

# Post-event Report

Drive and thrive: your roadmap to success



**FORS Annual Conference 2024**



# FORS Annual Conference 2024.

**Over 400 delegates. 20 speakers.  
Our best event yet.**

The seventh FORS Annual Conference returned to Birmingham on 15 October 2024, setting a new benchmark as the biggest and best event to date. Held at the ICC Birmingham, the venue was ideal for hosting over 400 transport professionals.

This year's theme, "Drive and thrive: your roadmap to success," delivered practical strategies for operators to tackle industry challenges while cultivating a sense of community among delegates.

The event hosted 50 exhibitors, as well as presentations from industry experts, each offering practical guidance on maintaining compliance, enhancing safety, and achieving greater business efficiency.

## Watch a video of the day





# A warm welcome.

## Andy Salter

Returning as chairman, **Andy Salter**, Director of DVV Media International, opened the conference by highlighting the resilience of the industry, referencing recent challenges such as rising costs and intensifying legislative demands.

Salter emphasised the importance of having the right processes, planning, and driver management to deliver efficiencies and savings. He praised FORS for driving up standards across the industry and fostering the right behaviours in fleet management, which he believes creates true resilience.

Andy concluded that operators and organisations that “foster a diverse, inclusive culture among their employees, clients and suppliers will be less likely to fail.”



**FORS** Annual Conference 2024





# Helping you thrive and drive: an update from FORS

## Geraint Davies and Glen Davies



FORS Concession Director, **Geraint Davies**, and FORS Technical Advisor, **Glen Davies**, took the stage to provide an update on the work of FORS over the last year and what's in store for the future.

Geraint touched on this year's conference theme, acknowledging that it's a tough operating environment with over 500 operators failing last year. Sharing his extensive background in the transport industry, including his roles at John Raymond Transport and various industry councils, he emphasised that FORS is a help, not a hindrance, and teased that there are some exciting plans in the pipeline to help operators even further.

Talking about how instrumental the FORS Community of operators and the Delivery team, have been to FORS success over the years, Geraint also thanked operators for their commitment to safety. He then shared a personal story about a near-miss incident while driving a bus in Cardiff, as well as recounting a tragic family accident to show the importance of safe driving practices and why the subject is so close to his heart.

Geraint went on to cover FORS progress over the last year, including the launch of Version 7, moving into the Cargo Bikes sector, a new route to accreditation called OVDA targeting single van operators, and a new level of accreditation, FORS Assured, which is being piloted.

Geraint spoke on the expansion work FORS is doing in Ireland, as well as the new FORS Forum, the first of which was well attended in Manchester in May. He stated that the forum is there so operators can help us shape the future of FORS. The next Forum is in London on 5 November, and Geraint encouraged delegates to sign up as soon as possible as spaces are filling up fast.

He also remarked on the importance of FORS collaboration with organisations such as Logistics UK, RHA, DVSA, and the Office of the Traffic Commissioner.

On training, Geraint highlighted the new practitioner module and FORS Approved for third party eLearning. Conference attendees were also given the opportunity to enjoy a 24% discount on training for a limited time only by way of scanning the onscreen QR code.

Concluding his address, Geraint discussed recent digital transformations at FORS, including the redesigned FORS Online website, which features the new FORS Audit Platform, a digital audit solution to enhance the audit experience, as well as a new FORS Offers section that gives operators great discounts on fantastic products and services. "This is just one of the ways we're already materialising our 2025 vision and beyond," Geraint said. He also encouraged attendees to engage with the near 50 conference exhibitors, many of whom were FORS affinity partners offering discounted rates for operators on services ranging from insurance and legal to fuel and wellbeing.

Geraint handed over to Glen Davies who began with a quick overview of his career, which started in the Royal Corps of Transport and led to his role at TfL as manager of the then Freight Operator Recognition Scheme.

Glen explained how, when FORS was first announced in 2007, it was defined as an industry engagement scheme to improve road safety and reduce environmental impact. He stated that FORS has made great strides to improve road safety over the past 17 years, but acknowledged that addressing environmental impact has been a challenge.



## Helping you thrive and drive: an update from FORS | Geraint Davies and Glen Davies

Version 7 of the Standard paves the way to address this challenge, placing more emphasis on vehicle emissions, decarbonisation and carbon reporting requirements. Glen mentioned that Version 7 includes the need to calculate well-to-wheel emissions, where operators must consider the emissions created in the whole fuel supply chain.

Glen introduced the new FORS emissions calculator, a tool that simplifies the process of calculating emissions across the entire fuel supply chain to help operators with well-to-wheel reporting.

With formulas and algorithms developed by Zemo Partnership, the tool does all the hard work and calculations for operators.

Touching on the development of the online FORS audit platform, Glen explained how this off the shelf product is already recommended by several FORS operators who are early adopters. He proceeded to explain how FORS has spent the past year developing audit templates, improving the question sets and grading criteria, creating logic between questions, and improving the report format.

FORS has also addressed any perceived weakness in regulatory compliance and has incorporated Version 7 amendments in the audit platform.

