



SPRING 2023

# STANDARD MAGAZINE

## CLEAN SWEEP

What London's ULEZ expansion means for transport operators

## FORS LEADS THE WAY

Pivotal role means FORS remains leading accreditation scheme

## BENTLEYS TO BINS

Old refuse trucks given a new emission-free face

PLUS: NEW MOVE BOOSTS FORS CREDENTIALS EVEN FURTHER

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## About us

**Management Publisher:** Matthew Eisenegger **Editorial Editor:** Trevor Gehlcken **Telephone:** 07747 787403.  
**Email:** gehlcken@hotmail.com **Art Editor:** Leo Gehlcken **Telephone:** 01257 231521 **Email:** design@cvdriver.com **Contributors** Steve Banner, Richard Simpson, John Challen **Editorial Address** Commercial Vehicle Media & Publishing Ltd, 4th Floor 19 Capesthorne Drive, Eaves Green, Chorley, Lancashire. PR7 3QQ **Telephone:** 01257 231521 **Email:** matthew@cvdriver.com  
**Advertising Sales:** David Johns **Telephone:** 01388 517906 **Mobile:** 07590 547343 **Email:** sales@thestandardmagazine.co.uk

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**Contact FORS:** **Web:** www.fors-online.org.uk **Tel:** 08448 09 09 44  
**Email:** enquiries@fors-online.org.uk @FORS\_online (Twitter and LinkedIn)



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## HELLO & WELCOME

It's time for yet another issue of The Standard and, as usual, our spring edition is packed with news, views and features – all aimed at helping FORS-affiliated transport companies to run their fleets more safely and in an environmentally friendly way.

And we are giving readers the chance to have a say in what we include in the magazine in future. Follow the link above and let us hear your views. We are also giving you the option of how you receive the magazine, either by post or digitally. We look forward to hearing from you.

As every month goes by, the FORS Team are pushing forward their offerings to provide operators with better and better services and on page 8 we find that FORS has become a strategic partner with another safety organisation CLOCS.

FORS will now play a pivotal role in campaigning to raise awareness of work-related road risk and supporting those within the construction sector to achieve best practice and the safest fleet operating standards. This can only be good news for FORS-affiliated companies and shows how, as time progresses, UK-wide action to improve road safety in general is becoming more and more joined up.

On page 9 we see how gaining FORS Gold accreditation can bring many benefits. The Transport Manager at lighting specialist Orlight tells us exactly what those benefits have been for his company.

Meanwhile, London's Ultra-Low Emission Zone is being expanded, so any FORS affiliates operating in the capital need to study our feature on pages 14 and 15 to get the lowdown on what this will mean for transport firms.

Staff retention is also a major topic of concern for transport operators as there is a massive shortage of truck drivers at present, so we turn the spotlight in that direction on pages 18 to 20 to see how the crisis in the industry is being dealt with.

There's a major face-to-face interview with Steve Agg, chairman of the Governance and Standards Advisory Group (GSAG), on pages 22-23, while on pages 26-28 we meet a specialist conversion company which transforms old diesel waste disposal trucks into usable electric ones – a fascinating

new move in the journey towards zero emission transport, while on pages 36 to 38 we revisit the well-known O'Donovan truck fleet to see how its environmental plans are progressing.

There's plenty of legal advice in these pages, including how to avoid bridge strikes and details of what transport firms need to do to ensure they comply with the financial requirements of the Traffic Commissioners.

One big question mark among firms thinking of investing in large electric trucks is how these vehicles will fare under different climates and environment so we packed our expert truck journalist Richard Simpson off to Norway to test how Scania's new electric trucks get on in sub-zero snowy temperatures. His report is a interesting one indeed and features on pages 40-41.

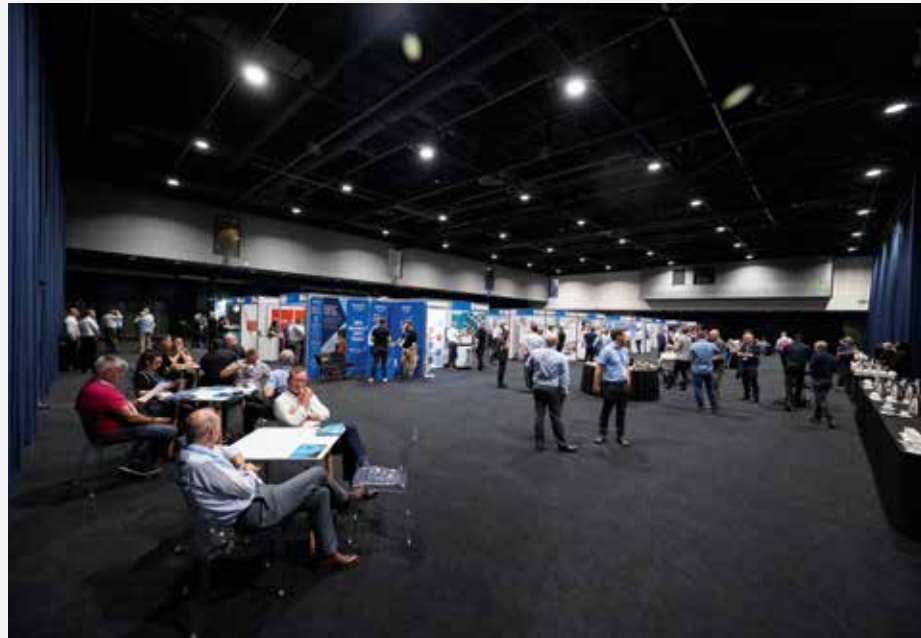
On the safety front, meanwhile, we report on how FORS has joined with Project Edward (standing for Every Day Without A Road Death) to increase its standing in the field of road safety even further.

Rounding off this bumper issue is a page of good solid advice from technical expert Abax on how transport fleets can improve their efficiency and thus save cash.

With so many issues and problems besetting our industry at present, FORS affiliates need every bit of information and advice they can get to deal successfully with them – and we hope that these articles help them to do just that.

*Read on and enjoy...*





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Looking back over another successful year for FORS

# 18-20

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How transport firms are dealing with the current driver shortage crisis



# 22-23

## Left: Face to face

Steve Agg explains why FORS remains the leading fleet accreditation scheme



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## Right: Bentleys to bins

Luxury refurb specialist kits out old refuse lorries with new emission-free power



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Flexible friend

FORS improves its Practitioner Training rules [p10](#)

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Belting up

Drivers face more legal action over offences [p10](#)

FORS secures strategic link with CLOCS for improved road vehicle safety



Above: FORS has become a strategic partner with CLOCS

FORS has become a strategic partner with CLOCS (Construction Logistics and Community Safety) in a bid to further enhance its aim of better safety on the roads.

While FORS has been a CLOCS Champion since 2013, the scheme has been formally appointed as a CLOCS Strategic Partner following the launch of a new collaboration programme. FORS joins a number of other existing CLOCS Champions and influential industry stakeholders in helping to promote the safety of vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists.

The fleet accreditation scheme will play a pivotal role in campaigning to raise awareness of work-related road risk and

supporting those within the construction sector to achieve best practice and the safest fleet operating standards. For well over a decade, FORS has been the fleet accreditation scheme of choice in construction supply chains and the partnership underpins FORS' commitment to work with

**I'm excited to see how this strengthening of ties will bolster our efforts in raising safety, efficiency and environmental standards**

like-minded organisations to drive up standards in transport and logistics.

FORS Concession Director, Ian Henderson, said: "The CLOCS Strategic Partnership

initiative aligns perfectly with our mission to help FORS Accredited Operators work safer, smarter and greener. FORS has always had a close working relationship with CLOCS – after all, operators with FORS Silver accreditation are automatically compliant with CLOCS, so the two standards work neatly in tandem. I'm excited to see how this strengthening of ties will bolster our joint efforts in raising safety, efficiency and environmental standards on the roads, protecting vulnerable road users, and supporting the FORS Community."

CLOCS Strategic Partners are not required to make any 'formal' commitment, other than pledging to work together to identify opportunities for mutual

support, such as promoting each other's initiatives and other key activities. FORS will provide its resources, expertise, support and thought leadership to enhance the portfolio offered by members of the CLOCS Strategic Partnership.

CLOCS Programme Director, Andy Brooke, added: "CLOCS has enjoyed a long-standing and collaborative relationship with FORS. The CLOCS Standard is aligned with FORS Silver accreditation as we believe this is the right benchmark for fleet operations. We're now delighted to have FORS as a CLOCS Strategic Partner and look forward to working even more closely to help create the right environment for the safest vehicle journeys". •

Orlight sees massive savings with FORS Gold Accreditation



Lighting product specialist Orlight has seen some massive benefits in terms of cash saving and safety after achieving FORS Gold Accreditation five years ago.

In addition to having a six-year incident-free record across its fleet of six vans, the company says its upgraded policies and processes have realised transport-related savings of between 20 and 25 per cent.

Orlight Transport Manager Claudiu Popa attributes the company's operational savings directly to FORS. He said: "The performance management toolkit really helped us set our targets and gave us the

key to creating sustainable business solutions. Taking advantage of the FORS eLearning modules provided tools to create better policies and procedures as well as significantly improve our MPG, thereby also reducing our carbon footprint."

In addition to his responsibilities as transport manager, Popa is also the elected Fuel and Emissions and Road Risk Champion. He recognises how crucial FORS driver training has been to improving fuel usage and has recorded savings of up to 17.5 per cent since becoming FORS accredited.

Orlight drivers are

provided with regular access to FORS eLearning and in-class training courses and, to date, all drivers have completed both Safe Urban Driving (SUD) and LoCITY Driving training.

Popa commented: "Upon initial examination of the requirements and benefits of joining FORS, we found that it aligned well with our company's commitment to enhancing safety and with our goals to increase fuel efficiency and reduce our environmental impact.

"We have consistently placed a high priority on compliance and safety, so we were able to attain our Bronze and Silver

accreditation without delay. Additionally, being a FORS Accredited Operator facilitated our application process for ISO (the international organisation for standardisation) accreditation as many of the necessary procedures and policies were already in place, making the process and ISO audit relatively uncomplicated."

Despite being Gold accredited for the past five years, Orlight's policy is one of continuous improvement. New routing software and telematics partners in 2022 aimed to improve the fleet's route efficiency, providing access to more detailed reports on idling, MPG and driver behaviour. This subsequently had a positive impact on lowering emissions.

Next on the agenda at Orlight is the desire to upgrade the fleet to alternatively powered vehicles. With a remit to improve emissions, range, noise pollution and payload, the company is considering all options to achieve its emission-reduction goals. •

New VisionTrack system hailed as a safety game changer

Artificial Intelligence (AI) video telematics and connected fleet data specialist VisionTrack is transforming commercial vehicle fleet safety with the launch of a new post-analysis solution. NARA (Notification, Analysis and Risk Assessment) will revolutionise how vehicle camera footage is assessed and help vehicle operators

to reduce road deaths and injuries, says the company.

Richard Kent, President of Global Sales at FORS Associate VisionTrack, said: "Our cloud-based NARA software is a true game changer in the world of video telematics as it will help save time, costs and most importantly lives, by providing proactive risk

intervention and accurate incident validation.

"NARA removes false positives and monitors driver behaviour without the need for human involvement. With traditional video telematics solutions, commercial fleets can experience hundreds of triggered daily events, so this will enable them to deliver more efficient

working, while not compromising on road safety." •







## New flexible approach to FORS Practitioner training

**F**ORS has launched a more flexible way in which managers can become FORS Practitioners. FORS Training Manager Alice Busnati said: "Instead of completing 10 mandatory courses, from 1 April operators will be able to become a FORS Practitioner by completing six mandatory modules and pick the remaining four from a group of nine optional modules."

Also, from 1 April, operators will be able to book any of five new FORS Practitioner modules covering a range of topics. These are:

### **FP11 – Managing Driver Fatigue Risk**

Learn how to develop a

fatigue risk management plan that includes preventative and counteracting measures.

### **FP12 – Managing Drivers' Hours**

Learn the legal framework of drivers' hours, working time and record keeping and how these interact with each other.

### **FP13 – Managing Abnormal Indivisible Loads**

Learn the legal framework for transporting abnormal loads and both STGO and Special Order Movement notices.

