz says using existing engines is a lower risk strategy than launching a new van with new engines, giving the likelihood of fewer teething problems to iron out. And the vehicle was able to comply with all current emissions legislation with the older engine.

Prototypes with all engine and transmission variants underwent test cycles totalling almost six million miles in eight locations in four countries, from intense cold in Finland and high altitudes in the Andes to extreme heat in the United States.

But Mercedes-Benz's new 2.0-litre four-cylinder engine, already being rolled out in its car range since 2015, with advanced exhaust after-treatment capability, will replace the 2.1-litre engine during the new Sprinter's lifecycle, most likely when tougher real driving emissions (RDE) tests are introduced measuring cold running from 2021.

For the new Sprinter, Mercedes-Benz is introducing more than just a van. In response to operators seeking greater ability to manage their vehicles remotely, a new connected telematics system, called Mercedes Pro Connect, is being launched with the van.

The basic system will be standard, with operators able to buy up to eight additional elements as bolt-ons, including Vehicle Supervision, Vehicle Operations, Fleet Communication, Maintenance Management and Accident Management plus a Digital Driver Log.

Vehicle Supervision displays all relevant data as well as the usage over a defined period. Vehicle Operations accesses vehicle location and has a geofencing function.

Vehicle Management Tool sends messages, addresses or contact details to the Mercedes Pro Connect app and enables information about forthcoming servicing to support maintenance management.



The controls are light and easy to use

COSTS

CV OTR price:	£30,405
RV (4yr/80k):	TBC
Fuel cost (ppm):	TBC
SMR (ppm):	TBC
Running cost (4yr/80k):	TBC
Gross vehicle weight (kg):	3,500
Payload (kg):	1,268
Load volume (cu m):	9.5
Power/torque (PS/Nm):	143/330
MPG:	29.75 (provisional)
CO ₂ :	208 (provisional)

KEY RIVAL

Ford Transit 2.0 TDCi 130 L2 H2
CV OTR price: £29,820
RV (4yr/80k): £6,725/23%
Fuel cost (ppm): 14.02
SMR (ppm): 4.29
Running cost (4yr/80k): 46.37
Gross vehicle weight (kg): 3,500
Payload (kg): 1,446
Load volume (cu m): 10.0



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

A high-speed internet connection is available for the connectivity services of Mercedes Pro Connect, but can also act as a hot spot for separate mobile devices.

For the first three years, the Mercedes Pro service Live Traffic is available free with the navigation system.

Mercedes-Benz plans to roll out Mercedes Pro Connect on other vans in its range with future updates, as well as working to accommodate LCVs of other makes on a customer's fleet so they would be able to manage and monitor all of them through the same system.

During our test drive in the Netherlands, we were assigned a task which we received through Mercedes Pro Connect, with navigation instructions to the collection point immediately programmed automatically on acceptance of the job.

The van is also available with the Mercedes-Benz new user interface (MBUX), revealed earlier this year in the A-Class hatchback, making the Sprinter only the second Mercedes-Benz model to feature it.

Our test vehicles all included this option, as well as the 10.25-inch dashboard touchscreen, although we expect most customers will keep the standard seven-inch one.

But the optional, larger screen looks modern and sophisticated, while the voice control system is good at recognising natural phrases and speech patterns.

The Sprinter makes driving feel effortless, especially when fitted with the optional automatic gearbox.

Noise intrusion is remarkably low and the controls are light and easy to use.

Optional safety features have been developed further for the new Sprinter, with Active Distance Assist Distronic celebrating its premiere, allowing the driver to set the desired speed from 12mph upwards. The system automatically maintains an adequate safety distance from the vehicle ahead.

THINKING CAP



Monday Saw an article from my mate Stephen Briers, editor of this very magazine. It said 'WLTP introduction is a total mess' and set out the confusion in the market over this issue. At Cap HPI, we are working with manufacturers, fleet companies, Government and motor trade bodies to ensure its introduction – and the way we display this new data – will work for all. But the uncertainty for fleet operators over BIK bands is not helpful in a period of rapid change. As many are saying, we need clarity very quickly from the powers that be. Briers' views and opinions are spot-on.