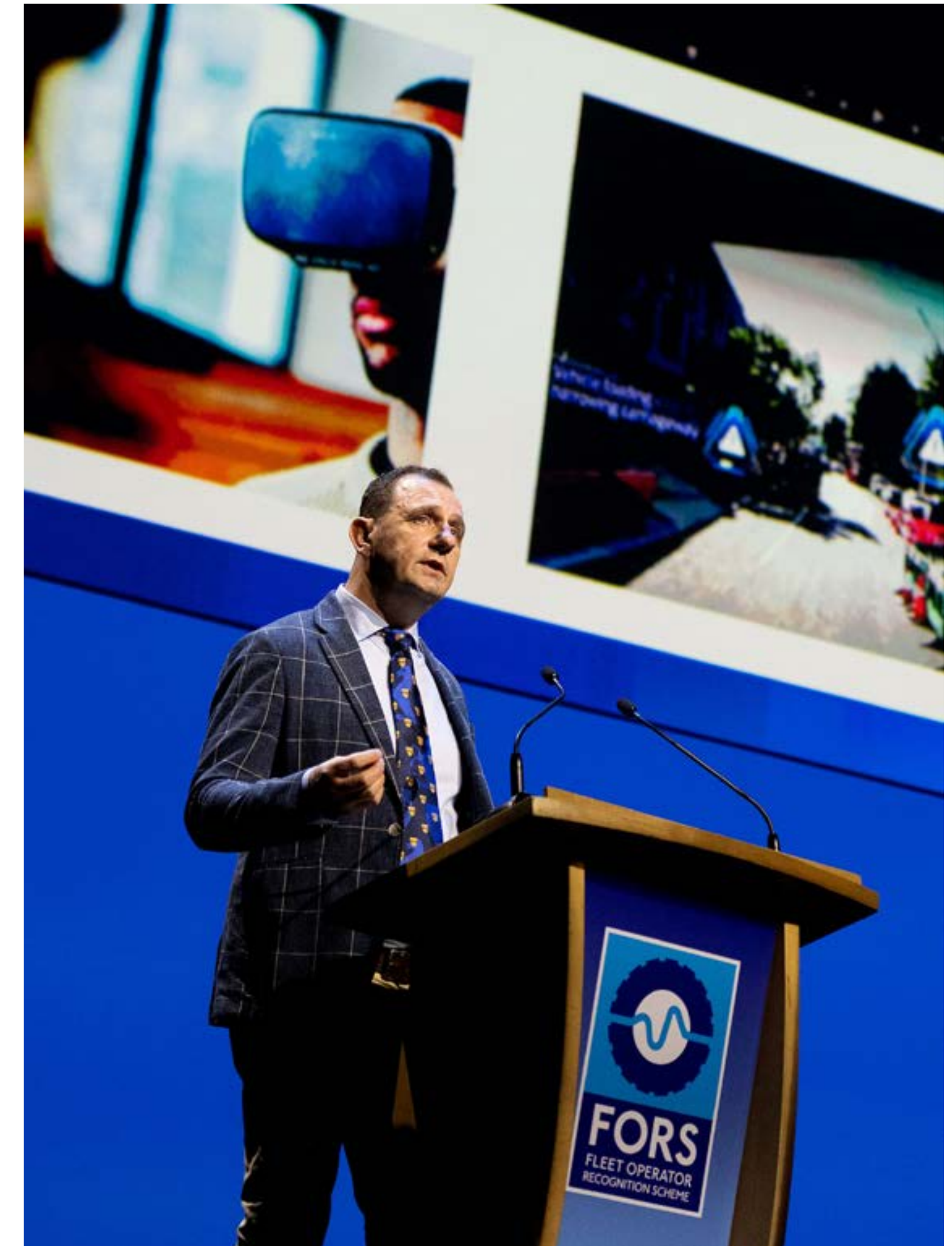
Full implementation of the platform is due in January and FORS is now piloting the system and templates via the FORS audit providers and volunteer operators.

Glen brought his presentation to a close by highlighting improvements to the FORS training program, including redesigned Practitioner courses, the introduction of FORS Advanced Practitioner, and a new “Safe Driving” course to replace the Safe Urban Driving course. He also previewed the development of virtual

reality training modules to complement the Safe Urban Driving course. This virtual reality module is an alternative to the on-cycle module and is 3.5 hours long with approximately 60 minutes of VR content.

An onscreen video showed how the module will work and the next steps to finalise post-production – then seek JAUP/T/GSAG approval.

“We are very much aware of the challenges facing operators today.”





# Resilience: A team sport!

## Tim Bradshaw

**Tim Bradshaw** of Sandstone Communications delivered an engaging presentation on resilience and leadership. He began with a humorous anecdote about James Bond, emphasising that real-life resilience is about more than just individual toughness – it's about enabling others.

Bradshaw shared his experiences from his military career, highlighting the importance of micro-goal setting and enabling resilience in others.

Tim recounted a challenging training exercise where he learned the value of setting small, achievable goals to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles. This approach, he explained, can be applied in a business setting to help teams navigate difficult situations.

Bradshaw also discussed the concept of filtering intelligence from information, stressing the importance of focusing on accurate, timely, and relevant data. He shared a story from his time in Kabul, where he had to quickly assess a high-pressure situation and make informed decisions based on the most relevant information.

In addition, Bradshaw touched on the physiological responses to fear and stress, using his experience of crossing a high mountain ridge to illustrate how our bodies react to perceived threats.

Tim emphasised the importance of training and preparation to manage these responses effectively in all walks of life and business.



Bradshaw concluded with a powerful personal story about a motorcycle accident in the desert, highlighting the role of determination and trained reflexes in overcoming life-threatening situations. He encouraged the audience to be part of their own solutions and to foster resilience within their teams.



