

# FleetNews

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## On the frontline

Hear from the fleet managers and key workers who stepped up during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic to save lives and keep the country running



# THE PEOPLE BEHIND

As the UK Government eases the lockdown, *Fleet News* pays tribute to the fleets and key workers who stepped up during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic to help save lives and keep the country running. These progressive essential services companies have implemented new processes at very short notice, and are keen to share their learnings with other business. Over 22 pages, we bring their stories to life and speak to some of the drivers on the front line about their experiences and how they are embracing a new way of working. Reporting by *Sarah Tooze, Matt de Prez* and *Tom Seymour*.

#### SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE AND SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE

Sarah Gilding takes us through a typical day keeping the emergency services at operational level, while police inspector Jason Booth and firefighter Ben Dalton explain the impact Covid-19 is having on their working lives [P34](#)

#### ROYAL MAIL FLEET

Paul Gatti reveals the processes the UK's biggest fleet operator has put in place, while postal worker Andrew Philips explains the changes to his daily routine [P38](#)

#### LONDON AMBULANCE SERVICE

How Justin Wand is handling significant challenges with logistics, vehicle preparation, supply and maintenance at the UK epicentre of the pandemic [P42](#)

#### JOHN LEWIS PARTNERSHIP

Justin Laney is still able to progress his major fleet projects, while his mothballed fleet is helping the Waitrose home delivery business to cope with high demand [P46](#)

#### GATESHEAD COUNCIL

Graham Telfer believes local authorities have 'stood up to the test' by ensuring vital services have been maintained, and refuse collection driver Tony Robinson tells how his crew is overcoming the restrictions imposed by social distancing [P48](#)



# OUR FRONTLINE FLEETS

**T**he Government's list of essential workers in the Covid-19 pandemic reads like a Who's Who in fleet. Police, fire and ambulance services? Tick. Postal services? Tick. Delivery companies? Tick. Telecommunications? Tick. Utilities? Tick. Local authorities? Tick.

These organisations (and many more) have played a vital part in the fight against Covid-19. While the doctors, nurses and paramedics have been risking their lives, treating patients, fleet decision-makers have been quietly working away in the background.

They and their teams have been keeping the vehicles on the road that we rely on – the ambulances, the fire engines, the police vehicles, the vans delivering food, parcels, medication and more to our doors, the refuse trucks, the vehicles that go out when there is a power cut or a flood or a gas leak. They have been helping to keep the country running.

They deserve a 'thank you'. A (virtual) pat on the back. A round of applause, even.

So, in this special feature (and ones in future issues), we aim to do that. We highlight what

life has been like for those fleet managers, their drivers and emergency services staff. These were all, understandably, busy, but took the time to share their experiences and give other fleet managers some ideas about how to operate safely in the strange times we find ourselves in.

In a world where, as John Gorton, head of transport at Kent and Essex Police, puts it, "the vehicle is a transmitter"; where:

- Simply handing over a set of car keys presents a risk.
- Initiatives that have brought efficiencies to fleets, like van sharing, have had to be dropped and new ways of working found.
- Communication and staff morale has, arguably, never been more important.

## TEST OF RESILIENCE

Covid-19 has been a true test of resilience, even for public sector organisations who plan for emergency situations like pandemics.

When Covid-19 hit, the police service put its contingency plans into action (essentially a command structure whereby a chief officer

oversees every aspect) but plans have to be continually adjusted as the situation evolves.

As Gorton points out: "No matter how good your planning is, it never survives contact with the 'enemy'. You always end up having to adapt."

Frontline fleets have had to:

- Create protocols for cleaning vehicles, offices and workshops.
- Introduce social distancing measures.
- Source personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Review MOT, maintenance and servicing schedules.
- Engage with unions.
- Recruit staff or partner with other organisations.
- Stock up on bunkered fuel and introduce contactless fuel cards.
- Respond to the latest Government and industry developments.
- Liaise with suppliers.
- Delay tenders.
- Put projects on hold and accelerate others.
- Provide equipment and test new technologies for those working from home.
- Monitor staff absences and have strategies to cover them, and support those who are ill.

# thank



## FRONTLINE FLEETS: A DAY IN THE LIFE

■ Find ways to boost staff morale and support their mental health.

The latter has been particularly challenging for one fleet operator who had to recover from the virus himself, deal with the difficulty of losing colleagues to it and keep the fleet running. That is the stark reality of this pandemic.

Another fleet operator described how they were facing a “perfect storm” at the start of lockdown. Auction houses had closed so they couldn’t dispose of vehicles; independent garages and dealerships had closed so they couldn’t maintain or repair vehicles; and staff absences were high. Yet they were providing an essential service and had to keep going.

They, together with industry trade associations, lobbied the Government to get dealerships to re-open for key worker vehicles requiring essential maintenance.

These are unprecedented times. But all the fleet operators we spoke to were effusive in their praise of suppliers and were getting regular updates from them and industry organisations.

Frontline fleets with non-operational vehicles, such as company cars, have faced the same challenges as fleets in lockdown – handling queries about benefit-in-kind tax, drivers wanting to hand keys back, pre-lease rental vehicles being returned, deliveries and collections of new cars being suspended, and ensuring that vehicles

parked up don’t have maintenance problems.

All this has had to be managed alongside ‘normal’ fleet operator tasks such as driving licence checks and reviewing the fleet budget.

### QUICK THINKING

Many fleet operators acted quickly at the start of lockdown to minimise impact.

South Yorkshire Police and South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue, for instance, did vehicle servicing at weekends to ‘get ahead’ (see pages 34-37).

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Group Fleet Services cancelled all new car deliveries as it was not able to dispose of old ones.

National Grid was due to take delivery of a number of new vans and its fleet team made the decision to move 25 of them to its head office where it could access them in emergencies.

“It was a wise choice – within 24 hours of that discussion our converter was then on lockdown itself,” says fleet manager Lorna McAtear.

For some fleets on the frontline of the Covid-19 pandemic, work has increased considerably. Take the London Ambulance Service, which has been at the epicentre of the virus outbreak (see pages 42-44). Its teams had to work 72-hour shifts to get vehicles ready for the opening of the emergency Nightingale Hospital at the Excel Conference Centre.

Royal Mail, meanwhile, has experienced a drop in letters, but a huge uplift in parcels since lockdown began (see pages 38-40).