### **FP14 – Introduction to Fleet Auditing**

Learn what it takes to be an objective auditor and the

basics of auditing a fleet operation.

### **FP15 – Road Traffic Collision Investigation**

Learn what it takes to be an unbiased investigator and the techniques needed to investigate collision evidence.

### **How the new approach works**

- From 1 April, all 10 required modules to reach FORS Practitioner status must be completed within 12 months from the completion of the first module.

- All modules undertaken prior to 1 January 2022 can no longer be counted towards the FORS Practitioner

journey. This is because FORS has recently changed and improved the modules. For example, if you completed FP01 and FP02 in December 2021, you'll have to take these modules again (though they will be the newer versions) if you want to achieve FORS Practitioner status.

- FORS Practitioner certificates are valid for five years from the date you completed your last training module.
- Individual Practitioner modules have an expiry date of five years.

- Email: [training@fors-online.org.uk](mailto:training@fors-online.org.uk) or log on to: [www.fors-online.org.uk/cms/faqs-fors-practitioner](http://www.fors-online.org.uk/cms/faqs-fors-practitioner)

## Electric vehicle prices may rise by 10% after Brexit deal ends

Transport chiefs are being warned the price of many electric vehicles (EVs), which are sold or made in the UK and Europe, could increase by 10% or more from 2024 when tariff exemptions, agreed as part of the Brexit deal, end.

The UK-EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement (TCA) temporarily exempted EVs from rules that said products must be substantially made in Britain or the bloc to qualify for the EU's zero tariff, zero quota regime, because EV batteries are predominantly imported from Asia.

Both the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA) and the Society of Motor Manufacturers (SMMT) are

asking for the rules of origin exemption to be extended from 31 December, 2023, when it is now due to end, because they say there are

**The UK-EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement (TCA) temporarily exempted EVs from rules that said products must be substantially made in Britain**

not enough batteries being made in Europe.

If the exemption cannot be extended, many EVs moving between the EU and UK would pay a 10% tariff, increasing prices for fleets.

## Penalty points ahead for seat belt offences?

The Government is considering introducing penalty points for drivers caught not wearing seatbelts, after figures showed it is a common feature of fatalities.

In a written answer to a question from Barry Sheerman MP, the Department for Transport (DfT) acknowledged that in almost a third of all vehicle

occupant fatalities recorded, seatbelts were not worn.

"This is unacceptably high and we have been considering options to tackle this, including the potential merits of introducing penalty points," said a DfT minister.

"This might form part of the Department for Transport's planned call for evidence on motoring offences." •

**Below:** Some fatalities are caused by people failing to belt up



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# LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING AHEAD

2022 was a busy and exciting year for FORS – and there are plenty of exciting plans for 2023



**Above:** The Fifth Annual FORS Conference in July was a tremendous success

The year 2022 was a real turning point in the development of FORS. Major changes included Sopra Steria Ltd taking over the concession and the launch of version 6 of the FORS Standard.

Sopra Steria engaged in extensive two-way communication with the FORS community, including a series of spring and summer briefings conducted across the regions in April, May and June, followed by the fifth FORS Annual Conference in July and more Regional Briefings from September to November.

## Auditing

The key business of assessing and accrediting operators continued, with the pass rate for Bronze audits standing at over 82 per cent and 90 per cent for Silver and Gold.

Seventeen new FORS auditors were appointed in the final quarter of the year and all current auditors have completed

refresher training to align with version 6 of the FORS Standard.

With over 4,700 operators under the FORS banner, 27 companies were suspended, two terminated and 262 complaints were received and dealt with.

## Training

FORS reviewed its manager and driver training material to ensure compliance with modern legislation and expectations.

Headline numbers from the annual review include:

- 130,104 participants undertook eLearning modules
- 27,081 participants undertook Security and Counter Terrorism modules
- 13,602 Pedestrian Safe modules were undertaken.

## Development

Future developments for FORS are shaped by GSAG: the Governance and Standards Advisory Group. This is made up of representatives from member companies and bodies from a variety of industry sectors and interests: BOC, the City of London, CLOCS, the CPT, DHL, civil engineers EKFB, Flannery Plant Hire, GS plus, Highways England, HS2, Logistics UK, MPA, North-East Combined Authority, O'Donovan Waste, the Road Haulage Association, Royal Borough of Greenwich, Serco, Tarmac, Transport for Greater Manchester, Transport for London, Travis Perkins, UPS and Wolseley.

GSAG's tasks for the coming year include providing advice and feedback from the implementation of Version 6 and preparation of Version 7, which will be presented in the latter half of this year.

The rapid planned introduction of Version 7 reflects the pace with which the industry is currently evolving with the introduction of new vehicles, technology and processes.

## Outreach

Last year saw FORS Regional Briefings delivered to Accredited Operators at locations around the country from May to November. Topics included the role of Sopra Steria in the future direction of FORS and transition to Version 6. FORS also attended 16 key industry events to meet operators and spread key FORS messages.

July saw the first FORS Annual Conference and Exhibition for two years, with the theme of 'working together

## 2023 changes will be based on four pillars: communication, value for money, agility and service outcomes



**Above:** Silver operators reduced CO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, and PM<sub>10</sub> emissions by five per cent

**Right:** FORS Silver operators made many improvements in environmental impact and safety

towards a safe and sustainable future'.

A post-event survey revealed 85 per cent of attendees found the content 'very useful', nearly 90 per cent said their knowledge of FORS 'had been improved' and 85 per cent said they would like to attend future events.

The next Annual Conference is being planned for November 7 this year.

## Quantifiable results

Achievements by operators noted by FORS auditors show that between 2021 and 2022, FORS Silver operators made many quantifiable performance improvements in environmental impact and safety.

Overall, the 139 audited Silver Operators improved fleet mpg by three per cent and reduced CO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub> emissions by five per cent.

The number of RIDDOR (reportable injuries, diseases and dangerous incidents) fell by 10 per cent, serious injury incidents fell by 31 per cent and slight injury incidents by six per cent.

In the wider picture, FORS supported Road Safety Week in November, encouraging its Accredited Operators to get involved in a variety of ways.

## Helping

The FORS helpline contacted dormant FORS operators and found that 70 per cent wished to rejoin the scheme. These operators are now in the process of returning to FORS.

The Helpline also offered advice to operators looking to upgrade from Bronze to Silver and Silver to Gold membership.

Operators choosing to leave the scheme are also contacted by the helpline to complete a survey, the results of which are used by FORS to inform its service transformation. The helpline also



**Above:** There has been a dramatic fall in the number of incidents reported by operators

took over 17,000 incoming calls and responded to over 26,000 emails.

## Growing

FORS welcomed 424 new Accredited Operators, with a total fleet size of 4,769 vehicles based in four countries and 273 cities.

By year-end, over 4,700 FORS Accredited Operators were operating in 15 countries across Europe, with more than 94,000 vehicles carrying the FORS logo.

There are now 108 FORS Associate companies, with eight having joined during the year.

These offer FORS Accredited Operators enhanced benefits of a range of services from alcohol and drug testing to wheel alignment.

## The road ahead

After a year of transition to Sopra Steria's management, 2023 is planned to be a year of transformation. Changes will be based on four pillars: communication, value for money, agility and service outcomes.

Operators will be kept informed of changes, new funding streams for FORS sought, products and services to help businesses thrive will be offered and there will be a refocus on service outcomes with safe, sustainable business operations at their heart.

The flagship project of the year will be the Future of Accreditation, which will focus on simplifying FORS, while providing regulatory and enforcement agencies with greater confidence in the FORS Standards and auditing processes. ■



# BRIDGE STRIKES: A NEVER-ENDING PROBLEM

Transport managers need to get a heads-up on the problem or risk severe costs and legal consequences, says **Ian Jones** of Backhouse Jones Solicitors

**B**ridge strikes are still very much a hot topic for the Traffic Commissioners and I consistently see operators and drivers called to hearings before the Traffic Commissioner – whether that be a preliminary hearing, public inquiry and/or a driver conduct hearing – to consider the culpability of commercial vehicles involved in the incidents.

Regardless of the nature of the incident or the circumstances that surround it, operators are expected to have systems and processes in place to prevent bridge strikes from occurring in the first place. This could be ensuring that relevant and comprehensive training is in place

involved. Our chamber's regulatory team deals with numerous public inquiries, preliminary hearings and driver conduct hearings arising from bridge strikes where the operators, transport managers and drivers all face potentially significant action.

Transport managers have to notify the Traffic Commissioner's office of any relevant matters which affect good repute and professional competence within 28 days.

This includes notifying the Traffic

Commissioner of a bridge strike incident. I regularly assist operators in making such notifications.

Given the ongoing prominence of the issue of bridge strikes and to assist operators in preventing them, my company has used its expertise to develop an eTraining course which features on a monthly basis – 'A Bridge Too Far' that covers what bridge strikes mean in practice for operators and drivers and the implications of getting it wrong when one happens. ■

**Below:** Operators are expected to have systems and processes in place to prevent bridge strikes from happening

**Regulatory action is a real possibility against the operator's licence which will affect the transport manager's repute**

for drivers (and agency drivers) or implementing accessible policies and guidance documents.

The reality is that regulatory action is a real possibility against the operator's licence, affecting the transport manager's repute and the professional vocational entitlement of the driver



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Words: **Steve Banner**

# UNDervalUED AND UNDERPAID

But things are rapidly changing as more transport firms see the need to recruit and retain the best drivers



**S**ome truck drivers are enjoying better pay at long last, receiving pay rises last year. The wage uplift has gone some way towards addressing the chronic shortage that has bedevilled the industry in recent times – but while proper remuneration undoubtedly matters, other concerns do too.

Drivers want to feel valued by their employers – and that is something that employers recognise.

Some months ago, Pontypridd, South Wales-based FORS Silver Accredited Operator Inter-Haul Pallet Services acquired three highly-specified MAN TGX Individual Lion S 26.510 tractor units.

Lesser trucks would doubtless do the job required of them just as well, but there was a key reason why the company opted for the trio – driver satisfaction.

Inter-Haul Managing Director, Mark Waite, said: “We like to ensure our drivers have a nice, safe and secure working environment and a comfortable and well-appointed cab when they are away from home.

“It’s a tough job being on the road and we put a high value on the great job our drivers do,” he continued. “These vehicles have integrated televisions, microwaves and coffee machines, which also helps with driver recruitment and retention.”

The units were included in an order for 11

**Above:** Truck drivers are enjoying better pay at long last, with many receiving rises of between 15% and 20% last year

MANs, which also embraced six TGX 26.470 tractors and a pair of 26-tonne TGS rigids.

Driving is, of course, a stressful job and responsible employers will do all they can to mitigate the pressures their drivers and other members of staff face. FORS can help, thanks to the links it has forged with Affinity Partner Incorpore.

For more than 20 years, Incorpore has provided businesses across the UK with the means to improve the health, fitness and mental wellbeing of the people who work for them. Its YourFitnessClub



**Above:** Inter-Haul Pallet Services acquired a range of MAN trucks

programme is now open to FORS Accredited Operators.

Once an employer joins the programme, the subscription can be managed through a dedicated customer portal. From there, employers can share the many benefits directly with employees.

YourFitness Club offers discounted gym memberships at more than 450 locations across the UK, including Pure Gym and Nuffield Health, with facilities that include swimming pools, group exercise classes and personal trainers. Online workout options from providers such as Les Mills on Demand and FiiT can be streamed to laptops, tablets or smartphones.

MyActiveDiscounts offers savings on hundreds of products, including healthy food. Nutritional practitioners are available to work with YourFitnessClub members, providing practical advice to help with weight management, digestive health and other health conditions.

Many drivers suffer from back pain and injuries caused by ill-advisedly jumping down from cabs rather than using the steps. YourFitnessClub provides online consultations and video appointments with physiotherapists who can advise on personalised exercise programmes and customised injury prevention plans.

FORS Concession Director, Ian Henderson, said: “The association with YourFitnessClub through Incorpore is particularly welcome at a time when so many suffer with challenges to mental and

physical health. It’s an important part of being an employer to consider employee wellbeing and we hope this opportunity finds its way to where it is needed most.”

Transport companies are offering a host of other employment benefits in a bid to attract and keep workers.

A FORS Bronze Accredited Operator, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire-based Miniclipper Logistics, provides its drivers with a health care plan, group life cover, a pension scheme and pays for their Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) training and their medicals. Bonuses are paid to those who drive frugally and remain accident-free.