# Operator Spotlight: Panel Discussion

## Gareth Jones, Alan Harvey, and Hannah Russel

The first panel discussion, led by Andy Salter, focused on the experiences of operators and how FORS accreditation has impacted their businesses.

**Hannah Russel**, Compliance Manager at Bidcorp, shared her journey with FORS. She highlighted how the accreditation process has helped her develop her career and improve operational standards within her company. Russel emphasised the importance of continuous improvement and how Version 7 of the FORS standard is pushing the business to enhance their processes further.

**Alan Harvey**, Transport Manager at Harlow Timber, discussed the significant impact FORS accreditation has had on the business. He explained how the accreditation has driven performance improvements and established a culture of safety and compliance. Harvey shared his background in the transport industry and how FORS has helped standardise procedures across multiple branches.

**Gareth Jones**, Group Fleet Compliance Manager at Speedy Hire, spoke about the benefits of being an early adopter of FORS. He highlighted how the accreditation has allowed Speedy to meet high standards and gain valuable insights from other operators. Jones emphasised the importance of creating a family-like environment within the FORS community, where operators can share knowledge and support each other.

### Key takeaways from the panel discussion

**Resilience and adaptability:** The panellists discussed the importance of resilience in the face of industry challenges, such as changing road networks and increasing customer expectations. They highlighted the need for continuous training and investment in technology to stay ahead.

**Driver training and retention:** The panellists emphasised the importance of comprehensive driver training programs and regular reviews to ensure safety and compliance. They shared their strategies for tracking and managing driver training, including the use of internal systems and external platforms.

**Promoting fleet management as a career:** The discussion also touched on the need to attract young talent to the industry. The panellists shared their experiences of apprenticeship programs and the importance of promoting the diverse career opportunities within transport and logistics.





# Decarbonisation of Transport: Why, When, Where, and How

## Kate Armitage

**Kate Armitage** delivered an insightful presentation on the decarbonisation of transport, addressing the critical questions of why, when, where, and how this transition should occur.

Armitage began by highlighting the significant progress made in reducing emissions in various sectors over the past 15 years, particularly in electricity generation. However, she pointed out that transport has now become the highest emitting sector in the UK. This shift underscores the urgent need for decarbonisation in transport to meet climate goals.

Kate discussed the timeline for decarbonisation, noting that significant changes are expected by 2040. She presented data showing the anticipated growth in electric vehicle (EV) sales and the gradual decline of diesel-powered vehicles. By 2040, a substantial portion of new vehicle sales is expected to be electric, driven by legislative measures and commitments from manufacturers.

Armitage provided practical advice on preparing for the transition to electric and hydrogen vehicles. She emphasised the importance of gathering data on current vehicle usage and energy consumption, engaging with stakeholders, and understanding the infrastructure requirements for electrification. She also highlighted the need for businesses to be flexible and ready to adapt their operations to accommodate new technologies.

### Key strategies for implementation

**Data collection and analysis:** Armitage stressed the importance of collecting detailed data on vehicle usage and energy needs to identify opportunities for electrification.

**Stakeholder engagement:** Engaging with facilities teams, energy suppliers, and other stakeholders is crucial for planning and implementing decarbonisation strategies.

**Infrastructure planning:** Understanding the current energy infrastructure and planning for necessary upgrades is essential for supporting electric vehicles.

**Financial planning:** Armitage highlighted the need to involve finance directors early in the process to ensure the financial viability of decarbonisation projects.

**Pilot projects:** Starting with small-scale pilot projects can help businesses understand the challenges and opportunities of decarbonisation before scaling up.

Kate concluded by encouraging businesses to be proactive and innovative in their approach to decarbonisation, emphasising that the transition is not only necessary but also achievable with the right planning and commitment.

“The brutal truth is, net zero is not going to go away and that 2050 zero emission deadline is not going away either.”



# Panel Discussion: decarbonisation in practice

Amy Carter, William Soper, Amber Geggus and Adam Franklin



The panel discussion on decarbonisation in practice provided insights into the practical steps and challenges associated with transitioning to a low-carbon future in the transport sector.

**Amy Carter**, Operations Manager at DAF Trucks, emphasised the importance of understanding the specific operational needs of customers when transitioning from diesel to electric vehicles. She highlighted the challenges related to infrastructure, particularly for operators running in urban areas where public charging infrastructure for trucks is currently insufficient. Carter mentioned the upcoming Zero Emission Truck (ZET) infrastructure demonstration project, which aims to address some of these challenges by providing a more robust public charging network.

**William Soper**, Director of Sustainability at DEKRA, discussed the importance of recording and reporting the different scopes of carbon emissions as a foundational step towards decarbonisation. William emphasising the need to capture data across Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions to understand the full carbon footprint of an organisation. Soper highlighted that sustainability is not just about environmental impact but also includes social and governance aspects. He stressed the importance of having a comprehensive, centralised plan that integrates sustainability into the business strategy.

**Amber Geggus**, Director at New Era Energy, focused on the role of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) as a renewable alternative to diesel. Amber explained that HVO offers significant reductions in particulate emissions, making it a cleaner option. Geggus addressed common misconceptions about the cost of HVO, noting that it is becoming more competitively priced compared to diesel. She encouraged operators to start small, with a few vehicles or a single depot, to making changes today without significant upfront costs.