The Government may be gradually easing restrictions (at the time of writing) but with many retailers set to be closed until June, at the earliest, online shopping will remain ‘the norm’ for some time to come.

### MEDICAL VULNERABILITIES

Well Pharmacy, the UK’s third largest pharmacy chain, has experienced a different workload challenge. When the lockdown started, many drivers needed to self-isolate due to age or medical vulnerabilities. Initially, it started a volunteering scheme internally to try to fill the gap but then embarked on a recruitment drive. It received more than 7,000 applications – compared with its normal 20-35 applications for driver roles.

It has taken on 45 drivers, with another 20 in process, and fleet manager David Sharples says it has been challenging getting them into the business and fully trained, within days.

However, internal departments and Well’s fleet suppliers “made this process easier”. DriveTech, for instance, carried out driving licence checks instantly with the DVLA as part of the screening process.

Well’s lease provider, Lex Autolease, has set-up a critical workers helpline. This “ensures our

## “THE VEHICLE IS A READY TRANSMITTER OF THE VIRUS”

Making vehicles safe is a priority for fleets, particularly when they have multiple users, such as pool cars, or police cars.

“The challenge is to recognise that the vehicle is effectively a fomite – a ready transmitter of viruses and pathogens,” says John Gorton, head of transport at Kent and Essex Police, and chair-elect of the National Association of Police Fleet Managers.

“Covid-19 is believed to last up to 72 hours on plastic and vehicles are full of plastic – the steering wheel, handbrake etc. so one of the things we’ve been very careful to do is make sure we’ve got standard operating practices between the change of driver. So, there are processes in place where the entire interior

of the vehicle can be wiped down and sanitised as far as possible, making sure that when you’re doing that, you’re wearing gloves. Remember that when logbooks, car keys and fobs are handed from one individual to another there is an opportunity to transfer the virus.”

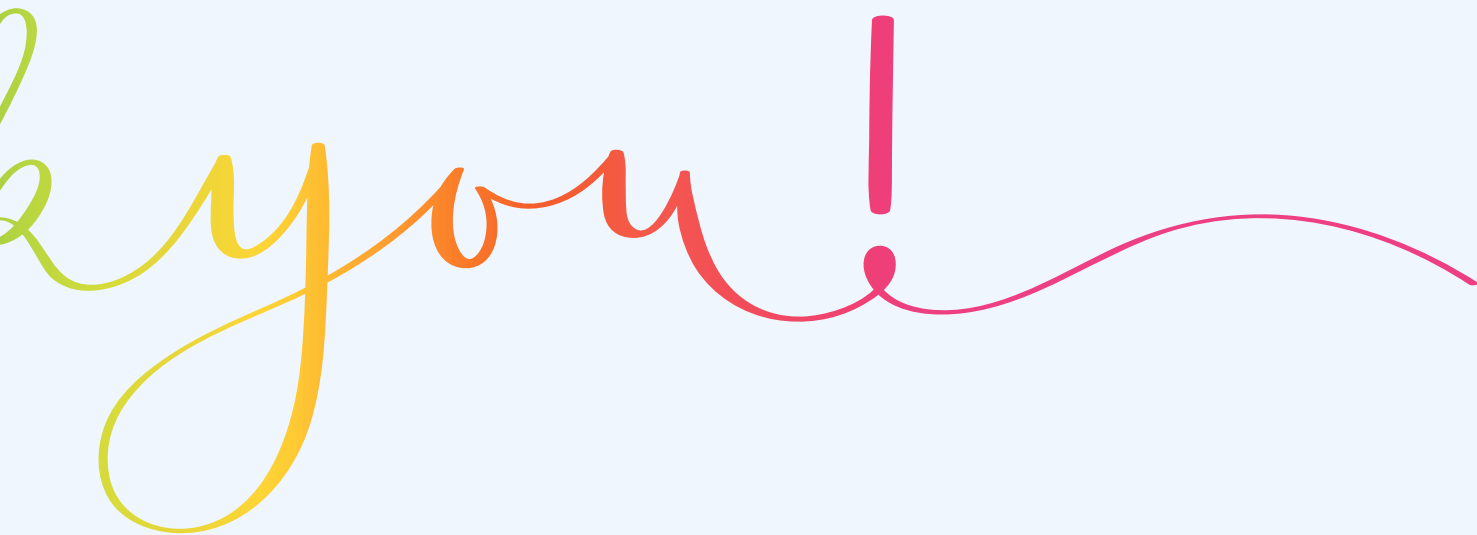
Gorton has avoided fitting seat covers as “we don’t want to restrict the deployment of any safety devices like car seat airbags” and there are similar concerns from fleets about fitting Perspex screens in vehicles.

Addison Lee has highlighted concerns about taxi drivers installing home-made partitions. It is implementing a single, tested model in each of its vehicles which adheres to International Safety Standards.

It is also providing drivers with protective equipment such as masks, gloves and hand sanitiser and disinfectant to wipe down vehicles after each journey, cleaning vehicles with an electrostatic spray for a deep antimicrobial clean, facilitating social distancing by using the rear seats of its seven-seater vehicles and asking people to only travel with members of their household and to avoid using front seats.

Fleet operators could also consider using third party suppliers to clean their vehicles, particularly in the event of a driver being found to have Covid-19. The London Ambulance Service, for instance, is using Interserve (see pages 42-44).





essential workers have the ways and means to maintain their vehicle, so it is fit for purpose", Sharples says.

Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles, which make up the majority of Well's fleet, and TrustFord also offered their demonstrator fleets should it need to boost vehicles numbers, and Wilko offered staff and vehicles to help with pharmacy deliveries.

"It's great to see everyone working together for the greater good," Sharples says.

For British Gas, the lockdown has actually caused its engineers' workloads to reduce considerably as it is only attending priority, vulnerable customers and emergency work where customers are without heating or hot water or where domestic equipment, such as cookers and fridges, are not working.

This has meant each engineer is now attending two to three jobs a day compared with six to eight prior to the coronavirus crisis.

"We call customers prior to attending to let them know what we will be doing and what we expect from them – they should always be in a different room to where we are working," says head of fleet Steve Winter.

"We are following the Government guidelines for working in customers' homes and the required PPE so gloves, face masks and coveralls. Use of this depends on whether the customer is self-isolating or vulnerable."