While the CPC has its critics, employees often welcome training opportunities. FORS offers a wide variety of training, encompassing everything from eLearning modules lasting from 20 to 40 minutes to practical Safe Urban Driving courses.

Another area employers will have to

address, if they haven’t done so already, is the way in which they organise work – a challenge given the pressures customers may place on them.

In a survey of transport operations conducted by the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport last year, nearly 80% of respondents said that the key reason why recruiting truck drivers was so difficult was unsociable hours. Workers were no longer as willing as they might once have been to begin early, finish late and spend nights away from home week after week.

That could be one of the reasons why the driver population is ageing, with too

**Below:** Miniclipper Logistics provides its drivers with a health care plan, group life cover, a pension scheme and pays for their Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) training and their medicals







few young people prepared to join an industry that they may view as having unappealing working conditions.

When a similar survey was conducted in 2015, the average age of drivers was 47, says the institute. Now it is 51.

Unsocial hours may also explain why there are so few women drivers. Women make up more than 50 per cent of the UK's population, yet no more than one or two per cent of the truck-driving labour force.

Logistics UK says some operators are doing more to attract female drivers by offering part-time working, something bus operators have done successfully for many years – flexible working hours and hours that match the childcare commitments that they may have.

Part-time working and job sharing could also help truck fleets retain older drivers who will soon retire, but do not want to cease vocational driving completely.

Hauliers can, of course, employ drivers who emerge from the Department for Education-funded HGV Skills Bootcamps, or from the truck driver apprenticeship

schemes that have been created. There are two – the C+E Large Goods Vehicle Apprenticeship and the Class C-based Urban Driver Apprenticeship.

However, there are some obstacles to driver recruitment that employers themselves cannot address and require government intervention.

One of the most important ones is the lack of safe and secure overnight parking. Logistics UK estimates that England alone is short of around 11,000 overnight truck parking spaces. (<https://www.rha.uk.net/Campaigns/Facilitie>)

Another is the refusal of some distribution centres to provide visiting drivers with washing and toilet facilities should they require them.

This is an area where the Department for Transport and the Health and Safety Executive are taking action, reminding businesses that they are obliged to provide such facilities under the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992. Furthermore, they have produced a letter which drivers can produce if they are faced with such a refusal – a document they should always

**Above:** Too few young people are prepared to join an industry which they may view as having unappealing working conditions

carry with them. ■

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# FORS LEADS THE WAY FOR TRANSPORT OPERATORS

Steve Agg, chairman of the Governance and Standards Advisory Group (GSAG), explains the group's pivotal role in ensuring FORS remains the UK's leading fleet accreditation scheme

**Q: What is GSAG and why was it established?**

**A:** The Governance and Standards Advisory Group, or GSAG as it is more commonly known, exists to be a credible and technically competent industry representative body that performs a core role in developing the FORS Standard. GSAG is the ultimate body overseeing the scheme's governance and is a key element in maintaining the integrity and relevance of FORS on behalf of fleet operators, specifiers and the public we serve.

Part of GSAG's role is to recommend changes, improvements and additions to the FORS scheme where appropriate and to provide guidance to ensure the FORS Standard is subject to continuous improvement, remains relevant to industry needs and is compatible with all relevant legislation. Finally, members of GSAG are encouraged to promote the development and growth of FORS to suppliers, customers, colleagues and stakeholders.

**Q: Does GSAG have a role in the day-to-day running of FORS?**

**A:** No, it doesn't. GSAG exists to provide advice and guidance on the development of FORS to ensure it remains fit for purpose, but the day-to-day running of the concession is the responsibility of Sopra Steria.

It's also worth noting that GSAG plays a role in hearing any appeals made by

FORS Accredited Operators relating to compliance action taken by Sopra Steria.

**Q: Who are the members of GSAG?**

**A:** The GSAG membership is made up of FORS Accredited Operators, Specifiers, trade associations, and industry-relevant public and professional bodies. We strive to build a diverse membership of stakeholders who are supportive of the scheme's aim to improve all aspects of fleet operations for the benefit of society at large.

**Q: How are members appointed?**

**A:** Organisations that are interested in joining GSAG are required to write to [enquiries@fors-governance.org](mailto:enquiries@fors-governance.org). uk and give an explanation as to why they'd like to join.

The process from there is managed by Steer Group, the FORS Governance and Standard service provider. Steer has responsibility for managing various working groups, including GSAG and FORS Executive Group.

For more information, visit the FORS website <https://www.fors-online.org.uk/cms/governance/>

**Q: What is your career background and how did you come to be involved with FORS and GSAG?**

**A:** I've been involved in the logistics and transport industry for my entire working life. I started as an apprentice vehicle electrician, but my ambition

**Truly equivalent competitor schemes are welcome but only FORS offers the comprehensive operational standard that fleet operators and specifiers have demanded since 2008**

was to become a fleet engineer. Once I had achieved that goal, I moved into mainstream logistics, where I held distribution director positions at several food companies. Later in my career, I was Managing Director for Business Services at the Freight Transport Association, before assuming my final role as Chief Executive of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT).

It was during my time at CILT that I became more involved with FORS and its early development, which I suppose led me down the path to my current position as chairman of GSAG. As the professional body for everyone involved in logistics and transport, CILT aims to raise the profile of the industry and everyone

working within it. It seemed to me that FORS offered an opportunity to champion best practice and to give both fleet operators and specifiers a tangible means of communicating their commitment to operating to standards above the legal minimum requirement.

**Q: What did you set out to achieve when you joined GSAG?**

**A:** When I engaged with FORS and with GSAG I wanted to help generate a more positive profile for the logistics profession, both in terms of the businesses and the people working within it. FORS offers a publicly visible means for fleet operators and transport specifiers to show that they care passionately about our environment and the safety and efficiency of all that they do.

FORS has become an established mark of quality, recognised within the industry and beyond, and as such remains an essential component in enabling users of transport to select the very best fleet operators.

**Q: What is your response to the recent news that Transport for London (TfL) has granted 'equivalency' to rival schemes?**

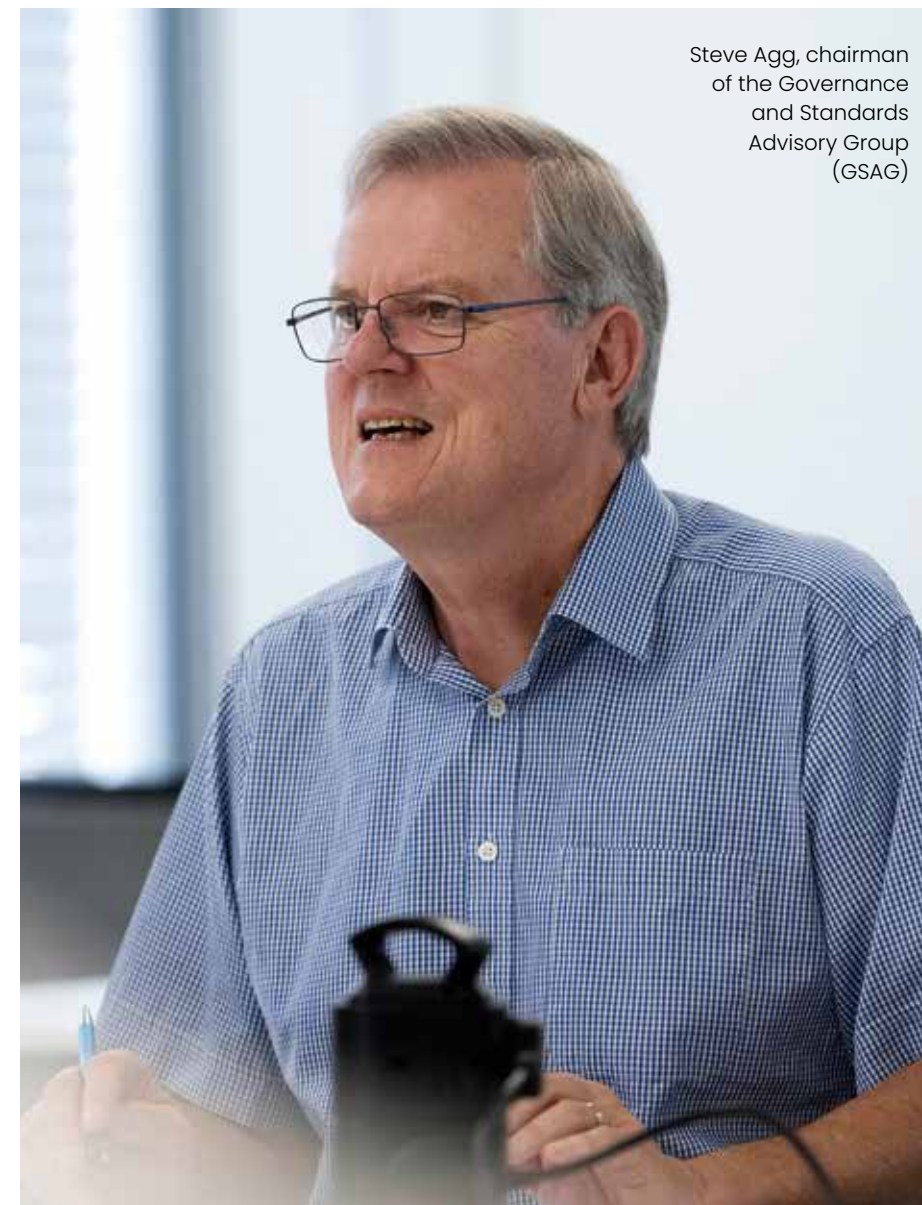
**A:** I understand the rationale because competition is essential to any business in driving innovation and combating the complacency that a monopoly can breed.

What I disagree with, however, is the catch-all term 'equivalency' being used in respect of schemes that are only truly 'equivalent' to FORS in specific areas – in this case as they pertain to compliance with TfL's Work Related Road Risk initiative. To me, this causes confusion in the marketplace and doesn't serve the overall aim of raising standards in fleet operations.

Truly equivalent competitor schemes are welcome, as any initiative to improve standards should be, but only FORS offers the comprehensive operational standard that fleet operators and specifiers have demanded since 2008. There is no doubt in my mind that FORS remains unparalleled for those operators who want to clearly demonstrate that they hold themselves to the most rigorous standard across a broad range of operational areas. ■

**Right:** FORS offers a means for fleet operators and transport specifiers to show that they care passionately about our environment and the safety and efficiency of all that they do

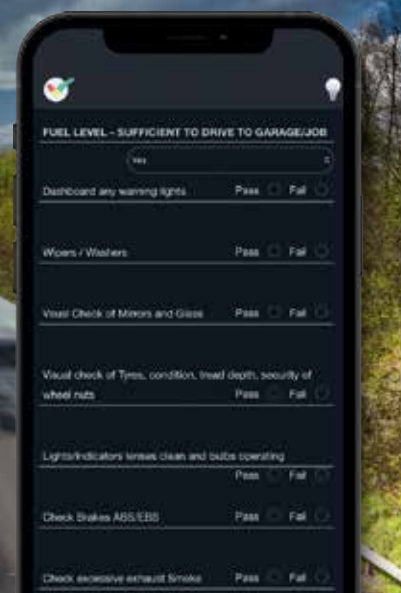
Steve Agg, chairman of the Governance and Standards Advisory Group (GSAG)





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# FROM BENTLEYS TO BIN LORRIES

First classic cars, now refuse trucks – Lunaz has extended its upcycling credentials with a brand-new production facility.



**Our vehicles are probably less expensive than buying a new EV – that’s the actual key fundamental – it’s greener and a less expensive production process**

LAT is based at a new production facility in Silverstone and will cater for the conversion of refuse trucks at the end of their first lifecycle

**A**utomotive specialist Lunaz Applied Technologies (LAT) is using its expert knowledge to upcycle ICE vehicles to electric. Lunaz has drawn on its skill of refurbishing luxury classic cars to do this. The company offers a bespoke service and attention to detail that is second to none. The cars take up to 20 months to complete their transformation, often

getting to numerous locations all over the world to live their second life. LAT, which is based at a brand new production facility in Silverstone, is now also dealing with the conversion of refuse trucks at the end of their first lifecycle (and others beyond that, says the company). To start, the facility will see more than 1,000 vehicles run down its two production lines every year. The plan is to use it as a blueprint for other international locations,

helping to ensure vehicles get to live a long and prosperous life.