**Adam Franklin**, CEO of Greenergy Flexigrid, shared his experiences running a fleet on high-blend biofuels. He discussed the economic viability of using these fuels, noting that while there are some additional costs related to maintenance and fuel system modifications, these can be offset by the benefits of reduced carbon emissions and improved fuel efficiency. Franklin also mentioned the challenges related to the supply of high-blend fuels but expressed optimism about the future availability and scalability of these options.

## Key takeaways from the panel discussion

**Recording and reporting:** Accurate data collection on emissions is crucial for understanding and managing the carbon footprint. This includes Scope 1 (direct emissions), Scope 2 (indirect emissions from energy), and Scope 3 (all other indirect emissions).

**Infrastructure challenges:** The lack of public charging infrastructure for electric trucks is a significant barrier. Projects like the ZET infrastructure demonstration are essential for addressing these gaps.

**Renewable fuels:** HVO and high-blend biofuels offer viable alternatives to diesel, with benefits such as reduced emissions and competitive pricing. Operators should start small and scale up as they gain experience.

**Economic viability:** Decarbonisation efforts can lead to cost savings and improved business performance in the long run. It is important to integrate sustainability into the overall business strategy and engage with stakeholders to support these initiatives.

**Outlook:** The transition to low-carbon transport is a gradual process that requires collaboration across the industry. Continuous innovation and adaptation are key to achieving long-term sustainability goals.



# The human factor in fleet safety

## Karl Wilshaw and Lisa Dorn

**Karl Wilshaw** from Travis Perkins opened the session by highlighting the significant role that drivers' emotions and cognitive states play in road safety. Travis Perkins commissioned research to understand the impact of these factors better, collaborating with academic institutions to gather evidence-based insights. Wilshaw shared some compelling statistics and insights from the research, aiming to plant seeds of thought among the audience about the need for a different approach to improving road safety.

Wilshaw stressed the importance of understanding the human element in fleet operations, particularly given the aging driver population and the various stressors they face.

### Key Points from Wilshaw's presentation

**Driver demographics:** The average age of HGV drivers has increased, with many now in their early to mid-fifties. This demographic shift brings additional stressors such as caring for elderly parents and financial pressures.

**Stress factors:** Drivers face numerous stress factors, including financial issues, family responsibilities, and the demands of the job. These stressors can significantly impact their cognitive function and driving performance.

**Technology and training:** While technology and training are crucial, Wilshaw pointed out the potential issues when drivers switch between vehicles with different levels of technological advancement. This can lead to confusion and increased risk.

**Dr. Lisa Dorn** from Cranfield University built on Wilshaw's introduction with an in-depth look at the cognitive and emotional impacts of driving. She explained how different regions of the brain process information and how stress can affect these processes.

### Key points from Dorn's presentation

**Brain Function and stress:** Dorn explained the roles of various brain regions, such as the prefrontal cortex, occipital lobe, temporal lobe, and amygdala, in processing information and emotions. Stress can disrupt these processes, leading to impaired decision-making and increased risk of accidents.

**Sources of stress:** Stress can originate from various sources, including home life, financial pressures, workplace demands, and the driving environment. These stressors can accumulate and significantly impact a driver's cognitive function.

**Safety culture:** Developing a strong safety culture within an organisation is crucial. This involves driver engagement, clear communication, and supportive leadership. Addressing stress and promoting a positive work environment can help mitigate the risks associated with stress.

**Health implications:** Chronic stress can lead to elevated cortisol levels, which are associated with various health issues such as cardiovascular diseases and cancer. Managing stress is not only important for safety but also for overall health and well-being.

Wilshaw and Dorn shared practical applications of their research findings. They emphasised the importance of understanding and addressing the human factors that contribute to road safety.





# The human factor in fleet safety

**Karl Wilshaw and Lisa Dorn**

## Recruitment and training

**Skill fade:** Research showed that skills can deteriorate after a period of not driving. Travis Perkins now asks specific questions during the recruitment process to assess the potential for skill fade.

**Driver engagement:** Engaging drivers in conversations about their stressors and providing support can help create a safer driving environment. This includes avoiding the use of angry tones during communications, which can exacerbate stress and lead to accidents.



## Stress management

**Personal conversations:** Encouraging personal conversations about stress can help identify and address issues before they lead to accidents.

**Divorce and road traffic collisions:** Research indicated that drivers going through a divorce are significantly more likely to be involved in road traffic collisions. This highlights the need for targeted support during such periods.

## Technology and observation

**Telematics and hard braking:** Using telematics data to identify patterns of hard braking can serve as a gateway to conversations about underlying stressors.

The session concluded with a call to action for fleet operators to consider the human factors in their safety strategies. By understanding and addressing the cognitive and emotional aspects of driving, organisations can improve road safety and the overall well-being of their drivers.

Dr. Lisa Dorn invited attendees to join her for further discussions on human factors in driving, either in person or online, through a two-day course offered by Cranfield University.





# Using data to improve driver safety

## Nick Chambers



**Nick Chambers** from Fleet Insights Group delivered an insightful presentation on how data can be leveraged to enhance safety within fleet operations. His talk focused on the importance of using the vast amounts of data available to reduce road risks and improve overall safety outcomes.

Chambers began by sharing his background as a fleet and risk manager with a passion for reducing road risks and preventing fatalities and serious injuries. He emphasised that while there is no shortage of data in the fleet industry, the challenge lies in making sense of this data and using it effectively to drive safety improvements.