Engineers already had this type of PPE, but Winter acknowledges that the supply chain has had to "work hard" to continue to keep engineers well-equipped.

"This has been a struggle, as I am sure we are

all finding," he says. "But we must give priority to the brilliant NHS at this time."

#### SUPPORTING CHARITIES AND COMMUNITIES

The reduced workload – as well as a huge drop in pump prices – has meant the fleet's fuel spend has fallen, and there has been a significant reduction in breakdown rates.

However, all vehicles are still being used to some extent as British Gas is one of five businesses (alongside Sainsbury's, The Entertainer, Palletforce and XPO Logistics) supporting the Trussell Trust and its network of food banks across the UK.

"We have more than 3,000 staff volunteering to help in their local communities and we are now delivering food parcels to the more needy," Winter says.

"We must thank our suppliers, Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions, Volkswagen, Vauxhall and Engineius vehicle movements. These companies have supported us with 50 large vans – some demo vans and some that were waiting to go to auction. These are now working, collecting food from the 20 distribution hubs around the UK and delivering to the food banks.

"The food is then sorted and our smaller vans and an army of our engineers then deliver out to the homes around the UK."

To date, 1,000 tonnes of food has been delivered, meaning approximately two million meals.

This is just one example of fleet operators, drivers and suppliers supporting their local communities and charities during the crisis.

At the London Borough of Hackney, buildings

maintenance has had to stop due to the difficulties of tradespeople entering domestic homes and trouble obtaining parts and materials "but rather than furlough these employees we have used the resource to support community programmes such as collecting and delivering food to vulnerable residents", says corporate fleet manager Norman Harding.

It's a similar story at Gateshead Council where staff are delivering PPE and supporting schools (see pages 48-49).

Defra has also been helping local authorities to deliver medicines or food.

Many more examples of the fleet industry providing support can be found on our dedicated page, [fleetnews.co.uk/tag/coronavirus-covid-19](https://fleetnews.co.uk/tag/coronavirus-covid-19)

#### MAINTAINING CORE SERVICES

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, both Defra and the Environment Agency have a full incident management structure in place, and fleet has established its own incident management team to maintain its core services.

Dale Eynon, director at Defra Group Fleet Services, says: "This cell deals with keeping the assets on the road, managing supply chains, and working with the end users to ensure continuity of service."

Around 75% of the fleet is operational, namely vehicles and plant that are part of Defra's critical incident response or are related to protecting the health and safety of the workforce or others.

Some vehicles are on standby and will be used as required. Responding to an incident or maintaining critical infrastructure (such as trash →

## STAFF WELLBEING

Fleet operators are conscious that their drivers, workshop staff and other fleet team members may be feeling anxious, suffering from fatigue or feeling lonely and missing 'office chat' if they are working remotely.

Royal Mail fleet has been keeping track of how staff feel by asking them to give scores for tiredness and morale during team meetings so they know who may require extra support (see pages 38-40).

At South Yorkshire Police, staff have access to an app which includes hints and tips for wellbeing and mindfulness techniques (see pages 34-37).

Meanwhile, the fleet team at National Grid has a daily Webex call, with work discussion banned, to "help lift spirits" and "have a bit of banter and humour to help relieve the impact of lockdown", says fleet manager Lorna McAtear.

## PRaise FROM THE GOVERNMENT

The Government has echoed praise from *Fleet News* in recognising frontline fleets for their hard work.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma says: "We want to pay tribute to all those who are working to keep our economy going."

"Across the UK, fleets of vehicles are delivering essential goods, boosting the resilience of the nation during these challenging times. We recognise those efforts and say thank you."



## FRONTLINE FLEETS: A DAY IN THE LIFE

### KEEP UP-TO-DATE WITH COVID-19 NEWS AND GUIDANCE

■ For the latest fleet guidance on Covid-19, visit [www.fleetnews.co.uk/tag/coronavirus-covid-19-advice](http://www.fleetnews.co.uk/tag/coronavirus-covid-19-advice)

■ For answers to questions from our Covid-19 webinar, visit [www.fleetnews.co.uk/covidquestions](http://www.fleetnews.co.uk/covidquestions)

■ For the latest fleet-specific Covid-19 news, visit [www.fleetnews.co.uk/tag/coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.fleetnews.co.uk/tag/coronavirus-covid-19)

■ The BVRLA has produced a guide to operating during the pandemic, see [www.fleetnews.co.uk/covidbvrla](http://www.fleetnews.co.uk/covidbvrla)

■ Driving for Better Business and Fleet Check have produced a series of video guides and other resources, see [www.drivingforbetter-business.com/covid-19/](http://www.drivingforbetter-business.com/covid-19/)

■ screens, which collect debris on rivers) often now requires two vehicles so employees don't travel together.

Vehicles that are not in use are started up at least once a week to make sure they have full batteries etc. Drivers are also undertaking risk assessments/inspections to ensure they are safe to use. Where they require maintenance, this is booked in with Defra's service provider, Rivus.

Like many fleet operators, Defra has moved MOT and servicing for non-critical assets and increased service intervals for its O-licence heavy goods vehicles.

#### KEEPING WORKSHOPS SAFE AND OPERATIONAL

Frontline fleets who carry out maintenance in-house have introduced methods for cleaning vehicles, tools and the workshop itself and installed sanitisation stations, reminding staff of the importance of keeping their hands clean.

They have introduced social distancing measures, such as markings on the floor to stay two metres apart, flexible start times and staggered breaks, and are limiting how many technicians work on vehicles. In circumstances where that isn't possible, they use PPE. Other measures limit how many people enter a workshop.

Gorton says: "We've almost quarantined our own workshops because I've got 35 technicians and if some of them were to fall ill that would have a direct impact on frontline policing."

"We don't let police officers in. We don't let the parts delivery people enter the workshop – they leave parts at a certain location, we come out and if we think there is a need we'll spray those parts and sanitise them before bringing them in."

Gorton has also split his biggest workshop team into two, which don't mix to "restrict opportunity of cross contamination".

As chair-elect of the National Association of Police Fleet Managers (NAPFM) he has been in

touch with other forces and says that some have opted to put their staff on a four-days on, four-days off rota, including weekends.

Some forces have been fortunate enough to have had some additional stock holding as part of contingency planning for Brexit.

"We've been able to use that; that's a fortunate double-up," Gorton says.