"Suzuki is quoting both NEDC and WLTP in its spec sheet. Confused?"

Tuesday / Wednesday Flew to Malaga to drive the all-new Suzuki Swift Sport, a bit of a watered down GTi, but great fun to drive. We collected the cars at the airport, and headed off up into the hills on some fairly twisty roads that helped prove how good its handling and road holding is.

Globally, Suzuki sold 3.1 million vehicles in 2017, with around 40,000 of those finding homes in the UK, and more now going to fleet customers as Suzuki is now taking the fleet market more seriously.

The Sport comes with just about everything you need as standard, including: sat-nav, sports seat, rear roof spoiler, air-con, plus much more. It is powered by a 1.4-litre petrol engine that produces 140PS, all mounted on a new lightweight platform.

The Sport does not offer options. It's one model only with a choice of six colours including metallic paint at no extra.

The price for this hot-hatch is £17,999 OTR and you get lots of fun for your money. Interestingly, Suzuki is quoting both NEDC and WLTP in its spec sheet for both CO₂ and mpg. CO₂ for NEDC is 125g/km and 135g/km for WLTP, confused, you will be...

■ Martin Ward will be holding a session on WLTP at this year's Fleet Live at the Birmingham NEC on October 10. Find out more at www.fleet-live.co.uk/



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

ON SALE FROM DECEMBER 2018

LEXUS ES

Executive model is in its seventh generation but this will be its UK debut

By Andrew Ryan

Lexus has unveiled its latest challenger in the executive class: the ES.

This model is now in its seventh-generation but this will be the first time it will be available in UK, where it will replace the GS in the manufacturer's range.

Full details of the UK range and specifications will be announced nearer to its on-sale date in December.

"Interior also includes a number of quirky design features which set it apart"

SAFETY TECHNOLOGY

The ES will be fitted as standard with the latest Lexus Safety System +, which adds new features including daytime cyclist detection to its pre-collision system.

The system has also been enhanced to detect pedestrians at night by increasing its radar's sensitivity and dynamic range.

ES will also be available with a two-stage adaptive high beam headlight system. As well as turning the high beam on and off automatically, its headlights, which feature 24 individual LEDs, have an adaptive light pattern which enhances illumination while reducing glare for oncoming road users.

ENGINE AND EFFICIENCY

ES will be available only as a 300h hybrid in the UK. The manufacturer's fourth-generation hybrid system combines a 2.5-litre four-cylinder petrol engine with a lighter, more compact and more power-dense electric motor than before.

Total system power is 218PS and combined cycle fuel economy is from 60.1mpg. Official fuel economy and CO₂ figures will be released closer to launch.



INTERIOR

From our initial examination of the car, the interior is spacious with a definite premium feel about it: in terms of materials and build quality it feels comparable to the class best.

The instrument panel is dominated by a large circular dial, while a 12.3-inch multimedia touchscreen positioned at the top of the centre console also adds to the luxury feel.

The interior also includes a number of quirky design features which set it apart from its rivals, such as the stubby stalks which sit above and either side of the steering wheel to operate the traction control and driving modes.



Spacious with quality to match best-in-class

5-DOOR COOPER

MINI HATCH

No major changes, but WLTP results in CO₂ rise across the range

Mini's excellent road holding and exciting handling are undiminished

By Matt de Prez

In keeping with BMW's tradition of mild facelifts, updates to the Mini Hatch for 2018 have been modest.

The new model has some re-designed headlamps, which now incorporate LED technology as standard.

Also there are some changes to the infotainment system. All models now get a 6.5-inch display with Apple Carplay and there is a new option package that bundles a host of connected services with sat-nav and a larger display.

At the rear, an injection of patriotism comes in the form of union jack shaped LED tail lights, reflecting Mini's position as a British carmaker.