### Key points from Chambers' presentation

**Abundance of data:** Chambers highlighted that fleet operators have access to a plethora of data from various sources, including leasing companies, telematics systems, camera systems, driver training records, and risk profiles. However, this data often exists in silos, making it difficult to derive actionable insights.

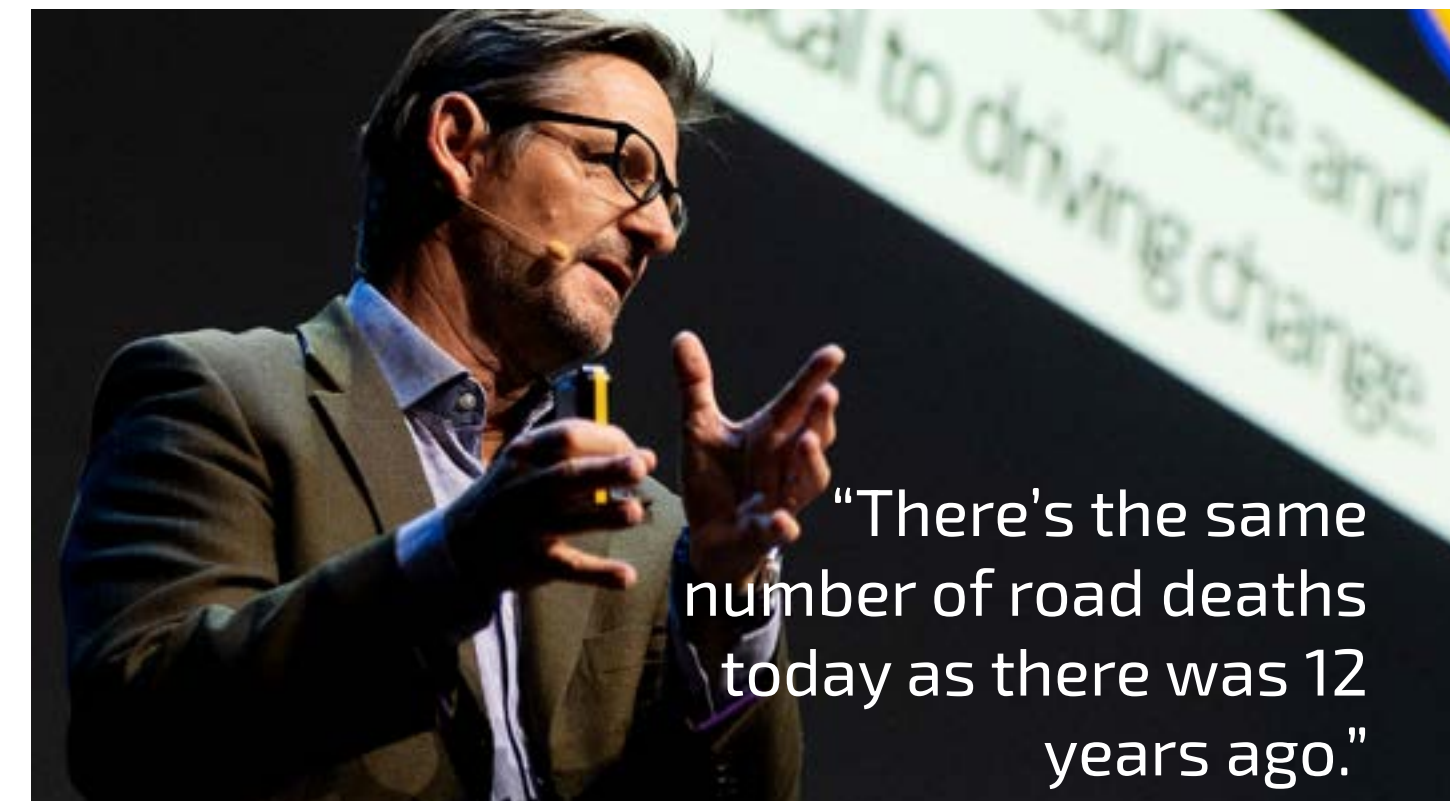
**Stagnation in road safety improvements:** Despite the availability of data, the number of road fatalities has plateaued since around 2012. Chambers pointed out that the same number of road deaths occurs today as it did 12 years ago, indicating a need for better data use to drive further improvements.

**Seatbelt usage:** A staggering statistic shared by Chambers was that a quarter of road accident fatalities involve individuals not wearing seatbelts, despite it being a legal requirement.

Chambers discussed the potential of data to transform safety practices within fleet operations. He outlined several key strategies for using data effectively:

#### 1. Aggregating and consolidating data

Chambers emphasised the importance of consolidating data from various sources to create a comprehensive view of driver behaviour and risk factors. By integrating data from telematics, cameras, training records, and vehicle inspections, fleet operators can identify patterns and tailor interventions to address specific issues.



#### 2. Individualised training programs

Using aggregated data, Chambers suggested that fleet operators can develop individualised training programs for drivers. Instead of applying a one-size-fits-all approach, data can help identify the specific needs of each driver, allowing for targeted training that addresses their unique risk factors.

#### 3. Focused initiatives

Chambers advised against trying to tackle all safety issues at once. Instead, he recommended focusing on one or two key initiatives at a time. This approach allows for more manageable and effective implementation of safety programs.

#### 4. Engaging drivers and management

Chambers stressed the importance of engaging both drivers and senior management in safety initiatives. Drivers need to understand the relevance of safety programs to their daily work, while senior management support is crucial for securing investment and prioritising safety within the organisation.