However, the national vehicle tender, which the NAPFM manages on behalf of the majority of the UK forces, has been put on hold as manufacturers have been unable to respond.

"I've suspended the tender for three months to make sure it's a fair and open process. I'll be reviewing it on a monthly basis," Gorton says.

Police forces, and other fleet operators, also have the challenge of vehicles being stuck at converters or body repair shops.

"It's going to be interesting when lockdown ends because there are a fair few of us with vehicles in part-build that have just been suspended because our external contractors are on lockdown," Gorton says.

"We've got vehicles that are out at vehicle body repair shops following serious accident damage and they've been locked down so there is a lot of catching up to do."

National Grid has about 250 vehicles stuck at its build centre that cannot be worked on.

Similarly, British Gas has vehicles in build at its commissioning centre. However, it has been able to issue some vans that were built prior to lockdown to its engineers.

It has plans in place to catch up with maintenance and van replacements when providers can return to 'normal'.

"We are pre-booking work, combining MOT and service much more to minimise downtime. As we have extended MOT and service intervals, we are able to combine much more easily and this will help to reduce SMR overspend," Winter

says. "We will not be using collection and delivery as much as we will be placing some surplus vans around the repair network, allowing drivers to drop their van at the repairer and collect the spare and carry on with work. This keeps engineers mobile."

#### LONG-TERM IMPACT OF COVID-19

In the long-term, fleet operators expect there to be less need to travel for face-to-face meetings as video conferencing has worked well for staff meetings and keeping in touch with suppliers.

Staff currently working from home may wish this to continue beyond lockdown and expect flexible hours.

Fewer miles could mean fewer cars or different ways of funding them with potentially more interest in flexible contracts.

Telematics will play a greater role in determining vehicle utilisation and will be increasingly important in helping organisations find savings in the wake of the financial pressures many will be facing.

But businesses will still be grappling with the big issue of the environmental impact of their fleet and the move to electric vehicles (EVs).

Winter says: "We are still working on our plans for a large EV fleet and we have surveyed our engineers and found more than 1,000 that want an EV and have off-street parking so we are also using this time (lockdown) to carry out virtual surveys on their houses to confirm their suitability for an EV."

And a note of positivity from Eynon: "As well as all the terrible sadness about the loss of life that has occurred in this pandemic, I always like to reflect on the positive challenges and opportunities that have come from this experience, and believe the fleet industry will emerge a stronger, more vibrant service that can make better use of technology to deliver its services."





## FRONTLINE FLEETS: A DAY IN THE LIFE

SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE AND SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE

# 'We've been tested to our limits'

Sarah Gilding, head of joint vehicle fleet management at South Yorkshire Police and South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue, shares how staff have responded to the Covid-19 crisis as she outlines a day in the life of her fleet operation during the April peak. As told to [Sarah Tooze](#).

### 8AM: ARRIVE AT OFFICE

I have been coming into the office every day throughout the crisis. We have three workshops – two in Rotherham and one in Chapel-town, near Sheffield, where I am based – and I can't expect my workshop staff to come in and fix vehicles while I'm at home. It would send completely the wrong message. And I want to make sure the team is okay.

So my deputy Jo (Buckley) and I are in. But we don't put ourselves or others at risk. We have separate offices and the first thing we do when we enter the building is to use a hand sanitiser which lasts 24 hours. We also wipe down our workstations. The cleaners have also been busy wiping down touchpoints.

Some administration staff, who are vulnerable, are working from home. They keep in touch through Skype and that makes a real difference, rather than people being totally isolated; they still feel part of the team.

### 8.15AM: CHECK ACCIDENT REPORT

I have to keep a daily eye on accidents and any write-offs because it could leave us short of vehicles. We had 25 beat vehicles and seven high performance vehicles on order prior to this crisis. They're now stuck in those manufacturing plants with no indication as to when they will come. We will be considering any stock vehicles that may become available, provided they're tested for police use, so we've got a pool to use.

The coronavirus crisis has affected the national police tender for vehicles. That should have closed at the end of March but that's been on hold because the manufacturers couldn't respond. It's going to take some time to get back to normal throughput so we may have to keep vehicles on longer than we would have done. We typically keep beat vehicles for five years/150,000 miles and high performance vehicles for four years/ 150,000 miles but we do always get a percentage of write-offs and we thought we'd successfully planned for that.

We had forward planned six months into the year with the order for 32 vehicles, but this has thrown it out.

### 8.30AM: CONTACT SUPPLIERS

In light of the vehicle supply shortage I am keeping a close eye on manufacturer emails. BMW, for example, is constantly updating us via email and I am speaking to them two or three times a week.

We're getting updates from our tyre provider, updates from other parts companies on what they have and haven't got in place, and checking which dealers are open or closed. I have to check every day where everybody is at because the situation today could be completely different tomorrow.

We increased our parts supply in the early days to take account of this and the same with fuel. We have a national contract with Allstar as well as our own bunkered fuel. BP has offered free fuel for emergency services through the Allstar cards so we fed that out to all the teams and told them where the BP locations were and said go there first so we could maintain our own stocks. There's a potential saving there for us so we're tracking that as well.

There are a lot of emails coming in from different suppliers, ones we've not used, too. Just to say 'perhaps we can help with this, please pass our details on' so there's been a lot of support.

### 9.30AM: SPEAK TO WORKSHOP MANAGERS

Myself or Jo ring the managers at the Rotherham workshops at least once a day as well as checking on the workshop here. We were in the middle of merging the two sites at Rotherham to create an HGV workshop and bodyshop facility ([www.fleetnews.co.uk/syorks](http://www.fleetnews.co.uk/syorks)) but we've had to stop contractors working on that and put that on hold.

A lot of proactive things have stopped. We would have been progressing telematics for

the fire service vehicles, for example, and we would have been doing a lot more proactive work in terms of getting the data out to districts and departments and trying to make savings. Things like that have gone on hold because everybody is consumed with coping day-to-day on the basics.

We continue with routine vehicle servicing. We have nominated people to clean everything at the start and end of the day, and every time vehicles are swapped over. We've got a designated cleaning station and cleaning kit for every vehicle with protective equipment in.

Workshop staff, such as technicians and store keepers that are dealing with parts, are also wearing gloves and masks.

We've tried to reduce how often more than one person works on a vehicle but there are still times where one may need another's help which is why we've gone with the masks so they've got that added protection. When they can just stay in their own workstation environment on a ramp they are doing that.