The headline announcement at the launch event, however, was a new Mini Yours Individual scheme.

It allows drivers of the new Mini Hatch to buy personalised trim pieces, produced using 3D printing technology.

The parts are designed to be fitted, easily, by the user and can be replaced with the standard parts before the vehicle reaches the end of its lifecycle.

Mini says this gives the driver a greater level of personalisation, but it also expects some company fleets to use the products for branding purposes.

Changes under the skin are minimal, although the base-model Mini One now has a de-tuned version of the Cooper's 1.5-litre three-cylinder engine, replacing the 1.2-litre unit.

CO₂ emissions have risen across the range, as a result of WLTP and the Cooper version we tested now emits 116g/km – a jump of 7g/km.

Performance is unchanged, so the 136PS motor can accelerate the Mini Cooper to 60mph in a respectable 8.2 seconds. Mini One models complete the sprint in 10.3 seconds, with emissions from 112g/km.



All models now get a 6.5-inch display

Mini offers a new seven-speed automatic gearbox on the refreshed model – replacing the old six-speed unit – which improves the emissions slightly, to 114g/km on the Cooper.

Pricing has also been increased, which means company car drivers will take a harder hit in their benefit-in-kind tax. When comparing the old Cooper with the new one, like-for-like, BIK will increase by almost £100 per year.

So, should drivers disregard the new Mini in favour of one of its recently launched counterparts?

Well, the Mini sits at the top of its class for desirability and limitless levels of customisation. To drive, it is still the best in the sector. It has excellent road-holding, exciting handling and an unbeatable sense of solidity.

The three-cylinder turbocharged engine is more refined than the smaller-capacity units found in similar cars and its fuel consumption should be on par, with official figures suggesting 55mpg is possible.

The more aesthetically pleasing three-door version is likely to appeal to user-choosers. It is also £700 cheaper.

COSTS

P11D price	£17,825
BIK tax band (2018/19)	24%
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£356
Class 1A NIC	£590
Annual VED	£165 then £140
RV (4yr/80k)	£6,575
Fuel cost (ppm)	9.85
AFR (ppm)	14
Running cost (4yr/80k)	26.48ppm

SPEC

Power (PS)/torque (Nm)	136/220
CO ₂ emissions (g/km)	116
Top speed (mph)	129
0-62mph (sec)	8.2
Fuel efficiency (mpg)	55.4

KEY RIVAL

Ford Fiesta 5Dr 1.0T 125 ST-Line	
P11D price	£18,115
BIK tax band (2018/19)	20%
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£725
Class 1A NIC	£500
Annual VED	£125 then £140
RV (4yr/80k)	£5,250
Fuel cost (ppm)	8.31
AFR (ppm)	11
Running cost (4yr/80k)	28.46ppm

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

CompanyCar

IN ACTION

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SEAT IBIZA FR 1.0
TSI 115 DSG

Daughter: "What's this handle for?"
Me: "What handle?"
Daughter: "The one on the door."
Me: "That's for opening the window."
Daughter: "What?"
Me: "You wind it round and it opens the window."
Daughter: "That's so weird! Why hasn't it got a button?"
Me: "I don't know..."

The conversation made me smile and prompted me to consider just how far technology has come in such a seemingly short space of time – not just in cars.

It doesn't seem too long ago that we weren't permanently connected to the internet anywhere and anytime. If you wanted to contact someone you had to speak or write to them, something that I'm sure she would find equally bizarre.

"Why hasn't it got a button (to wind down the window)"

As far as windy windows go though, she has a point. I haven't seen them in a modern car for years.

Maybe I'm spoilt... but as cars are becoming more and more packed with technology and electronics to make our journeys safer, easier and more comfortable, the lack of rear electric windows in the Ibiza seems a strange omission, especially when you consider the range of driver aids the car has to offer.