#### 5. Using on-road and virtual training

For smaller fleets where taking drivers off the road for training is challenging, Chambers suggested using on-road training and virtual reality-based training programs. These methods allow for continuous learning without significantly disrupting operations.



# Key Changes for Version 7 of the FORS Standard

**Nerija Smilgeviciute, Baljit Randhawa, Charlotte Smith**

The FORS Quality Assurance Team, consisting of **Nerija Smilgeviciute**, **Baljit Randhawa**, and **Charlotte Smith**, provided an overview of the key changes introduced in Version 7 of the FORS Standard, which will come into effect on 2 January 2025. The presentation highlighted the significant updates and the rationale behind these changes, emphasising the importance of compliance and the benefits of the new standard.

Nerija opened the session by acknowledging the extensive work that has gone into developing and implementing Version 7 of the FORS Standard. With a focus from an operator's perspective and only making changes to the Standard that were needed, Version 7 aligns with modern legislation and provides operators with the assurance that they are compliant with regulatory requirements.

“Version 7 is designed to equip you with all the knowledge, tools, and data outputs to fulfill your own reporting needs.”



## Key changes in Bronze requirements

### Management

**Pre-employment checks:** Drivers are now required to declare any collisions involving insurance companies or the police as part of the pre-employment process. This can be included in a revised pre-employment checklist or an updated recruitment and selection policy.

**Annual declarations:** Driver declarations in requirements M5/D1/D2/D6 are now required annually.

### Vehicles

**Vehicle safety recalls:** A procedure must be in place for vehicle safety recalls, with evidence of notifications being checked, rectified, and kept on file.

**Maintenance alignment:** Inspections and maintenance must align with the operator licence and DVSA guide to maintaining roadworthiness. This means for HGV and PCV operations auditors will be looking at evidence such as brake performance assessments being completed at safety inspections. The Vehicle Operator License system will be cross-referenced to verify relevant operator licence undertakings on vehicle maintenance.

**Technical competency:** Evidence of the technical competency of staff conducting safety inspections is required. For example, records of technical qualifications and accreditations, or assessment on the Maintenance Provider to ensure third-party suppliers meet the required standards.



# Key Changes for Version 7 of the FORS Standard

**Nerija Smilgeviciute, Baljit Randhawa, Charlotte Smith**

**V7 - Tyre Management:** Tyre management requirements now align to DVSA guidance. A couple of examples are:

- Wheel retorque to be completed following wheel refitting, and the records being retained on file
- Tyre reports to be reviewed and retained, and the quality of any contracted work to be monitored.

## Drivers

**D1 - Licensing:** The frequency of driver licence checks is increasing to 3 monthly. This is in line with the Senior Traffic Commissioner's Guidance for HGV and PCV operations, but it is just as relevant to light vehicle operations. To allow operators to adjust, for reapproval audits in 2025 there is a transitional arrangement in place, which means that only a minor action point will be awarded if the frequency hasn't been met. There may be more guidance published on this prior to the version 7 effective date.

**D4:** A key change here is that the 10% tolerance has been removed for the driver learning requirement with the completion of mandatory eLearning now required as part of staff induction for new drivers. A tolerance may still be accepted but this must be fully justified.

**eLearning:** Another major change to provide flexibility and variety for operators is the option to undertake either the existing FORS Professional eLearning or FORS Approved eLearning. This is a new approach to recognising eLearning in the same way as FORS Approved training.

## Operations

**O2 - Fuel consumption and environmental impact:** The policy and supporting procedures need to include the following additional requirements:

- Calculating and monitor diesel to AdBlue ratio by Vehicle Registration Mark
- Eliminating engine idling in accordance with relevant regulations; and
- Ensuring that any low carbon fuels used are reputably sourced, such as through supplier-approved schemes like the Zemo Renewable Fuel Assurance Scheme.

To demonstrate meeting the Standard at audit, operators must:

- Incorporate these requirements into their documented policies and procedures
- Provide supporting evidence of communications to drivers and transport staff on engine idling laws, promotion of behaviour changes or upgrades in technologies to monitor compliance
- And provide records as evidence that the requirement has been implemented.

A transitional arrangement is in place for reapproval audits in 2025. If the diesel-to-AdBlue ratio has not yet been calculated, a minor action point will be recorded, providing time to achieve full compliance by the next audit.

**O5 - Longer semi-trailers:** Any operator using longer semi-trailers will need to have a specialist operations policy and procedure in place along with formal notification to operate longer semi-trailers. This can be evidenced via the Vehicle Operator Licence system.

## Key changes in Silver requirements

**S2 - Data performance:** Baljit highlighted that the S2 requirement has been updated to align with the development of the FORS Emissions Calculator. The fleet emissions data (Green House Gas, NOx, and Particulate Matter) is now to be recorded and calculated. This can be done either by using the FORS Emissions Calculator or a FORS Approved alternative.

- The way the data is entered into the FORS Performance data report is also changing. Now fleet and emissions data will be extracted from the FORS Emissions Calculator, or if you are using an approved alternative, uploaded via a CSV file.





# Key Changes for Version 7 of the FORS Standard

**Nerija Smilgeviciute, Baljit Randhawa, Charlotte Smith**

As part of the transitional arrangement, for reapproval audits:

- From 2nd Jan 2025, operators will have to demonstrate that they have started collecting and calculating the data using the FORS Emissions calculator or approved alternative
- From 2nd January 2026, 12 months' data will need to be provided at audit.