David Lorenz, founder and CEO, Lunaz, has high hopes for not just the Silverstone site facility, but also the wider business model to prevent what he calls ‘carbon post-boxing’ – effectively moving products to another part of the world at the end of their first life on the road. “Operators are being asked to do a lot regarding meeting emissions

targets and we want to enter the market and support them in the right way,” he states.

“Upcycling is vital to the future of transportation – we need to put an end to the process of buying and replacing vehicles. If you reuse and recycle, you can improve things one vehicle at a time.”

Lorenz says that beyond the financial conversation, there’s a wider issue at play. “Our vehicles are probably less

expensive than buying a new EV – that’s the actual key fundamental – it’s greener and a less expensive production process,” he maintains.

“That means we can save local councils and taxpayers millions, which is essential, but also the workforce gets a higher quality product than many standard vehicles available on the market.

“We’re in touch with around 50 local

authorities as well as most of the top 10 private waste management companies in the UK, which contact us for a number of reasons,” he adds.

“Firstly, they see us as a good technical partner and they feel we are doing things in the right way. They also see the functional advantages and technological upgrades that can be tailored to the specific requirements of their fleets. There’s also a really simple performance



function as well, which is as much about our engineering as the upcycling process.”

#### The big build

While Lunaz Design is a project-focused business, Lunaz Applied Technologies (LAT) is designed to be a volume production operation, which means there are fewer concerns about having to seek specific components for vehicles and more concerns about productivity and efficiency. The timescale from a vehicle entering the facility in its original state to going out of the door as a converted Lunaz truck is 14 days. In that time, a lot of work is done beyond taking out the engine and popping in some batteries.

“The goal is to improve the overall quality of the base vehicle,” says Lorenz. “Fundamentally, each refuse truck is stripped down before all the components are assessed, the chassis is shot-blasted and then we stress-test it for fractures and suchlike. It is then painted and rebuilt with all of the original moving components – such as air lines, airbags, suspension, brakes – as new and then we start the rebuilding process, because everything is done on the production line.”

Lunaz says it has adopted a modular approach when it comes to the 65.5kW battery packs being offered for the refuse truck. “We’ve gone for four different options for battery pack size because we don’t believe that it’s a ‘one size fits all’ solution, even for vehicles that might be doing the same job,” says Lorenz. “By specifying the correct capacity for the application, we are increasing the efficiency but also lowering the weight of the battery pack and vehicle overall, which improves the payload.”

The shift to EV propulsion is obviously a big step, so it’s encouraging to hear that with a four-battery set-up, the gross vehicle weight is on a par with a standard ICE vehicle. A six-battery set-up makes it a more expensive proposition, but also impacts vehicle payload – an important element in the commercial vehicle world, although less so with refuse collection than, say, long-haul delivery trucks.

#### Trash truck transformation

Stepping into any electric vehicle should be a pleasant experience – and the challenge in achieving that goal in an upcycled refuse truck is one that Lunaz relishes. The vehicle might not have the same bespoke elements that are seen in the products that leave the Lunaz Design



facility down the road, but the approach of putting the user first is paramount within the whole operation.

As such, the refurbishment process is thorough, with pipes, harnesses and other elements upgraded, as well as the materials around them, to prolong the life of the core components.

Inside is where drivers can expect to see the biggest differences over a standard ICE refuse truck. “We want to reduce the friction in the industry and work with them to find solutions to make driving these vehicles easier and more enjoyable,” says Lorenz. “That approach

**Above:** David Lorenz, Founder and CEO, Lunaz, has high hopes for the firm’s wider business model

functional improvement is the re-positioning of the handbrake to the right hand side of the driver. Having observed fleets in action, Lunaz engineers realised that it was safer to have the unit on that side, rather than in the centre. Most of the cabin plastics can be carried over, ensuring that wastage is minimised in the conversion process. “If it can be re-used, make sure it is,” seems to be big principle for Lunaz.

## Upcycling is vital – we need to put an end to the process of buying and replacing vehicles

includes replacing wing mirrors with cameras and making the centre seat of the refuse truck more comfortable because we’d had complaints from users that it was the most uncomfortable seat in the truck.”

But the creature comforts don’t stop there. The revised interior features multiple touchscreens, Apple CarPlay connectivity, camera displays and a new HVAC design featuring a fresh approach to the vents and controls, compared with the base/donor Econic truck.

An onboard thermal management system recycles the heat and turns it into extra energy for the truck, while there is the option of heated front seats across all four of the spaces in the cab. Another

On the outside of the truck, there are charging points at the rear on both the left- and right-hand sides. The front grille has been smoothed to include four LEDs, indicating the states of charge. They shine either green, amber or red, according to how much charge is onboard.

“What gets us really excited is how the business can be scaled up because the remanufacturing is recorded, measured and audited,” explains Lorenz. “That means we can copy and paste factories like this around the world. And that’s how this business will grow from 1,100 units here to many more all over the world. However, this will always be its home – it’s the data engineering hub, the master facility, the blueprint!” ■

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Words: **Richard Simpson**

# WE DO LIKE TO BE BESIDE THE E-SIDE

The perils and advantages of the early adoption of heavy-duty electric vehicles, as experienced by Fox Brothers of Blackpool

**F**ORS Gold Accredited Operator Fox Brothers of Blackpool has made history by putting the UK's first battery-electric tipper trucks into service.

The two Volvo FE Electric 6x2s, which were delivered in 2022, are the first such vehicles of their kind in the UK and have cemented Fox Brothers' status as a pioneer on the UK's route to a net zero transport industry. Fox Brothers also runs some battery-electric plant items, including diggers and rollers, as the UK's construction industry is also faced with a net zero target.

A concession allowing the FE Electrics to be plated at 27 tonnes, where a diesel equivalent three-axle truck has a maximum weight of 26 tonnes, helps offset the increased unladen weight of the battery-powered vehicles.

There is rightly some scepticism about just how 'green' electric trucks might be, especially as many EV proponents look no further than their status as zero tailpipe emissions vehicles and ignore the upstream emissions of power generation. Fox Brothers has countered this by producing some robust data based on operational experience that acknowledges the carbon footprint

of power generation, yet still shows a substantial saving in CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions.

This data has been calculated using conversion factors provided by Greenhouse Gas Reporting. These show that a Volvo FE Electric requires an average daily charge of 300kW/h, while the equivalent diesel truck burns 200 litres of fuel a day. Round these up to a five-day week and the electric truck absorbs 1,500 kWh of energy from the grid, while the diesel truck consumes 1,750 litres of fossil fuel. This translates to just over 290 kg of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent from the power generation needed to charge the electric truck, while the weekly burn of the diesel vehicle produces 4,725 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent.

## **Impressive saving**

That's an impressive saving by any standard, but unfortunately there are other constraints in the way of wholesale adoption of battery electrics, not just for Fox Brothers, but for the industry as a whole. Fox Brothers admits that the current high capital cost premium of choosing battery over diesel means the trucks would not be a viable commercial proposition for most operators whether they were purchased or leased – and the hike in electricity prices which has come since the vehicles were ordered has been a most unwelcome surprise.

Looking to the future, the company

**Left:** The two Volvo FE Electric 6x2s are only the second such vehicles to be put into use anywhere in Europe





is planning to install solar panels, which will ensure that at least some of its energy demand is being met by electricity that is both home-grown and sustainable.

There have also been difficult operational constraints.

The first of these is unavoidable: ground clearance. The chassis-mounted battery packs reduce the trucks' 'break-over' ground clearance, which means some sites are inaccessible to them – and traffic planners must take this into account when allocating each truck its day's work.

The second is rather more variable: operational range. The trucks were specified to carry seven loads a day within a 20-mile radius of the company's Leyland depot. In practice, this is indeed possible, but only in ideal conditions. Venturing into hilly terrain can reduce range dramatically, while running in winter conditions sees lights, cab heater and windscreen wipers all depleting battery endurance. On occasions, the electric trucks have had to stop work to recharge at lunchtime.

#### Connection issue

And actually connecting power to the vehicles has been an issue since day one. Supplying dealer Thomas Hardie Commercials was able to resolve initial problems in getting the two FE Electrics to charge, but expanding charging facilities to increase the number of electric trucks operating out of Leyland is going to be very expensive, if not impossible.

Its electricity provider has told Fox Brothers that it will have to invest £50,000 to improve the local distribution grid if it is to install another four chargers so up to six electric trucks can recharge simultaneously – and installing

just 20 chargers in a depot that is home to 160 trucks would be impossible.

So, for the moment, the Volvo FE Electrics are more of a symbol of an intention to 'green' the transport and construction sectors than they are a practical tool.

But the good news is that they are working brilliantly in this role. As a large player in the construction sector, Fox Brothers has seen the much-publicised arrival of the FE Electrics boost its Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Social Governance ratings.

This, in turn, makes it an attractive partner for government bodies and large plcs seeking to enhance their own green and social credentials.

#### Unusually green

Combining the Volvo FE Electrics with the company's electric crusher and mobile plant means Fox Brothers can present an unusually 'green' solution for the construction and civil engineering



**Left:** From left: Neil Crook, Customer Solutions Manager at Thomas Hardie Commercials; Paul Fox, Managing Director of Fox Group; Christian Coolsaet, Managing Director of Volvo Trucks UK & Ireland and Jim Murray, Managing Director of Thomas Hardie Commercials

sectors. Fox Brothers has subsequently ordered two more, heavier, 8x4 Volvo FMX Electric tippers to keep up with the demand from customers wanting materials delivered by electric wagons. In addition to further wagons, Fox Group has diversified into both rail and marine, with the recent opening of their Railhead at Leyland and Fox Maritime shipping facilities.

While they have made the headlines, the credentials of the electric vehicles are underpinned by sound environmental and safety policies garnered from Fox Brothers' FORS Gold status.

Last year, the company put 336 drivers through the FORS LoCity Driving Course and its drivers also undertake FORS eLearning courses. Additionally, the company has sought to minimise the impact of its conventional vehicles by using the FORS Anti-Idling and Congestion-Cutting Toolkit and Drivers Guide to ensure that its diesel-powered vehicles are creating the lowest possible emissions levels.

Even if an operator is not yet ready to take the plunge into EV deployment, there are still gains to be made by better using existing equipment with FORS guidance. ■

**Below:** The Volvo FE Electrics are more of a symbol of an intention to 'green' the transport and construction sectors than they are a practical tool



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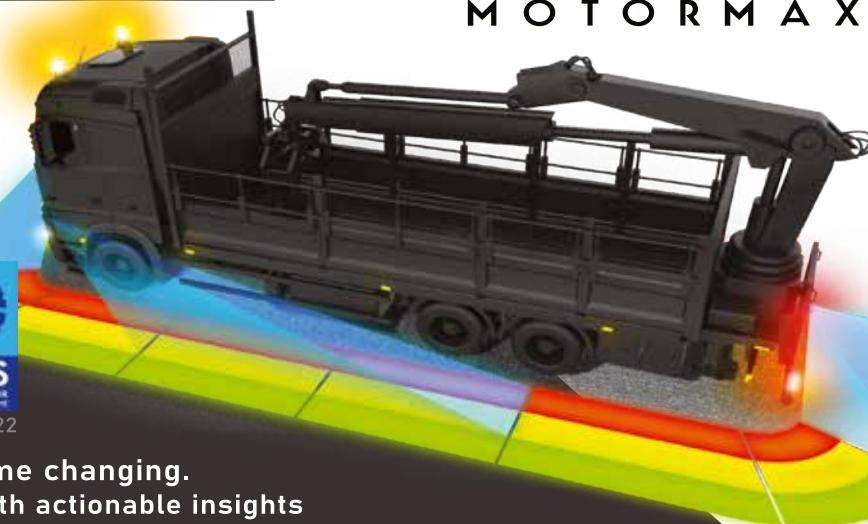


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Words: **Matthew Eisenegger**

# THE O'DONOVAN ROAD TO NET ZERO

Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil may be more expensive than diesel but it is helping the waste management specialist steer towards its green goal

**Right:** O'Donovan is a dynamic leader in the construction, demolition and waste sectors



In 2022, O'Donovan Waste announced its pledge to help tackle the climate emergency by setting out ambitious aspirations to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2035.