We've introduced other distancing measures. For instance, officers no longer drive into the back of the compound, we're asking them to wait outside the front of the building, and we've changed meal breaks so there are not as many people having breaks at the same time.

We have a plan should workshop staffing levels reduce. We would prioritise which vehicles are serviced, ensuring we service the ones doing the high speeds and those that have the risks first. Those that aren't used for responding, that are doing day-to-day enquiries or day-to-day deliveries, would be pushed lower down.

We have also done some weekend servicing to get ahead of the game in case we do have a reduction in staffing. We put people on notice to do overtime while they're well.

The fire service has continued to do mobile servicing of vehicles and appliances.

Their work has shifted in terms of response





## Factfile

**ORGANISATION:** South Yorkshire Police (SYP) and South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue (SYFR)

**HEAD OF JOINT VEHICLE FLEET**

**MANAGEMENT:** Sarah Gilding

**FLEET SIZE:** SYP = 715 (559 cars, 138 vans, 18 motorcycles); SYFR = 201 (80 cars, 70 vans, 46 HGVs, five other)

**NUMBER OF STAFF:** 54 posts in total of which 41 are from the police service, 13 from the fire service. Of the 54, there are six HGV mechanics, two equipment technicians, five body repairers, two auto electricians, nine mechanical technicians. The remaining roles are management/supervisors, admin, storekeepers and drivers.

**REPLACEMENT CYCLE:** Cars – five years; vans – up to seven years

**FUNDING METHOD:** Outright purchase

to fire. They're doing more work with the police and the NHS to assist with Covid-19, delivering PPE to people. They've stopped their routine things like house calls.

The focus of work for our drivers has changed. Normally, they would be doing a daily post run, we've cut that down to three times a week. Or they would be moving witnesses about – there's none of that because of social distancing. The courts are closing so the movement of files and things isn't as urgent.

The ad-hoc jobs for them are now mainly Covid-related such as delivering laptops and getting PPE out to people.

### 10.30AM: CHECK COVID-19 UPDATES

We set up a central Covid-19 team at the beginning of March to deal with contingency planning and it sends daily updates to all staff such as where we are at with PPE, staff being off and where we are in the peak.

As a police force and fire and rescue service, we have business continuity plans and we carry out exercises to try to test for situations like this. I've sat in those exercises and thought 'well, this will never happen, will it?'. And this is beyond any expectation.

We've certainly been tested to the limits in terms of technology and resilience.

In the early days there was a lot of activity looking at HR policies, how we could work differently, getting laptops to people who needed to work from home but didn't have them. The IT element really had to step up.

A lot of departments were looking where to get PPE from. We, in fleet, did come across a supplier that could supply masks and hand sanitiser so we ordered some from them and we fed that into the central team as well.

When that arrived you could see the difference in staff because they'd been very anxious prior to that and the anxiety was building because they knew we needed them to come in but they felt vulnerable. We now have a ➔





## FRONTLINE FLEETS: A DAY IN THE LIFE



Regional procurement team which has been nominated to source PPE.

That's delivered to a central location and then distributed. It comes into the Covid-19 team and then gets handed out in terms of priority, looking at the staff still having to work with the public and those most at risk.

Staff receive Covid-19 updates via email, our dedicated intranet site and through notifications on an app called Backup Buddy, which is mental health app for police and can be customised by each force.

It has hints and tips for wellbeing and mindfulness techniques.

### 11AM: DAILY BUSINESS CONFERENCE CALLS

I still having 'business-as-usual' type meetings with department heads from the fire service and the police, either using Skype or Zoom.

### 1PM: 'GOLD' CONFERENCE CALL

Once a week we have a 'gold' conference call to discuss Covid-19. It is led by the assistant chief constable with heads of departments and district commanders participating.

We have analysts looking at the absence figures and how things are doing nationally and they feed that into these meetings.

We have to plan for how we would cope if we lost 10%, 30% or 50% of our staff.

We have had some people self-isolating but they've returned in fleet so we're in a good position at the moment. It's a similar picture across the organisation I would say with people being off and then returning.

We are also now able to test up to 50 police staff a day at the testing station which has just been set up at Doncaster airport so we can get them back to work quicker, provided they test negative.

### 2.30PM: FINANCE CONFERENCE CALL

I speak with police finance staff on a regular basis to discuss the fleet budget. We have already done a lot of cost-cutting over the

years and I expect there will be further budget constraints as a result of the Covid-19 crisis.

### 3PM: 'SILVER' CONFERENCE CALL

In addition to the 'gold' conference call we have a 'silver' conference call, which takes place once a day. It's led by a superintendent who is responsible for the ops planning team and traffic.

I tend to feed into the gold and silver calls and Jo will do silver when I can't. Typically, the silver calls are attended by the deputies of the people in the gold group. We'll feed in things like vehicle supply issues.

We also have a 'bronze' conference call to discuss things like stock levels of PPE which Jo feeds into.

### 4PM: SPEAK TO LOCAL FORCES

We have been in contact with local forces if we need anything, although there is probably less contact than before the coronavirus crisis because everyone is focused on getting their own teams through this. The regional meetings between police fleet managers have stopped.

### 4.30PM: HEALTH AND SAFETY CONFERENCE CALL

I have regular conference calls with health and safety representatives to discuss things like risk assessments.

### 5PM: LEAVE OFFICE

Although I am working 'normal' hours, the Covid-19 team members have my contact details for call-outs should they need me.

The workshop also closes at 5pm, although they will do overtime if required.

I'm really proud of people's commitment. The staff have really stepped up and there is a good team spirit that we're all in it together.

You have to remain calm and look on the positive side and encourage people to keep going.

INSPECTOR JASON BOOTH,  
SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE



BEN DALTON,  
FIREFIGHTER, SOUTH  
YORKSHIRE FIRE AND  
RESCUE





## FRONTLINE FLEETS: CASE STUDIES

**R**oad officers at South Yorkshire Police are as busy as ever, despite the volume of traffic falling due to the lockdown. However, with fewer drivers on the road, it makes it easier to spot those who are up to no good, according to inspector Jason Booth.

"Our role is quite dynamic, we're responding to anything that comes in on the radio such as collisions or vehicles that have been stolen, burglaries and other crimes at night, as well as looking after the road network," he says. "We did that before and we're still doing that now."