**S3 - Environmental impact:** this is a new requirement, with the following key points:



- A policy and supporting procedure need to be in place to plan and implement emissions performance improvements
- The nominated fuel and emissions champion needs to complete an additional FORS Practitioner module, FP 16, which is the 'Introduction to Decarbonisation'
- A review of the fleet operations is required to assess potential initiatives that could minimise environmental impact and improve efficiency

A few examples of these include improving load consolidation, first-time delivery performance, using e-cargo bikes to replace van movements or use of renewable energy sources.

- Once you've completed the review, it will help you to identify the key action areas that offer the best combination of cost effectiveness and environmental impact improvements
- Finally, you need to document your findings in the operational performance action plan. An updated template will be available on the FORS website to guide you.

**S5 - Personal development:** As per Bronze D4, the 10% tolerance has been removed for the driver training and eLearning requirement. However, this does not mean the tolerance has been removed. 10% provides a very different tolerance for an operation of 10 drivers versus an operation of 1000 drivers. At audit, any outstanding training must be fully justified.

- Operators will now have a choice to undertake FORS Approved environmental awareness eLearning as well as the FORS Professional LoCITY module. The list of FORS Approved providers will be published and (as part of the approval criteria) records of completed eLearning will be logged automatically on

the FORS Professional Training register.

- Furthermore, the manager training requirements have been updated for the road risk champion and for the fuel and emissions champion.
- For the fuel and emissions champion, as mentioned at S3, an additional mandatory FORS Practitioner module 16 introduction to decarbonisation is now required to be undertaken. However, a transitional arrangement for reapproval applications has been put in place and will be accepted in 2025 if the training is booked to be completed within three months of the audit submission.

**S10 - Fleet transition:** This is a new requirement. For operators to meet the requirement they need to carry out a fleet review to understand practicalities of transitioning to lower environmental impact vehicles.

Operators are required to provide a Fleet Replacement Plan, to help prepare for the transition to renewable fuel technology and any regulatory phase out dates for new petrol and diesel vehicle.

The fleet replacement plan needs to include:

- The projected procurement cycles of your fleet
- The estimated total cost of ownership of petrol and diesel vehicles as well as their lower environmental impact alternatives
- If any government financial initiatives are available; and
- any practical considerations for integrating lower environmental impact vehicles into the fleet.

The FORS fleet replacement plan template will help operators to evidence this new requirement.



# Key Changes for Version 7

**Nerija Smilgeviciute, Baljit Randhawa, Charlotte Smith**

## Key changes in Gold requirements

**G3 - Decarbonisation strategy:** Decarbonisation is at the forefront of Version 7 of the Standard and the most forward-looking requirements are at Gold:

- G3 introduces a new requirement for a decarbonisation strategy and replaces the sustainable operations requirement in Version 6. A documented decarbonisation strategy is required. The strategy is a further development on the fleet operations review

“ We have been busy over the past year. We are contracted to transform the scheme, and that's what we've done.”



undertaken at Silver S3 and S10.

The strategy document needs to include:

- An emissions baseline, against which you will set and measure your environmental impact performance in the years to come
- Self-defined emissions performance targets for years: 2028, 2030, 2035 and 2040
- The actions the operator plans to take to achieve these targets. These would have already identified at Silver S3 and S10
- Finally, a commitment to ensure the accuracy of environmental performance data gathered.

FORS is working on a template to help operators with this requirement. A transitional arrangement has been put in place for re-approval applications in 2025, where performance targets for years 2028, 2030, 2035 and 2040 can be added to the strategy from 2 January 2026, when the emissions baseline has been established.

**G7 - Managing fleet transition:** This is a new requirement. Operators need to further develop the fleet replacement plan as required at Silver S10 to further include:

- A commitment to procure all new vehicles at the ultra-low emission standard. As a minimum this would include Euro 6 for diesel or hybrid vehicles, Euro 4 or above for petrol vehicles and Zero tailpipe emissions or alternative fueled vehicles
- Setting a target date to achieve a 100% ultra-low emissions fleet
- Finally setting target dates to begin procuring zero emission vehicles.

The requirement is to have a plan in place that lines up ahead of the regulatory phase out dates. However, this plan can change to reflect your operational circumstances, industry developments and regulatory change. A FORS template will be available to help to meet this requirement.

**G8 - Environmental impact engagement:** This has two key elements:

- Having an environmental impact engagement policy and procedure; and
- Records to demonstrate your actions taken.

## Transforming the FORS audit experience

Charlotte introduced the new live and dynamic digital audit platform, FORS audit platform, which aims to transform the audit experience. The platform includes a complete rewrite of the Bronze audit question set, integration of smart logic, and the ability to upload media, work offline and on three devices simultaneously. The new format provides clear, actionable insights and ensures transparency in the audit process. This means that as operators answer specific questions, the platform will trigger additional, relevant inquiries. FORS' goal is to eliminate the heavy text typically found in reports, replacing it with concise information that truly reflects your operations.

In addition to this, to minimise the need for supporting documentation, FORS has embedded the grading criteria directly within the audit template. This transparency benefits both auditors and operators, ensuring everyone has a clear understanding of what is required.



# Are we de-skilling our drivers with technology?

Jonathon Backhouse



**Jonathon Backhouse** from Backhouse Jones delivered a thought-provoking presentation on the potential de-skilling of drivers due to the increasing reliance on technology. He explored various aspects of driver responsibilities and how technology might be impacting their skills and accountability.