Multi-award winning O'Donovan is a dynamic leader in the construction, demolition and waste sectors with a proven track record for placing greener initiatives and environmental performance at the forefront of its priorities and vision for the business. The firm has already invested heavily in sustainable buildings and state-of-the-art processing facilities and equipment.

O'Donovan produce British-Standards Quality-Certified recycled aggregates

that contribute to its 100 per cent waste-diversion from landfill alongside high-quality RDF materials used in UK Energy-from-Waste Infrastructure.

The business holds impressive accreditations, demonstrating its competent and ethical practices and is ISO and CHAS accredited, along with achieving the FORS Gold operator status – held for 12 consecutive years.

O'Donovan is the first waste management company to make the bold move to switch its entire fleet to sustainably sourced Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO). This is a huge step for the multi-award winning business that operates with a 100-strong fleet,

serving the construction and demolition sectors throughout London and the Home Counties.

## **Sustainable fuel**

HVO is a sustainable and 100 per cent renewable fuel that eliminates up to 90 per cent of net carbon dioxide emissions, although it is more expensive than diesel. The green alternative fuel reduces nitrogen oxide (NOx) by up to 30 per cent, particulate matter (PM) by up to 86 per cent and carbon monoxide (CO) emissions by up to 90 per cent.

The switch took place in October 2022 and although figures contain just three months of HVO use, the reduction in

carbon emissions for 2022 has had a substantial impact with overall fleet CO2 emissions reduced by 43 per cent, Nox by 48 per cent and PM10 reduced by 35 per cent. In 2023, O'Donovan fleet carbon production will reduce even further. The O'Donovan team feels that HVO has a vital role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions until electric vehicle infrastructure improves and more long-term solutions become available.

## **Ongoing initiatives**

Training continues to be a core part of the ongoing initiatives that prioritise safety and operational excellence and all staff have been heavily involved in

the process. Due to the cultural mix of its team with staff from numerous nationalities, the comprehensive training curriculum is multi-lingual ensuring total understanding.

The commitment to the upskilling of the entire team, coupled with strong top-down leadership has resulted in high staff morale, low staff turnover and the company embracing health and safety goals.

The training curriculum comprises a range of courses – some are optional but for HGV drivers, compulsory training consists of approved courses, Safe Urban Driving, Greener City-Driving, LoCITY Driving, as well as O'Donovan's own DCPC approved courses Waste-

Essentials and Doing it Right. The drivers also undertake FORS online eLearning programmes.

The compulsory Safe Urban Driving course combines practical and classroom-based training. Lorry drivers go cycling on roads with instructors, allowing them to experience the road from a cyclist viewpoint. This permits drivers to gain first-hand practical knowledge of the challenges faced and invaluable insights to take into their daily work.

## **Fewer accidents**

Safety training has reduced accidents by 25 per cent, reducing O'Donovan's





insurance premiums by 22 per cent. Sustainability credentials have also been further boosted with CO2 reduced due to stringent monitoring and improved knowledge, anti-idling campaigns and LoCITY driver training. Additionally, O'Donovan trained and initiated health and safety champions across all its operations, each being responsible for guiding and mentoring colleagues alongside demonstrating best practice.

Not only excelling at sustainability and having an active CSR programme, O'Donovan has taken the wellbeing of staff and made it a critical part of the health and safety policy and the DNA of the company by rolling out their bespoke wellbeing strategy called the Dynamo Welfare Project. This interactive 'Dynamo' training assists

staff in maintaining positive health and wellbeing by teaching self-awareness and a range of techniques and tools to manage negative emotions including anxiety.

Through the education and empowerment of the team, O'Donovan has empowered staff and given them the tools to minimise the impact that stress and negative feelings have on them – enabling them to respond in a positive and constructive way.

This investment in the team speaks volumes about the priorities of the business and is a unique and powerful way to show that it rejects the stigma attached to mental health, encouraging an environment that deals openly with challenges faced whilst offering support, guidance and importantly, the knowledge to do so. ■

**Above:** O'Donovan encourages an environment that deals openly with the challenges faced

**Left:** Safety training has reduced accidents by 25 per cent, reducing O'Donovan's insurance premiums by 22 per cent

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Words: **Richard Simpson**

# SNOW BUT NO ICE



Norway is at the forefront of transport electrification

Can battery-electric trucks cut it in the cold? We head to Norway to find out

**F**or any truck operators thinking of choosing battery electric vehicles (BEVs) in a bid to improve their green credentials, there are many questions to be answered.

Front-end price and range are two of the queries that are likely to be raised first. But there are others too – and one of these is how BEV trucks are affected when the temperature plummets.

It's a valid point...at the moment. The truck manufacturers are striving all the time to improve the overall performance of their BEVs in all conditions. But the development is not there today.

Why do I mention it? Well, the Scania PR team gave us the opportunity to join them in Norway at Winter Wonderland extravaganza – a mammoth customer experience. In short, it's an icy, cold, snow-covered playground – and this year Scania brought out its latest range of electric trucks.

What better opportunity to see how the technology is progressing than in the freezing and unforgiving environment up in the Norwegian mountains? Not only does Norway regularly experience weeks of the mercury being in negative double digits at a time, it's also the world leader in electric vehicles. If any country is in the know about EVs, it's the Norwegians.

Battery electric vehicles accounted

for just under 80 per cent of the market for all new vehicles and while most are cars, Norway is also currently the world's largest market for electric heavy commercial vehicles. So there was no better place to test how you get the best out of a BEV in these conditions.

## Learning the theory

Scania has been investing a lot of time in perfecting its battery technology. And the roadmap from here until 2030 indicates we will see a new BEV product launching each year. But up to now, the team in Sweden has been doing their homework.

Last year saw the official opening of Scania's Battery Test Laboratory in Sodertalje, which will be the home for all Scania's battery developments. Up to now, it has been a hotbed of activity as the engineers build their knowledge and get to grips with the composition of current battery cells and their limitations. All this information feeds into Scania's R&D to shape the development of the control system software for the vehicle, drivetrain and the batteries. What this means is certainty that these vehicles will be able to operate effectively and reliably in a multitude of different environments.

But that's just the theory. In practice, Scania tests its latest electric vehicle

technology with selected customers as part of its Partner Pilot programme. Mostly involving customers based in Scandinavia, there is more than a dozen current projects live, each testing the viability of electric vehicles in different uses. For example, mining firm Boliden in Northern Sweden has been trialling a 74-tonne BEV on two shifts a day. There's lots of other examples from chemical tankers and refrigerated food transports to timber trucks.

The variation is wide, but as Tony Sandberg, Director of Scania's Pilot Partners programme, alludes to before we get behind the wheel, these examples are extreme environments for any vehicle and the best place for a BEV to prove its viability of being a long-term technology solution for ICE vehicles.

So, here we are in Norway, with our chance to conduct a little bit of cold weather testing, to see what is what.

## Effects of the cold

If you've ever been out in the cold for an extended period and seen the battery level of your mobile phone plummet, you'll know that batteries and cold weather don't go well together. Charging in these conditions is the biggest elephant in the room, but there are also several others. Cold temperatures affect range as the battery can store less

energy, but cold air is also more dense and harder to drive through than warm air. Ice and snow also create more wheel slippage. That increases the amount of energy needed to maintain momentum and power is lost through spinning wheels. There are also cold fluids that need heating, increasing the draw on the heating systems and zapping life from the already underperforming batteries.

In a nutshell, it's a perfect storm of range-destroying what-ifs and potential energy consuming howlers.

Yet, there's a way of doing it properly and the Scandinavians know that going about running these vehicles in the right way is the key. For the right operation, it's also not that much of a change to ordinary working practices to integrate one of these vehicles into an operation.

The key is to prepare the vehicle before starting out. Unlike starting a diesel vehicle, ahead of setting off on a cold day, it's not just about clearing the ice from the screens. Pre-conditioning is about the most vital action of the day. Set the truck up ready to work and it'll almost perform just like an ICE vehicle, discounting the air and increased rolling resistance factors that diesel trucks are also subjected to.

Pre-conditioning not only heats the cabin to give a comfortable operating temperature, it also heats the battery cells and prepares the high voltage system for work. Without doing so, the first several hours of operation can be spent simply warming the systems.

## Serious drain

Batteries need to have an operating temperature of around 25C to be at their most efficient. A cold start from minus temperatures is going to drain a serious amount of energy from a battery – and with truck batteries being far larger than the average electric car, the power used is significant.

Heating the cabin of a car or truck will typically consume as much as 6kW per hour. High-powered heaters warm our fingers and bottoms, which is why power demands are so great, but the batteries need a similar amount of heating. Around 6kW per hour is required to heat the large batteries on a truck. If the vehicle is left unplugged overnight and unable to pre-condition itself before departure, within the early stages of starting a journey the valuable battery charge is being eaten up just to get the vehicle to a baseline it would normally be at in summer.

In cold temperatures, the energy



**Above:** A cold start from minus temperatures is going to drain a serious amount of energy from a battery

storage capacity of the battery also decreases by as much as 30 per cent. Factor in cold temperatures that may remain throughout the day of operation and the heating system is constantly working to maintain that optimal 25C temperature when the elements are against it. It could mean more than a 40 per cent loss of range simply by being in the cold. Pre-conditioning does at least negate that battle to build heat.

As for the rest of the EV driving experience, it's not unlike driving an arctic or rigid in our inclement weather. With the right tyres, there's very little to write home about.

The instant torque of an electric truck, if deployed too quickly, can cause sudden and overly exaggerated interference from the traction control but it's otherwise a hassle-free affair. One noticeable benefit of an EV over a combustion engine in such slippery conditions is the absence of gear changes.

## Rapid changes

The latest battery-electric Scania we experienced was a P series regional distribution prototype with a new six-speed transmission and despite having four more gears than the urban models also on offer pushed through its changes in such a rapid and effortless manner that we hardly noticed any loss of power in the driveline.

Contrast this to an ICE vehicle where the gearbox is working overtime flicking between at least twice as many ratios and BEV driving on ice suddenly seems a lot less difficult.

Without the pause in power between changes, the BEV is free to power its way up an incline in the most treacherous conditions and with a properly pre-conditioned cabin before starting out, there's no reason why users couldn't thoroughly enjoy a shift in a battery electric truck, even in these conditions.

**It's a perfect storm of range-destroying what-ifs, and potential energy consuming howlers**

**Below:** The EV driving experience is not unlike driving an arctic or rigid in our inclement weather







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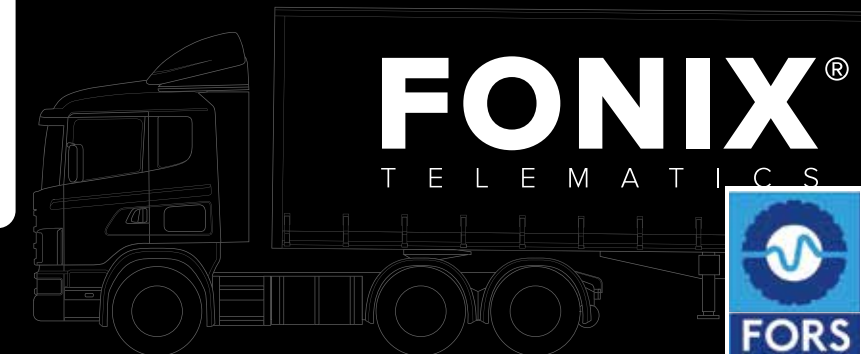


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Words: **Matthew Eisenegger**

# FORS FORGES NEW ROAD SAFETY LINKS WITH PROJECT EDWARD

Partnership will see two road safety advocates working together to raise awareness within the road safety arena

**F**ORS is reinforcing its total commitment to road safety by joining forces with Project Edward, the UK's biggest platform for showcasing good practice in road safety, to promote road safety standards in 2023.

Project Edward, which stands for 'Every Day Without a Road Death', champions the valuable work being done to support road safety around the UK. Looking holistically at every aspect of safety on the roads, the Project Edward team highlights the importance of vehicle safety systems, driver training and speed awareness, as well as the planning, design and engineering of the road networks.

The partnership will see the two road safety advocates working together to raise awareness of the important role fleet operators have to play within the road safety arena. In particular, FORS will be promoting Project Edward's theme for this year 'Safer Mobility, Everyone's Responsibility' to its community of over 4,700 FORS Accredited Operators, encouraging fleet organisations to get involved and spread the word.