These include: an eight-inch touchscreen with Full Link technology (Apple CarPlay and Android Auto), navigation system with voice recognition, parking sensors, rear-view camera, Bluetooth hands-free connectivity, four different drive profile modes (Normal-Sport-Eco-Individual), which alter steering response, throttle response and gear shifts mode (only DSG models), emergency brake assist and our car is fitted with optional adaptive cruise control (£170).

But for rear seat passengers it's just a case of retro motoring!

Luke Neal



The S90 has run-off road protection but we are in no rush to test it

VOLVO S90

D4 INSCRIPTION

Safety features pass muster, but some feel odd

COSTS

P11D price	£37,000
Additional options	£5,950
BIK tax band	25%
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£1,875
Class 1A NIC	£1,294
Annual VED	£160 then £140
RV (4yr/80k)	£11,900
Fuel cost (ppm)	8.82
AFR (ppm)	11
Running cost (ppm)	46.35

SPEC

Engine (cc)	1969
Power (PS)	190
Torque (Nm)	400
CO₂ emissions (g/km)	116
Manufacturer mpg	64.2
Real-world mpg*	38
Test mpg	41.3
Max speed (mph)	140
0-62mph (sec)	8.2
Current mileage	4,127

Running cost data supplied by
KeeResources (4yr/80k)
* Data supplied by Equa Index

TEST TIMELINE

Start ————— End

By Stephen Briers

Bing-bing-bing-bing – the sound of the S90's City Safety front collision warning is becoming a weekly occurrence, as the big Volvo mistakes yet another parked car as an impending crash.

Volvo's safety technology is among the best in the industry, so if it still gets easily confused on narrow roads, it suggests we remain some way off from a foolproof system.

Each time the alert is activated, it is accompanied by a brief dab of the brakes, before the system realises that I am still in control of the car and gives way.

I've not tested the run-off road protection system – which automatically tightens the front seatbelts should the car inadvertently leave the road – nor the collapsible seat frames which help prevent spinal injuries. And, I've no plans to. But, I have tested the Pilot Assist with adaptive cruise control and, while a little unnerving, it works well.

It is best employed on the motorway, where control of the speed through acceleration and braking combines with steering

inputs to keep the car within the lane markings. You have to keep your hands on the wheel, which creates the odd sensation of the wheel moving your hands, but so far it has been faultless.

I've also tried it on A-roads with no issues, although the steering has a slight delay on bends. Hold your nerve and it does navigates safely, but it's hard not to manually override. As mentioned, I've no desire to test run-off road protection!

Other safety/driver assistance systems also get the big tick, including the LED headlights with active high beam. It is quick to react to prevent dazzling when sensing an approaching car; some systems are less diligent – some cars we've driven have switched to high beam when following another vehicle.

One final quibble – although by the time of the next test it should no longer be a problem due to the change in weather. Switching on the rear screen heater sometimes interferes with the radio signal.

It will be less of an issue with the brighter weather, but it does seem a bit of an oversight on the part of Volvo's engineers.

"Hold your nerve and it navigates safely, but it's hard not to manually override"

JAGUAR XF

2.0D 180 PORTFOLIO

In the long run the XF emerges with much praise



The XF shapes up well on fuel efficiency and running costs

FINAL TEST

COSTS

P11D price	£37,925
BIK tax band (2018/19)	27%
Annual BIK tax (40%)	£4,028
Class 1A NIC	£1,390
Annual VED	£205 then £140
RV (4yr/80k)	£10,850/29%
Fuel cost (ppm)	8.49
AFR (ppm)	11
Running cost (ppm)	47.8

SPEC

Engine (cc)	1,999
Power (PS)	180
Torque (Nm)	430
CO₂ emissions (g/km)	114
Manufacturer mpg	65.7
Real-world mpg*	45.7
Test mpg	51.2
Max speed (mph)	136
0-62mph (sec)	8.0
Final mileage	11,388

Running cost data supplied by
KeeResources (4yr/80k)
* Data supplied by Equa Index

TEST TIMELINE

Start ————— End

AT A GLANCE – THE REST OF OUR FLEET



Renault Koleos 1.6DCI Signature Nav

Moving house provided a perfect opportunity to test out the load-carrying ability of the Koleos. With almost 1,000 litres of luggage space to fill it was more than adequate, with the extra weight having little impact on performance. The boot continued to impress during the inevitable Ikea trip.