Contrary to some media reporting, the police are not patrolling the roads looking specifically for breaches of the Covid-19 regulations, but it is inevitable that they frequently come across them during the course of their daily work.

"We had a motorist from a neighbouring county saying they were going 'to view a kitchen' - at 11 o'clock at night," says Booth. "We had another motorist driving more than 35 miles to deliver a letter instead of using a stamp. We've had people driving out to buy some cannabis. We've had people say they were 'out to buy a KFC' despite the fact they were all closed. These are just a few examples!"

He adds: "Those are not valid reasons for being out and we have taken some positive action (i.e. fines). But, everything we do is proportionate; it's not a numbers game. It's

about supporting the local communities and the Government message.

"We have also been operating 'educational' stop sites across the force each afternoon. Here, we engage with motorists about the Government guidance around lockdown."

Officers are aware key workers and commercial vehicles need to be allowed through quickly. Social distancing is adhered to for all conversations with motorists, which are intended to ensure they are out for the right reasons.

No prosecutions take place at these educational sites; they are not designed to catch people out, simply to educate and inform.

Social distancing measures have also changed the way the police interact.

"We no longer have a team briefing sat in the same room. In the main, we brief at the start of the shift via Skype with staff in cars, dialing in via laptops," Booth says.

"It's quite alien because the team briefing is an integral part of our day and is good for team building, but we need these measures to protect each other and protect the department.

"When we do go into the office, we enter the building one way and leave another. We use hand sanitiser and take our temperature when we enter to make sure we're not bringing people into the work environment who may potentially have symptoms of Covid-19 and pass it on to others.

"We have social distancing within the office, and we wipe down the office very regularly with special cleaning solutions."

Cleaning measures have also been implemented for the cars, where officers usually work as a single crew.

"We've had to take car cleaning to the next level. We are using special cleaners at the start and end of every shift. It's about minimising any opportunities to pass anything on to the next person that uses that vehicle," Booth explains.

"All our cars have PPE (gowns, gloves, goggles, paper mask, biohazard bag and sanitiser on board), each officer has individual hand gel and a full face mask, as required, and all staff are used to carrying gloves due to the nature of our job."

Should they transport anyone suspected of having Covid-19, officers have access to vans and have set up a dedicated custody suite.

"Despite the difficult circumstance, team morale is generally good, and we all appreciate this is national situation and we need to support each other while doing our job and making our a contribution to keeping the roads and people of South Yorkshire safe," says Booth.

"We continue to have some really good success, and this translates into a boost for morale. We are also active on social media, promoting the work we do, and the public's supportive comments are a real boost."

**S**outh Yorkshire Fire and Rescue has been working hard to support the fight against Covid-19, with a range of actions that assist other emergency services and the wider community.

Firefighter Ben Dalton explains: "We've been training up staff to drive ambulances, we've been delivering food parcels, prescriptions and PPE, we've been testing face masks for doctors at Doncaster Royal Infirmary, we've been ringing up vulnerable people for a welfare chat to make sure they're OK for essentials, and we've been supporting the NHS 'clap for carers'."

He adds: "We try not to affect our operational response by sending operational fire engines, so the things I've mentioned have been done by drivers on their day off or by civilian staff."

Dalton has himself helped ambulance services to gain access to premises where someone is suspected of having coronavirus.

"If the ambulance service turns up at a house and somebody isn't answering, but you can see them the other side of the door, they've collapsed, we'll gain access by drilling the lock so the ambulance service can get in," he says.

"If we do have to go into the property to open the lock we're wearing our personal issue respirator and goggles and we are thoroughly decontaminated afterwards. We have a spray which we can put on our uniform which cleans it within 15 minutes.

"We're spending about three hours of our 11-hour shifts cleaning so at the start and end of each shift we do a thorough clean of the fire engine, the fire appliance equipment and the station. We're also cleaning when we turn back to the station from call-outs. You can't be too careful with something like this."

Social distancing has changed the service's daily routines, including working practices and leisure times.

"When we all line up at the beginning of the shift to be detailed our duties for the day, we're spaced two metres apart instead of being stood side-by-side and when we're having lunch we make sure we're spaced apart," Dalton says.

"We're staggering how many people go into the gym at one time - normally we go in as a crew and train together but we're limiting it to three or four people - and we're cleaning all the equipment. It's good that the fire service has allowed us to train because it's important we maintain our physical fitness to be able to carry out the role appropriately and it helps with mental wellbeing.

"When we've been to the gym and checked our equipment, we normally do some operational training, which we call drilling, for the job so we practice different scenarios such as responding to road traffic collisions or search and rescue, and putting up ladders. There are certain limitations now as to what we can do, we try not to get within two metres, so we're

doing less drilling provided we're 'in date' for certain competencies."

Generally, each engine accommodates four firefighters during a call out: a driver and an officer in charge in the front and two breathing apparatus-wearers in the back, with plenty of space to sit apart.

However, the amount and type of call-outs have changed slightly, with an increase in 'nuisance' fires and a reduction in road traffic collisions as the number of cars on the road has dropped.

Dalton adds: "But I've noticed that drivers are a lot more complacent - they're not indicating as much or looking when they pull out - as the roads have been quieter. I've found pedestrians are in a similar mindset when they're stepping out onto the road. I've also seen drivers treating the road as a race track!

"I've not had to attend a road traffic collision since the outbreak but the protocol is to have the minimum amount of people close to each other working on the car. Unfortunately, there are some scenarios where you need more than one. For example, when you're extricating a casualty from the car you need more than one person to physically remove the casualty and then we'll wear goggles and a respirator. But we're trying, where possible, to minimise the amount of people around a vehicle.

"We're all trying to be positive and support each other and get on with what needs doing."



ROYAL MAIL FLEET

# 'If someone is feeling low, we make sure we rally round'

With an uplift in parcels as consumers turn to online shopping during the coronavirus lockdown and a shift from van sharing to one person/one van, Royal Mail's fleet director Paul Gatti explains how he and his team have adapted to support the operation and keep staff safe. As told to [Sarah Tooze](#).

## 9AM: CONFERENCE CALL WITH WORKSHOP TEAM

I have been working from home since this all began and my day is spent making and taking conference calls. Every morning I have a call with the workshop team, which is led by Sally (Warren), my head of maintenance.