Commenting on the partnership, FORS Concession Director, Ian Henderson, said: "One of the most fundamental

**Right:** Project Edward is involved in the planning, design and engineering of the UK's road networks

**Below:** Project Edward champions the work being done to support road safety in the UK



elements of FORS is the desire to raise road safety standards and support operators in their aim to follow best practice.

"Project Edward's commitment to road safety closely mirrors our mission and aspirations, so we felt it was important we became involved as a strategic partner.

"We look forward to working with the team at Project Edward to make our roads a safer place and get our community of 4,700 accredited operators involved too."

Project Edward has been running since 2016 and is best known for its 'Week of Action' initiative, which this year takes place from 15 to 19 May.

The campaign invites leaders in road safety to join a national road trip visiting those companies, schemes and individuals who are going above and beyond in their commitment to improving road safety. Project Edward then showcases these initiatives through a programme of daily broadcasts, webinars, social media content and media engagement activity.

James Luckhurst, founder of Project Edward, said: "We are delighted to be working with FORS in 2023. Our aim is to improve road safety measures for every road user, as this year's theme 'Safer Mobility, Everyone's Responsibility' demonstrates.

"Through FORS, we can extend our national reach thanks to its Accredited Operator network.

"We hope this partnership will allow us to get closer to some of the excellent initiatives commercial fleets are already implementing and raise awareness of how much can still be achieved." ■

**Project Edward has been running since 2016 and is best known for its 'Week of Action' initiative, which this year takes place from 15 to 19 May**



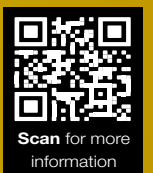
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Words: **Steve Banner**

# LONDON'S CLEAN SWEEP

The city's ultra-low emission zone will be expanding this year – and only the cleanest vehicles will escape a penalty

**T**ransport for London (TfL) is expanding the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) from the centre of the capital to its entirety in a further bid to clean up the air its inhabitants breathe. From 29 August it will cover all the capital's boroughs – and van operators will be among those impacted by its spread.

The move is being attacked by some of the boroughs that will be newly affected, with Bexley, Bromley, Harrow and Hillingdon mounting a collective legal challenge to get it stopped. They are doing so in conjunction with Surrey County Council.

London mayor Sadiq Khan is pushing hard for the ULEZ expansion despite the opposition and has no intention of backing down. He said: "My proposals for expanding the ULEZ are the right thing to do.

"Air pollution is not just a central London issue. People in the outer boroughs should be able to enjoy the clean air benefits the ULEZ brings.

"The air Londoners breathe is so toxic it stunts children's lungs, exacerbates chronic illnesses and contributes to thousands of premature deaths each year," he continued. "More than half of the 500,000 Londoners with asthma live in outer London and all areas of the capital still breach safe levels of pollution."

Jemima Hartshorn, founder and director of campaign group Mums for Lungs, added: "We're delighted to see this expansion happening. It will help clean up the air and hopefully reduce some of the preventable illnesses caused by air pollution.

"But sadly, it's not enough to ensure all kids can breathe easily. We need to see a plan to get rid of diesel in its entirety."

Several leading trade associations are critical of the extension. They argue that it will oblige hard-pressed private individuals and businesses to replace non-compliant vehicles at a time when they may not be able to afford to do so, given current economic pressures.

In response, TfL has introduced a £110m vehicle scrappage scheme to help defray some of the expense. While that sounds generous, it may not cover the likely demand given the size of London's population, the associations contend.

Bear in mind, too, that the van scrappage element of the programme is only open to sole traders, registered charities and businesses with ten or fewer employees. They must operate within the 32 London boroughs or the City of London.

Furthermore, long lead times mean that firms that have ordered new compliant vans from some manufacturers may not be able to take delivery of them until long after the ULEZ expansion has been implemented. Suitable secondhand models are on the market, but price and availability issues may rule them out of court for many too.

The rules that will apply to the expanded zone will be the same as those in force in the existing ULEZ.

The vast majority of light commercials grossing at up to and including 3.5 tonnes travelling within the camera-monitored 24/7 (except Christmas Day) ULEZ must meet Euro 6 so far as NOx and particulate emissions are concerned if they are diesels. If they happen to be petrol-powered, then they must comply with



**Above:** Only the cleanest vehicles will escape a penalty when London's ULEZ expands

## ULEZ enforcement is based on the declared emissions of a vehicle rather than its age

the Euro 4 NOx limit.

ULEZ enforcement is based on the declared emissions of a vehicle rather than its age. That said, TfL states that all new diesel light commercials sold from September 2016 onwards are likely to meet the Euro 6 standard.

All new petrol vans sold from January 2006 are likely to meet the Euro 4 requirement, it adds.

The ULEZ also embraces ambulances and motorcaravans grossing at between 2.5 and 3.5 tonnes, and minibuses with more than eight passenger seats, but not grossing at above 5.0 tonnes.

Cars are covered by the ULEZ too. They must meet the same emission levels as light commercials says TfL, but there are important differences.

"Petrol cars that meet the ULEZ standard are generally those first registered with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) after 2005, although models that comply have been available since 2001," it says. "Diesels that do are generally those first registered with the DVLA after September 2015."

Motorcycles, mopeds, motorised tricycles and L-category quadricycles – all of which could be used on final-mile delivery work – have to meet the Euro 3 NOx level. "Generally speaking, Euro 3 engines are fitted to models registered with the DVLA after July 2007," says TfL.

Goods vehicles grossing at above 3.5 tonnes do not fall within the ambit of the ULEZ. Nor do buses, minibuses and





**Above:** Iveco is offering £1,000 to incentivise claimants to opt for one of the new electric eDaily vans

coaches that tip the scales at above 5.0 tonnes.

They are covered by the LEZ rules however, which means they must match Euro VI for NOx and particulates.

Take a non-compliant vehicle into the ULEZ and you will be charged £12.50 a day. Fail to pay and you will be hit by a £180 penalty, reduced to £90 if you cough up within 14 days.

There are various ways to pay the daily charge. Drivers can do so using Auto Pay, which takes the money automatically from a bank account or payment card, pay online, download TfL's pay to drive in London app free-of-charge from either the Apple App Store or Google Play Store, or simply pay by phone.

The central London Congestion Charge Zone is staying as it is and is not affected by any of these changes.

Firms that want to scrap non-ULEZ-compliant vans and obtain a compliant model t can claim £5,000 from the TfL scrappage fund.

They can claim the same amount if they opt to retrofit existing vehicles with emission control equipment to meet ULEZ stipulations. Anything retrofitted must be certified by the government's Clean Vehicle Retrofit Accreditation Scheme.

Go for a zero-emission electric van however – something TfL is encouraging – then users can claim £7,500.

Iveco has responded promptly with a contribution of a further £1,000 to incentivise claimants to opt for one of the new electric eDailies.

Offered with one, two or three 37kWh battery packs, eDaily can cover up to 248 miles on a single charge, says Iveco.

Rapid charging at 80kW will see it gain just over 60 miles of range in 30 minutes, the manufacturer adds, and the newcomer is available with a 15kW electric power take-off which can be used to drive a wide range of ancillary equipment.

Iveco UK light business line director, Mike Cutts, said: "Air quality is a critical environmental issue, so encouraging operators to go electric by making the switch even more affordable makes sense. Iveco is proud to support TfL's scheme."



Londoners are breathing toxic air thanks to exhaust pipe emissions from vehicles

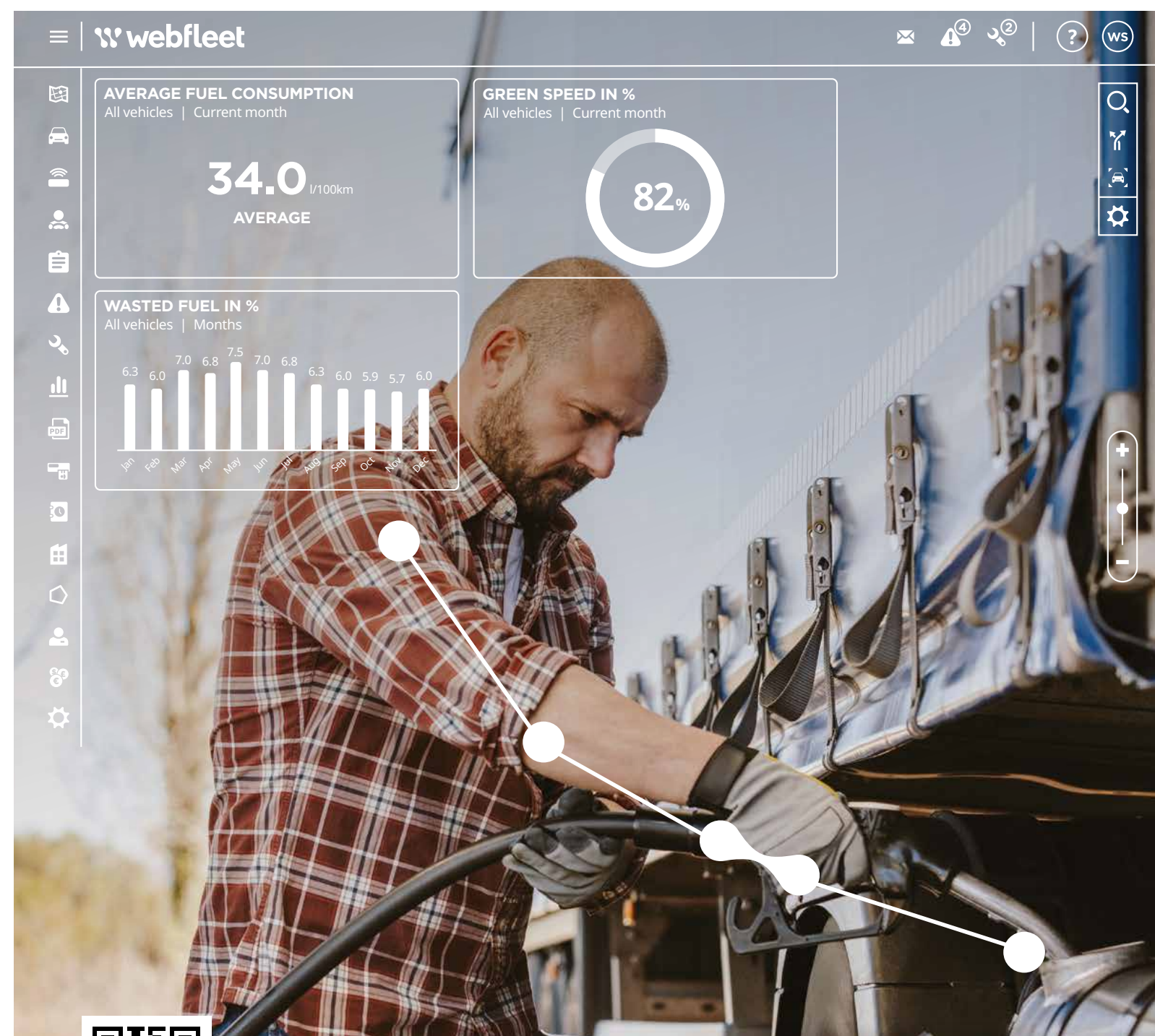
**The air Londoners breathe is so toxic it stunts children's lungs, exacerbates chronic illnesses and contributes to thousands of premature deaths each year**

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# REDUCE THOSE FUEL AND MAINTENANCE BILLS

The experts at ABAX outline five ways in which transport firms can cut their costs and improve efficiency



**Above:** Sitting in a warm vehicle while making calls or catching up on admin between jobs will affect the business financially

**T**he current economic landscape has everyone, including businesses, searching for ways where costs can be saved. For companies with fleets of vehicles, it's likely that fuel spend is one of the most significant business costs. The cost of repairs and maintenance are also creeping up.

This article runs through five key areas that can help claw back costs.

## Idling

We've all been guilty of vehicle idling at one point or another. Sitting in a warm vehicle while making calls or catching up on admin between jobs makes for a more comfortable experience, but the truth is it's affecting the business financially.

Idling will also add to repair and maintenance costs. Fuel isn't fully combusted when a vehicle idles and residue builds up, damaging exhaust systems and engine components – leading to costly vehicle downtime and repairs.