Škoda Octavia 1.0 TSI SE Technology

A trip to Telford for a fleet profile gave our photographer Chris Lowndes the chance to get behind the wheel of the Octavia. He was impressed by the car's punchy 1.0-litre engine, smooth ride and spacious interior but the sat-nav's instructions proved inconsistent on the journey.

VAUXHALL INSIGNIA
GRAND SPORT 1.6
CDTI 136 SRI
VX-LINE NAV

It's a long time since I've spent any significant time behind the wheel of a Vauxhall. It's even longer since I had the opportunity to interact with its dealer network.

Recently we received a notice from Vauxhall that a safety check needed to be carried out on the rear seatbelts of our Insignia Grand Sport, and perhaps with claims of slow reactions over fire risks with the second-generation Zafira, the company is extra keen to ensure any problems are dealt with promptly.

While *Fleet News* is located on the outskirts of the sprawling Peterborough metropolis, I'm based in the Lincolnshire fens.

It meant that rather than using the main dealer in Peterborough, around 15 miles away, it was more convenient for me to travel just six miles to Taylor's of Spalding.

Set along a busy main road in the town, the facility feels as modern as the one in Peterborough, and the friendly service desk staff were able to accommodate me within 48 hours of my call.

The work was carried out within 10 minutes, and I was on my way again with barely enough time to drink my complimentary hot chocolate. There was no problem with our car.

Much has been written about Vauxhall dealers recently, with an expected downsizing of the retail network following the brand's takeover by PSA.

It was reported in April that contracts would be terminated and retailers would need to reapply to take on the franchise again. No doubt dealers will act in their best interests, but it would be a pity if the network was to lose any of its quality outlets.

Simon Harris

ANDY LILLYWHITE

FLEET, ESTATES AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES MANAGER AT YORKSHIRE HOUSING

Lillywhite is a man in pursuit of perfection. He likes testing himself and is always ready to step outside his comfort zone. Helping others is high on his list of priorities

A book I recommend is Schwarzenegger's *Encyclopaedia of Modern Bodybuilding*. I regularly train, it gives me focus and is an excellent stress reliever. The book was a gift thinking I would never read it, but when I finally did many years later it was a massive surprise. The focus on goals and motivation is the same as for anything else you choose to set yourself.

Away from the office I love carp fishing. I train a minimum of five days a week which keeps me feeling young and healthy. And I follow Formula 1 although my childhood team McLaren are really testing my loyalty.

My first memory associated with a car was when my dad bought a Ford Sierra soon after its launch. I remember the spotlights in the grill. The car was revolutionary in its styling. Sat in the passenger's seat, I felt like royalty.

If Prime Minister for the day I would house all war veterans and bring in timely treatment for those with mental illness.

I'd like to be remembered for living life, giving life and regretting nothing. Holding the British record for carp fishing and being a doer, to achieve no matter what the situation.

My favourite film is *Saving Private Ryan*. I lost my dad when young, so my grandad, who was a WWII veteran, became my father figure. I have seen it many times. I just sit in awe about what men and women did for our futures.

The most pivotal moment in my life was the birth of my daughter. It turned my world upside down. I grew up overnight realising the responsibility I had for the rest of my life. It was a scary at the time but so rewarding.

The advice I would give to my 18-year-old self would be that you can achieve anything you choose to, put yourself out of your comfort zone and failure is learning to never give up.

The three vehicles I would like in my garage would be an Audi RS6 Avant for just brutal performance and handling. As my Sunday drive a convertible E type Jaguar. And an Overfinch Range Rover for my out and about adventure days.

My pet hate is being late! My grandad firmly installed punctuality in me.