Everyone gives a score out of 10 for tiredness and a score out of 10 for morale. As you can imagine, it ebbs and flows dependent on the day, but it's always good to keep a record of those numbers. If someone is feeling low, we make sure we rally round and they get a few calls of support during that day from Sally and myself.

During the conference call, each workshop manager talks about coronavirus-related absences. We have 110 workshops and around 1,000 technicians and we need to understand which units are being challenged the most.

We also discuss the changes we have made in the workshops and will refine them if necessary.

We have introduced a lot of additional preventive measures. We maintain strict social distancing rules in all our workshops in line with company policy.

When we get a vehicle in it needs to be cleaned and disinfected before we start working on it. When the keys are handed over they are also cleaned and disinfected before they are hung up. Every tool that is shared needs to be cleaned after use, and even for things like allocating parts from the store-room, we have created a process for social distancing.

In line with the guidance from public health authorities, good hand hygiene is still one of the most important lines of protection, coupled with enforcing a strict two-metre social distancing rule.

We have markers on the floor in our

reception areas to maintain that distance.

We've introduced staggered break times so, whereas before, you might have had six people in a restroom at one time, now you only have two. We've also introduced staggered work times so we don't have everyone arriving at the same time.

Our other key focus, of course, remains making sure the operation has as many vehicles as it needs to manage this busy time.

Our letter volumes have gone down, but parcels have increased significantly so the operation is busier than normal at this time of year.

We have implemented a new policy of one person in a van as part of a range of social distancing preventive measures. Normally, we have two people going out in a van, they stop in a street, both jump out, take some mail, do a loop with that mail, get back in and drive to the next point. But that's not possible with the two-metre rule.

To support the operation we're making greater use of our fleet of mobile technicians allowing us to provide more on-site service rather than the operator having to bring the vehicles back into the workshop.

To ensure that we identify any vehicles in the operation that might have a fault, we carry out a check every day and any faults are highlighted to the manager. This gets relayed to the workshop and then we fix it. We also deploy technicians to carry out walkaround checks of the vehicles that are in the yard.

## 10AM: CONFERENCE CALL WITH MANAGERS ACROSS THE BUSINESS

These are weekly conference calls with managers to talk about what is happening in the organisation in terms of responding to Covid-19. Then there are 'questions from the floor'.

## 11AM: CONFERENCE CALL WITH MANAGERS FROM FLEET

Every fortnight I lead a call with all the managers from fleet, which is around 120 managers. It's a 'state of the nation' across fleet. I give an overview of what has changed and talk about any challenges.

It's important we talk about how our own business unit is responding to demand because there are a lot of operational calls about processing and moving mail. This call is all about how we best support the operation. It also allows people to raise any questions with the fleet management team.

Some non-operational-facing colleagues are working from home and could feel isolated. We always make sure we point them to the company resources around how to ensure their wellbeing.

But the biggest part of the call is saying 'thank you' for all the hard work and support our people give as we play an important role in keeping the UK connected.

## NOON: SUPPLIER UPDATE

We have a spreadsheet with all of our fixed supply chain listed and what the status of each is – either red, amber or green and the latest update we've had from them. Looking at our supply chain now, it's thankfully pretty much 'green' across the board.

It was a different picture a month ago. The immediate response was to close, to scale right back, but we're finding most of our suppliers have got their head round some of the challenges and have started to re-open.

We have appointed a specialist company to clean any vehicles that may have been contaminated on those rare occasions when a driver may be taken ill. So, if a driver has been found to have the coronavirus, that





## Factfile

**FLEET DIRECTOR:** Paul Gatti

**FLEET SIZE:** 49,068 commercial vehicles  
(42,700 vans, 6,368 HGVs)

**NUMBER OF WORKSHOPS:** 110

**FUNDING METHOD:** cars – contract hire;  
vans and trucks – outright purchase and  
finance lease

**AVERAGE REPLACEMENT CYCLE:**

cars – three years; vans – nine years;  
trucks – 10 years

vehicle is quarantined for 72 hours before being given a full clean by the specialist contractor.

### 1PM: CONFERENCE CALL WITH DIRECT REPORTS

I have a call every day with my direct reports and I also have one-to-ones. My diary is starting to fill up with end-of-year appraisals. I also have a weekly meeting with my boss and his direct reports.

### 1.30PM: CONFERENCE CALL WITH THE UNION

I touch base with the union that represents the fleet team regularly to get feedback from them about any concerns that may be coming through from people on the ground.

### 4PM: CONFERENCE CALLS ABOUT PROJECTS

We're deploying a number of 'business as usual' initiatives so I have a weekly touchpoint with my team and the same with the central programme team on what we're doing.

Some projects have been paused while other things have been accelerated.

We've learned a lot from Covid-19 in terms of how you can do things differently. So we're picking up some of those learning points and applying them to other scenarios as we move into the new normal. ➔





## FRONTLINE FLEETS: CASE STUDIES

ANDREW PHILIPS,  
POSTAL WORKER,  
ROYAL MAIL



**A**ndrew Philips, a postman based in Kenton, London, has had to adapt to a new way of working having van shared with a colleague for the past eight years.

Instead of collecting mail together from the local office, Philips now travels there alone.

"I go in a bit early, about 6am, to start prepping up both deliveries so we can get it all out and completed within the duty time," he says.

"When I'm ready to leave I call my delivery 'partner' to say I'm on my way and he makes his way to the drop point."

Before Philips leaves the office he carries out his usual vehicle walkaround checks and cleans the van using a sanitiser spray, making sure all the touchpoints such as the door handles, steering wheel and gear knob are cleaned. He also cleans it at the end of the shift in case the van needs to be used by one of the collection drivers.

"We've been given hand sanitisers, masks and gloves to make sure we're properly protected," Philips says.

When he meets his colleague at the drop point they maintain social distancing.

Philips adds: "He works from the drop point. He loads up his trolley, does one loop, comes back to the drop point, loads up again and goes off again whereas I do my deliveries from the

HOPEFULLY,  
WE CAN COME  
OUT THE OTHER  
END SMILING

van. I park it up, do a loop, move the van, do another loop," he says.

Social distancing is being maintained with customers too.

"We're no longer handing over our PDAs (postal digital assistants) to the customer to sign for a delivery," Philips says. "Now we knock on the door, leave the parcel on the doorstep, step back, and when the customer opens the door to pick the parcel up we put in a code to confirm it's been delivered, so we're protecting ourselves and the public."