## Driving styles

Bad driving burns fuel. Data gathered through our customer base tells us that a

driver's impact on fuel efficiency can be up to 20 per cent on some vehicles.

Every day, bad driving habits such as speeding, sudden acceleration and harsh braking don't just jeopardise the safety of other road users – they vastly increase fuel consumption due to air and tyre rolling resistance.

Just as idling can damage engine systems, harsh braking increases tyre wear and tear and reduces the lifespan of brakes and brake pads, requiring more frequent changes. Unsurprisingly, poor driving leads to a higher number of accidents, with the cost of an incident reckoned to be up to 36 times higher than the cost of a basic repair – driving style is a severe cause of concern for businesses operating vehicles.

It is possible to monitor driver behaviour using a telematics system. Rather than being used to point the finger, it is often an exercise in identifying business processes that can be improved and introducing incentives to improve driving styles and fuel consumption.

## Pack for the job

Load weight causes vehicles to use more fuel. Furthermore, equipment attached

to the roof of a van increases drag – leading to as much as a 25 per cent reduction in fuel economy if driving on a motorway.

By loading up the vehicle according to the day's jobs, rather than always carrying heavy equipment or adding items to the roof of a vehicle, businesses can also reduce fuel costs.

## Route planning

The adage 'better the devil you know' can also be applied to routes and directions. Frequently, the use of technology can be of great benefit because the roads taken between jobs may differ from those that offer the best fuel efficiency and economy.

While routes that meander through town centres and villages require lower speeds, constant braking and acceleration negatively impact fuel efficiency – not to mention more traffic leading to more idling.

Opting for routes that use more efficient and fast-moving roads, where a consistent speed can be adhered to, will enable drivers to improve fuel efficiency.

## Preventative maintenance

Attention to detail with regular vehicle checks and scheduled maintenance is crucial to avoid unexpected downtime through breakdowns and prolong vehicle life, thus lowering fuel and maintenance bills.

Even weekly tyre checks play a role – underinflated tyres can increase fuel. Other areas include regular servicing using mileage data, oil changes and part replacement.

Maintaining a fleet of vehicles positively impacts depreciation, which accounts for as much as 40% of the total cost of running a company vehicle.

**• To learn more about how ABAX solutions can help with any of the areas mentioned above, please take a look at our website: [abax.com/uk](http://abax.com/uk)**

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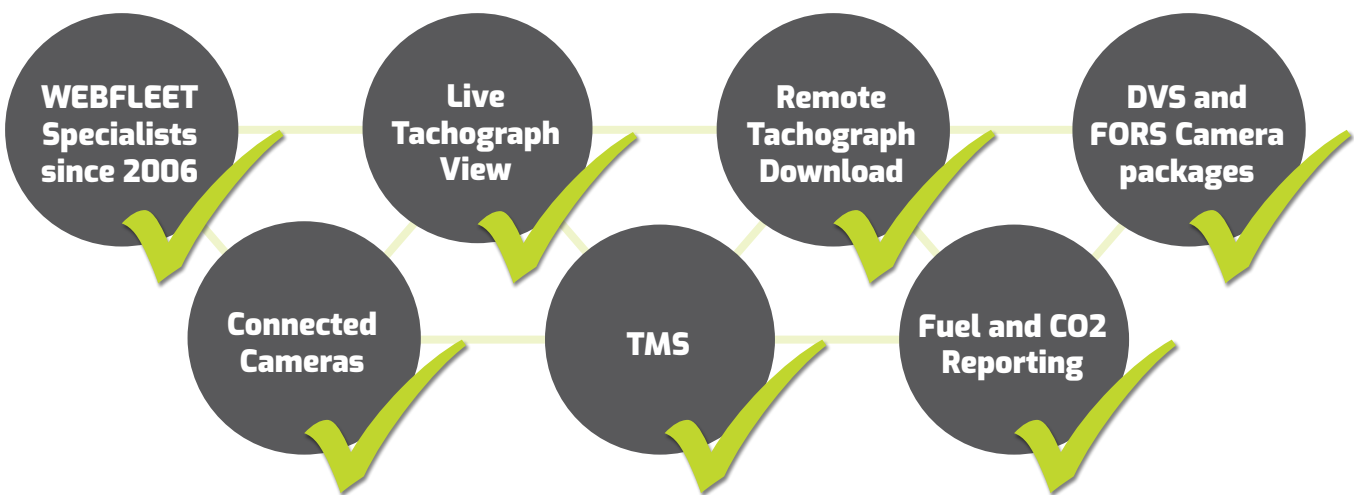
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## FORS Report

Summary						
Total	Fuel consumption: 28,482.10 l	Distance: 109,851.3 km	CO2 emission: 75,476.8 kg	Braking events: 943	Steering events: 2343	
Quarter	Fuel consumption	Distance	CO2 emission	Braking events	Steering events	Average fuel consumption
001 -	Fuel consumption:	Distance: 5,295.0 km	CO2 emission:	Braking events: 3	Steering events: 1	
I 2022		5,295.0 km		3	1	
002 -	Fuel consumption:	Distance: 1,797.5 km	CO2 emission:	Braking events: 6	Steering events: 84	
I 2022		1,797.5 km		6	84	
003 -	Fuel consumption:	Distance: 1,291.0 km	CO2 emission:	Braking events: 0	Steering events: 5	
I 2022		1,291.0 km		0	5	
004 -	Fuel consumption:	Distance: 1,848.3 km	CO2 emission:	Braking events: 6	Steering events: 10	
I 2022		1,848.3 km		6	10	
006 -	Fuel consumption:	Distance: 835.1 km	CO2 emission:	Braking events: 3	Steering events: 18	
I 2022		835.1 km		3	18	



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## Warning over Wheel alignment

Wheel alignment specialist AES is warning transport operators about the dangers of failing to check their vehicles often enough.

Wheel alignment checks should be made as often as possible, experts at the firm say.

Misaligned wheels on commercial vehicles can increase rolling resistance, resulting in premature tyre wear and increased fuel consumption.

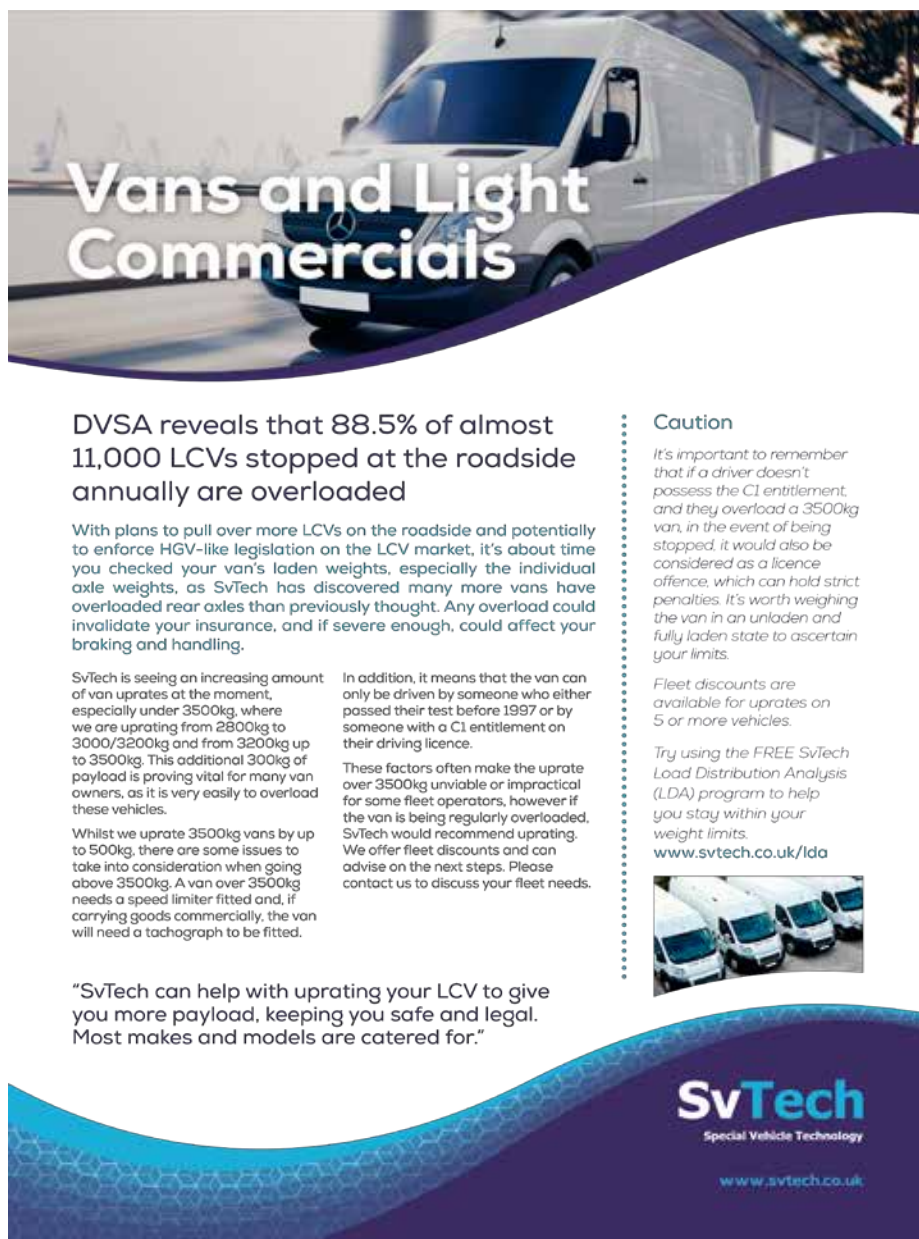
An AES spokesman said: "Climate impact of a commercial vehicle is also influenced by wheel alignment. Reduced fuel consumption goes hand-in-hand with CO2 emissions and premature tyre wear goes hand-in-hand with 'tyre dust' particles."

Transport managers should take immediate action when drivers complain about how their vehicles are behaving. This could signify that there is a wheel alignment problem.

"Alignment should be carried out when new tyres are fitted and when steering and suspension components are fitted or replaced."

AES is a UK supplier of Josam wheel alignment equipment. Josam's I-Track can measure a four-axle vehicle in five minutes, allowing workshops to be much more proactive in their wheel alignment programmes.

Combined with OEM trained trainers, AES can support workshops in getting up and running with commercial wheel alignment quickly.



### Vans and Light Commercials

**DVSA reveals that 88.5% of almost 11,000 LCVs stopped at the roadside annually are overloaded**

With plans to pull over more LCVs on the roadside and potentially to enforce HGV-like legislation on the LCV market, it's about time you checked your van's laden weights, especially the individual axle weights, as SvTech has discovered many more vans have overloaded rear axles than previously thought. Any overload could invalidate your insurance, and if severe enough, could affect your braking and handling.

SvTech is seeing an increasing amount of van uprates at the moment, especially under 3500kg, where we are uprating from 2800kg to 3000/3200kg and from 3200kg up to 3500kg. This additional 300kg of payload is proving vital for many van owners, as it is very easily to overload these vehicles.

Whilst we uprate 3500kg vans by up to 500kg, there are some issues to take into consideration when going above 3500kg. A van over 3500kg needs a speed limiter fitted and, if carrying goods commercially, the van will need a tachograph to be fitted.

In addition, it means that the van can only be driven by someone who either passed their test before 1997 or by someone with a C1 entitlement on their driving licence.

These factors often make the uprate over 3500kg unviable or impractical for some fleet operators, however if the van is being regularly overloaded, SvTech would recommend uprating. We offer fleet discounts and can advise on the next steps. Please contact us to discuss your fleet needs.