Jonathon began by emphasising that while technology can enhance safety and efficiency, it should not replace the fundamental skills and responsibilities of drivers. He posed the question of whether technology is inadvertently reducing drivers' skills and sense of responsibility.

## Key points from Backhouse's presentation

**Accountability and responsibility:** Drivers remain accountable for their actions on the road, but technology might be shifting some of their responsibilities. Backhouse questioned whether this shift is beneficial or detrimental.

**Driver skill and judgement:** Backhouse shared a personal story from 1986, where an experienced HGV driver potentially saved his life by making a quick, professional decision on the motorway. This highlighted the importance of driver skills and judgment.

**Load security:** In the past, drivers were responsible for roping and sheeting loads, which required significant skill and understanding of load distribution. Today, many loads are pre-secured by warehouse staff, and drivers often have less involvement in ensuring load security. This shift might reduce their awareness and skills related to load safety.

**Vehicle inspections:** Backhouse suggested renaming driver defect reports to driver maintenance inspections to emphasise the importance of these checks.

**Technological interventions:** The use of barcodes, GPS tracking, and photo documentation might distract drivers from thoroughly inspecting their vehicles. He questioned whether these technologies are making drivers more like robots, focusing on compliance rather than understanding the purpose of their tasks.

**Bridge strikes and technological aids:** Despite the availability of GPS systems, height sensors, and other technologies, bridge strikes remain a significant issue. Backhouse argued that drivers might rely too heavily on technology and neglect basic practices like knowing their vehicle's height and reading road signs.

**Driver respect and professionalism:** Backhouse highlighted that drivers are often seen as the lowest common denominator in the transport sector. He contrasted this with the aviation industry, where pilots are highly respected. He called for a cultural shift to respect and value drivers' roles, encouraging high standards and professionalism.

**Health and fitness to drive:** Employers should be vigilant in observing signs of drivers' ill health or stress. Backhouse referenced the Germanwings incident, where a pilot's mental health issues were not adequately addressed. Creating a supportive environment where drivers feel comfortable reporting health issues is crucial for safety.

Jonathon Backhouse called for a cultural shift to respect and support drivers, ensuring they understand the importance of their tasks and feel valued in their roles. Maybe ultimately that we need to stop putting equipment in the way and start reminding the driver that as highly skilled individuals they are expected to follow the rules of the road to keep us all safe.



# NaVCIS Freight: An Overview of UK Cargo Crime

**Mike Dawber**



**Mike Dawber**, a police officer at the National Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service (NaVCIS), provided an insightful overview of cargo crime in the UK. His presentation highlighted the scale of the problem, the methods used by criminals, and the efforts being made to combat these crimes.

NaVCIS is a national police unit based at the College of Policing in Ryton-on-Dunsmore, near Coventry. The unit is unique in that it is entirely industry-funded, receiving no Home Office funding. NaVCIS acts as a bridge between industry and policing, focusing on various aspects of vehicle crime, including freight and cargo theft.

## Key points from Dawber's presentation

**Scale of the problem:** In 2023, NaVCIS received 5,373 notifications of UK lorry crime and cargo theft. The unit supported 48 policing operations and assisted in 325 cargo theft related arrests.

**Data collection:** NaVCIS manages the UK national cargo theft database, collecting data from police forces, haulage companies, businesses, and cargo insurers. This data is used to produce reports that help map the threat of cargo crime.

Dawber outlined various types of cargo crime, including:

- **Theft from lorries:** This includes thefts from parked lorries, thefts in transit, and thefts involving the entire vehicle.
- **Organised crime:** Organised crime groups target specific types of goods and supply chains. These groups understand the logistics and routes of certain commodities, allowing them to plan and execute thefts effectively.

The economic impact of cargo theft is significant. In 2019, the estimated cost price loss value of cargo theft was £115 million. However, when considering hidden costs such as insurance, policing, criminal justice, and reputational damage, the true cost could be as high as £700 million per year.

One prevalent method is side-by-side cargo theft, where a smaller vehicle pulls alongside a larger lorry. Criminals then cut the curtain of the larger vehicle and transfer goods into the smaller vehicle. This method is challenging to detect and prevent.

## Challenges and solutions

Stolen goods often infiltrate legitimate supply chains, making them difficult to trace. They can end up being sold through online platforms, market stalls, and even supermarket shelves. Therefore, NaVCIS is working with the Department for Transport and the British Parking Association to promote secure truck parking standards. The goal is to implement robust standards to deter organised crime.

Dawber shared examples of recent operations, including the recovery of 250 cases of cognac worth approximately £54,000. These operations highlight the ongoing efforts to combat cargo crime and the importance of industry collaboration.

Mike Dawber concluded by emphasising the importance of continued efforts to combat cargo crime. NaVCIS plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between industry and policing, providing valuable intelligence and support to tackle this significant issue.

For more information, Dawber invited attendees to contact NaVCIS at [freight@navcis.police.uk](mailto:freight@navcis.police.uk).



# Wrap up.

## Andy Salter and Geraint Davies

To end the conference, chairman Andy Salter and FORS Concession Director Geraint Davies returned to the stage. Salter thanked the audience for their input and remarked at what an insightful and thought-provoking event it had been.

Davies thanked the audience for being a part of the FORS Community and said it was fantastic to see so many people attending. He stated, “The best is yet to come” and next year’s annual conference will be even bigger and better.





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