First fleet role In the late nineties I worked as a breakdown mechanic and tyre fitter in Yorkshire. I loved the summer months but the winter weather was brutal.

Career goals at Yorkshire Housing I hope to continue to progress through to director level, ensuring my teams progress with me and continue to deliver assurance to the housing association.

Biggest achievement in business A tough one. I started on the bottom rung of the career ladder with Yorkshire Housing 17 years ago. I soon realised the rewards are there if you're prepared to work hard and put yourself out of your comfort zone.

Biggest career influence Without doubt my daughter, she's my drive. My goal is to ensure she does well to achieve her own goals and not to endure hardship like I have. A proud dad moment, she's now a student paramedic.

Biggest mistake in business I used to take a very singular view of a problem. Not having the ability to come at it from different angles really hampered me.

Leadership style Calm and approachable. It's important people are comfortable with you as it makes the whole relationship that much easier. I'm always chasing perfection and want to be the best.

If I wasn't in fleet I would love to work with the ambulance service and I've previously volunteered for two and a half years.

Childhood ambition Like a lot of boys I wanted to be a policeman.

Most memorable driver moment I once was ranked third overall for the British Schools Karting Championship. Only hampered slightly by barrel rolling several times down the back straight. We turned over the kart and I finished the race with a broken collar bone.

FleetNews PORTFOLIO

WHAT WE DO IN YOUR INDUSTRY

Fleet News magazine

The leading business publication for the fleet sector, offering insight, analysis, best practice and in-depth profiles of fleets and suppliers every fortnight. But don't take our word for it: 96% of readers say *Fleet News* is the most useful fleet publication (*Fleet News* reader survey). Every issue is packed with information that helps companies to run efficient and effective fleets – and our readership of 16,000 is restricted to named decision-makers, running fleets of 10-plus vehicles.

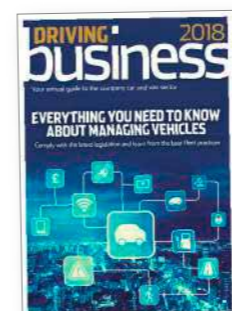
Commercial Fleet magazine

Commercial Fleet offers insight into the world of light commercial vehicles and trucks to provide operators with detailed analysis on key topics such as operations, safety, remarketing and the environment. Case studies in every issue provide best practice advice to help you to improve your efficiency. The magazine is supported by the commercialfleet.org website and events.



Fleet events

Fleet News events are the biggest and best in the sector. Our annual awards night attracts more than 1,500 people; the FN50 Dinner sees 950 leasing, manufacturer, rental and supplier companies networking and *Commercial Fleet* Summit provide insight into key areas of fleet operation; monthly roundtables enable 10-15 fleets to discuss issues and share solutions.



Driving Business magazine

This annual magazine is sent to managing directors and finance directors at 25,000 small to medium enterprises (SMEs) that are running fewer than 50 vehicles. Focusing on the key elements of running cars and vans, *Driving Business* provides practical advice to reduce cost and improve safety with a minimum of time and effort.

Websites and newsletters

The *Fleet News* website is an extensive library of best practice advice, fleet case studies, news and tools. Compare car and van running costs, check how much tax employees will pay and find out which models use the least fuel with our easy-to-use tools. We also send *Ignition*, a monthly newsletter which contains car reviews and interviews not included with our print magazine.

Fleet Leasing magazine

Fleet Leasing provides insight and analysis to board level executives, senior management and regional sales staff at contract hire and leasing companies. Its objective is to inform and educate about fleet trends, new models and technological developments, once a quarter, supported by a website regularly updated with the latest leasing news.

Bespoke publications

Magazines, supplements, brochures and digital products are produced for commercial partners. These bespoke publications inform fleets about companies and topics relevant to their business. They include manufacturer and supplier reports, in which *Fleet News* journalists interview key personnel to unearth the developments of interest to fleet operators.

Next issue: Richard Crook, director of fleet, DHL International (UK)

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