**Caution**

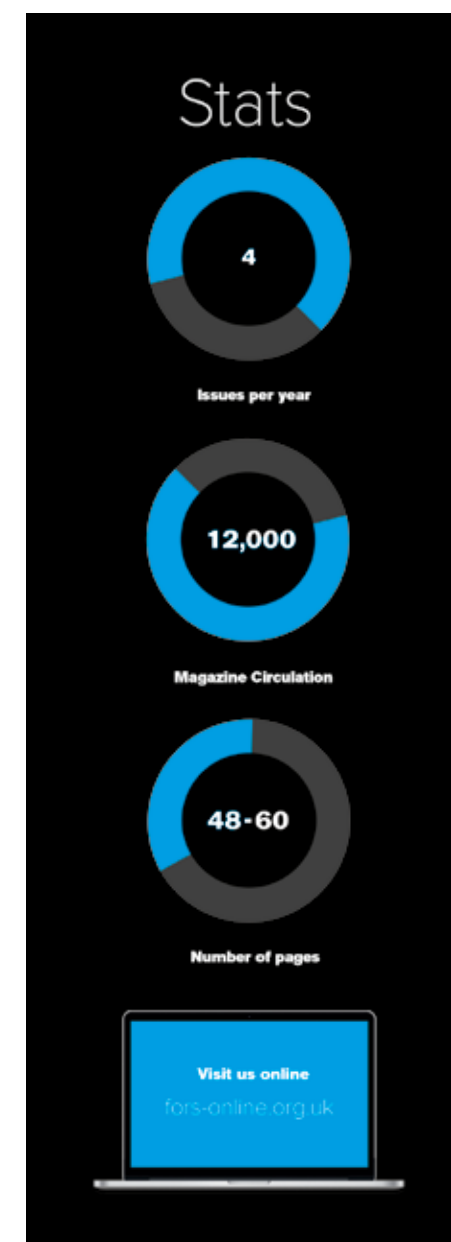
*It's important to remember that if a driver doesn't possess the C1 entitlement, and they overload a 3500kg van, in the event of being stopped, it would also be considered as a licence offence, which can hold strict penalties. It's worth weighing the van in an unladen and fully laden state to ascertain your limits.*

Fleet discounts are available for uprates on 5 or more vehicles.

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1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 law in effect

0 - star HGVs without Safe Systems will be banned

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# WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SOMETHING IS FOUND IN A WORKPLACE TEST

It's important to understand the exact processes that must be gone through, says **David Whiffin** of OdiliaClark, specialist impairment risk management provider

In our last article, we looked into the who, what, when, why and how of workplace substance testing. The article ended with a workplace drug test (known as a 'point of care' test) identifying the presence of a substance. Although not a common occurrence, a single incident can have a significant impact on both the individual and the organisation.

To fully understand the impact, it is necessary to explain the process and the requirements of the process. Once understood it is possible to define wider impact.

## The process

Setting the scene, a workplace drugs and alcohol test has just been performed, in accordance with the European Workplace Drug Testing Society (EWDTS) guidelines and relevant legislation that ensure the donor is treated with the dignity and respect that should be afforded to every employee.

If the alcohol test has been passed, that is the end of breath testing.

The drugs test is performed by taking a sample of oral fluid using the Dräger DrugCheck 3000 (DC3K), one of the best in class point of care (POC) drug testing units on the market. The appropriate consent has been taken and all relevant information recorded. The DC3K records a positive result for both Amphetamines and Benzodiazepines – however, at this point, the test is not declared as a positive result and instead we must use the term 'non-negative'. This is because the device can only identify the parent drug and cannot discern the exact substance nor the quantities of substance present within the sample.

At this stage, perhaps unsurprisingly, the mood and atmosphere in the



**Above:** All employees must be treated with compassion and respect and afforded dignity

testing room can start to change. The tester, who will remain impartial and non-judgmental, must now move to the confirmatory sampling process in what is likely an increasingly stressful situation for the donor and some of the terminology used may seem more formal and perhaps somewhat daunting.

A confirmatory test is required to confirm what has been found in the point of care test and will involve taking two further samples of fluid under 'chain of custody'\* conditions (a scary term in itself). Both samples are sent to an accredited laboratory where the first sample (Sample A) is tested and certificated results are issued to the requesting organisation.

The second sample, Sample B, is stored for three months. This sample is stored so that if the donor wishes to challenge the result from Sample A, then Sample B can be sent to another accredited laboratory of their choosing. The laboratory will give a 'results are' or 'are not' consistent with the sample A findings if independent verification were to be requested. It should be stated, however, that requests for independent verification are a very rare occurrence!

During the confirmatory sample collection process, the donor is given the opportunity to declare any medications. The declarations come in many forms – for example, a donor may state that they took medication that morning for back pain, but

say they do not know what they took.

This doesn't matter, as the information can be sought at a later point. The tester would still record the reason given for taking the medication and the time it was taken. Alternatively, you can have a donor who produces a prescription and a packet of tablets, detailing exactly what they have taken. The process is exactly the same, but the tester is now able to record more information for the laboratory and ultimately, the laboratory will be able to determine if the donor's declaration matches the substance/s identified in the confirmatory sample.

It is important to note that the laboratory will only look for those substances identified during the point of care test. The laboratory will not run a full suite of tests to see what other substance could be identified.

Once the testing organisation has received the results back from the laboratory via secure encrypted channels, the results will be communicated via secure channels to the nominated contact/s in the client organisation.

## Testing outcomes

There are generally two outcomes to a confirmatory laboratory test:

Positive: the substance/s found in the point of care test have been identified, isolated and quantified, meaning we can see the exact substance present and how much of the substance was present in the sample.

Negative: the substances found in the point of care test have not been

process and the donor will likely be able to return to work as usual.

Now that the process after a point of care test is understood, consideration should be given to what this means for both the donor and the requesting organisation.

In the first instance, when a non-negative point of care test result has been produced, the donor must be removed from any safety sensitive duties as until confirmatory laboratory results have been processed, it will not be clear whether a substance was acting on the employee at this point.

If moving the individual to lighter/desk-based duties is not an option, it may mean suspension on full pay. This again highlights a clear, definitive company policy is very important, as, it will define how the organisation will treat any non-negative results.

It is also really important to think about the donor themselves. It is entirely possible that the person did not take a substance, or perhaps they are in a profession where certain medications or other substances are not authorised. The stress and anxiety is going to heighten and they may fear for their livelihood, their reputation and, in some instances, their liberty. It is important that employees have a means to reach support, discuss what has happened and gain insight into this process. It doesn't have to be something that is feared. The opposite side of the spectrum is, of course, that the individual is fully



**Above:** A donor may produce a prescription and a packet of tablets, detailing exactly what they have taken

to come to work under the influence of a substance.

If employees are repeatedly using a substance in their daily lives, employers should really be considering whether the substance is being used as the solution, rather than being the problem.

As far as possible, staff should be encouraged to come forward and seek help with any dependency or addiction issues.

Regardless of what the individual's circumstances may be, it is important that a clear, concise and transparent passage of information takes place upon receipt of a confirmatory result.

The results should be communicated to the employer and depending on the complexity of the results, they may be accompanied by the report of a Medical Review Officers (MRO) which will detail the substances taken and the likely impact of the substance on the individual. Any action taken on receipt of results would utilise the results and MRO interpretation.

The organisation has now been left with an investigation and a decision to make. Crucially, that decision does not need to be terminal for the employee.

In the next issue, we will look into the options available to the organisation and how we can ensure the safe continuing operation of the organisation and ongoing care and support for the employee. ■

## It is important that employees have a means to reach support, discuss what has happened and gain insight into this process

identified in the laboratory confirmatory test. This can happen for a number of reasons – for example, cross-reactivity with the equipment and something that is in the donor's system, or even a spurious reading from one of the tests. The frequency of spurious readings can vary wildly depending on the quality of the equipment used which is why it is so important to use the best quality equipment available.

If the confirmation results are negative, that will be the end of the

aware of what they have taken, they are resigned to the fact that they have been caught and they may react to that knowledge in a myriad of different ways. The key message is that all employees must be treated with compassion and respect and afforded dignity.

## Culture differences

A big part of the management of the donor is the culture and attitudes within the organisation.

In most cases, employees do not want



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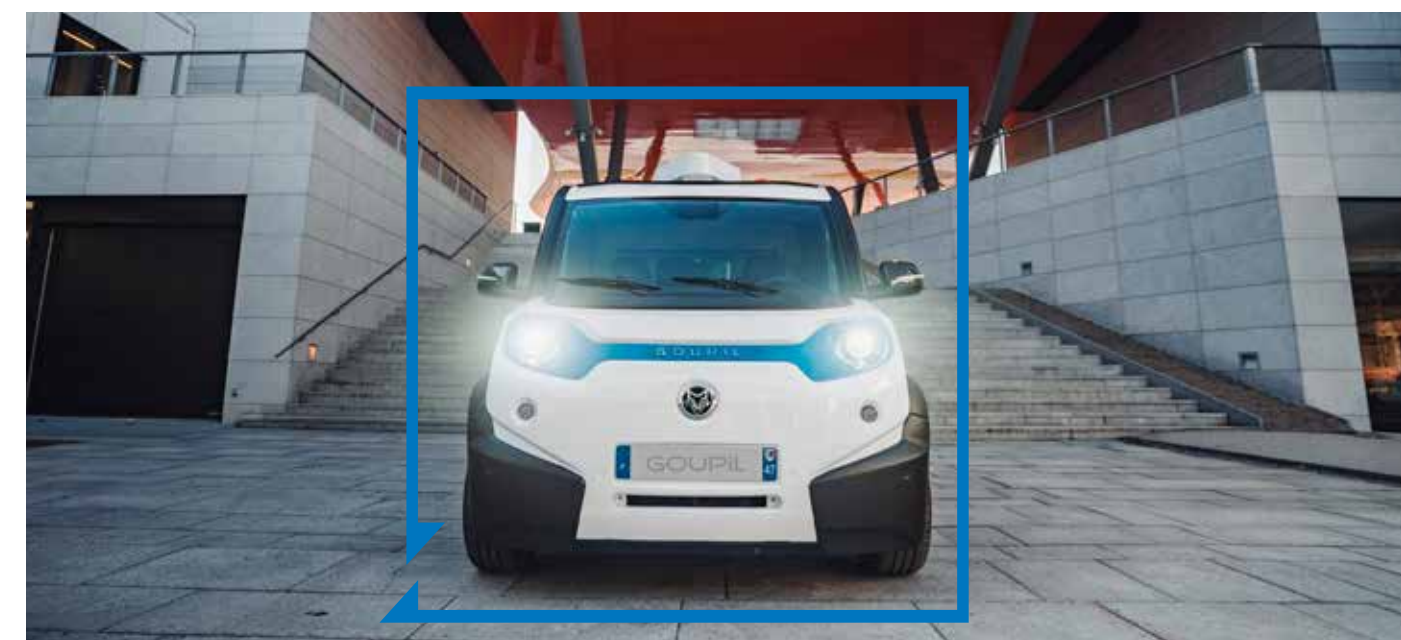
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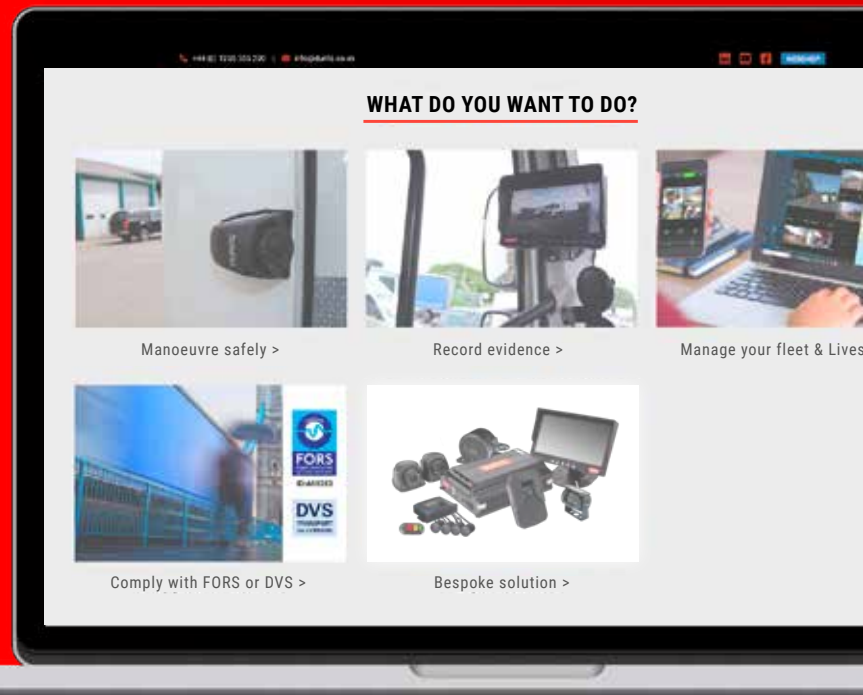
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