Philips has been a postman for 32 years and has never experienced such major change, but recognises it is a necessity.

"Obviously people's health comes first," he says. "It's a situation where people have to adapt. You've got to try to stay healthy, stay safe."

"We're just carrying on, doing the best we can, and, hopefully, we can get through it and come out the other end smiling."

## FRONTLINE TWEETS - SOME OF THE THANK YOU MESSAGES SPOTTED ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Our partners Baker Labels and Yodel working together here to continue the mission to deliver one million meals to the NHS frontline. Thank you! Salute the NHS (@SaluteNHS) on Twitter.



Huge thanks to British Gas engineers who have been delivering patient monitoring kits for the NHS during the Covid-19 crisis. The packs are being delivered across

Liverpool and contain smartphones, blood pressure meters and pulse oximeters - enabling the NHS to monitor patients. Docobo (@docobuk) on Twitter.

Thank you to all involved in getting this food from Fare Share South West in Bristol to Provide Devon in Plymouth. Special thanks go out to ALD Automotive and Gerry who delivered it for free. We are delighted to partner with this organisation to help distribute more crisis food.

Provide Devon (@providedevo) on Twitter.



Brilliant, thank you Euro Commercial for delivering 600 seat covers to the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board. Yvonne Carroll on LinkedIn.

Thank you so much to Matt and the team at Lynne's Pantry and City Grab for providing lunch today for Tapton School key workers, it was much appreciated.

Tapton School (@taptonschoo1) on Twitter.



Thank you to local DPD drivers, who recently stopped by to deliver care packages for our staff. These consisted of essentials such as toiletries, drinks and snacks for staff working busy shifts. The delivery

was part of DPD's 'NHS Thursday' - a campaign that sees DPD colleagues collect donations throughout the week and deliver them to hospitals on Thursday. Peterborough City Hospital NHS on Facebook.



# 'Coronavirus will push us to be more innovative in future'

Justin Wand, director – strategic assets & property at London Ambulance Service (LAS), has faced significant challenges with logistics, vehicle preparation, supply and maintenance across the trust at the UK epicentre of the Covid-19 pandemic. As told to *Tom Seymour*

## **TAM: START WORK FROM HOME OFFICE**

I'll check emails, call or video conference colleagues and we're generally in contact on almost an hourly basis throughout the day. The guidance is changing rapidly and we have to respond quickly.

## **TAM: CHECK OPERATIONAL FITNESS OF THE FLEET**

Call demand for ambulances went from 3,500 a day pre-lockdown to 11,500 a day so we had to flex the fleet size rapidly.

Our usual fleet of 1,076 vehicles, including ambulances, light commercial vehicles, rapid response cars and motorbikes had to be scaled up with an additional 176 ambulances in just three weeks to meet the demand necessary due to the coronavirus pandemic.

That 16% increase was made possible by extending end-of-contract vehicles, making sure they were 'battle ready' with full service, MOT, as well as running gear and gearbox overhauls.

We also pulled forward orders for the replacement vehicles, including the preparation of specialist equipment fitting in Ireland and shipping them to London before any border lockdowns were put in place.

You can't just go down the road and hire 176 ambulances like you can some white vans.

Support from Stagecoach and South East Ambulance Service with logistics and donating equipment meant we could have the vehicles we needed ready in time.

We would normally be able to prep new ambulances at a rate of five a week, but this had to increase to 20 a week over a three week period.

We're going to keep these additional 176 vehicles because we can't afford not to have this capacity should a second wave hit later this summer and then into the winter which is always a busy period for us. We'll keep rotating vehicles in use and it's our plan to

“WHATEVER  
HAPPENS AFTER  
THIS, IT'S GOING TO  
CHANGE OUR  
WORKING PATTERNS  
AND THAT WILL BE  
LIBERATING”

make them a national fleet resource in times of crisis like this.

## **TAM: CHECK WORKSHOP CAPACITY AND JOB SCHEDULES**

We have 12 London garages to keep vehicles on the road but we knew we needed more resources and The AA kindly stepped in to help us with 41 patrols and a total of 176 additional mechanics. It meant they could continue working, rather than being furloughed as they may have been due to the drop in demand from the lockdown.

Our internal specialist mechanic teams helped to train The AA teams to make sure they had the technical knowledge necessary to service and repair ambulances to make sure downtime was minimised as much as possible. Some of The AA's teams also cover 24-hour breakdown repair for us and have been helping on site at A&E locations to do roadside repairs when needed to help minimise downtime even further.

As a result, the ambulance fleet is running at between 92-95% operational capacity.

## **TAM: UPDATE ON VEHICLE DEEP CLEANING**

All these vehicles need to be washed, stocked and deep cleaned if they have been in contact with a confirmed or suspected Covid-19 patient.

This additional work means four extra hours of downtime per vehicle and this is even before restocking.

We have teams from supplier Interserve working to disinfect vehicles with anti-static cleaning agents. This is a manual process, but we're currently testing an ultraviolet solution that is unmanned and will hit every surface inside and out of the vehicle. This will rapidly cut our preparation time down from four hours to 35 minutes. It takes just a few minutes to reset.

This will give ourselves and our paramedics much greater assurances of the decontamination process. If we're successful with our testing of this new technology it will be shared with the Department for Transport (DfT) and Public Health England to inform policy for the rest of the vehicle preparation and vehicle logistics industry.

## **NOON: CHECK IN WITH THE TEAMS**

You have to trust people to do what they need to do. We're working and collaborating with pragmatism and our whole lives have been transformed. Can we honestly say that we're going to spend that 20 minute journey for a face-to-face meeting again when we know we can video conference remotely?

Whatever happens after this, it's going to change our working patterns and that will be liberating. It's going to be a challenge for the NHS to navigate how it resets, rather than returning to business as usual. It's going to push us to be more innovative with how we deliver services in the future.

There has been so much variety in what's happening each day. This level of preparedness day in, day out can cause anxiety for the teams and you have to be aware of that.

In order to prepare for the emergency Nightingale Hospital at the ExCeL Conference Centre, the teams were putting in 72-hour shifts to get 16 vehicles prepped in time.





It's absolutely tragic the number of people in the UK and across the NHS that have lost their lives fighting the pandemic and LAS hasn't been untouched by that.

I am working from home, but I'm also still doing face-to-face with the teams where appropriate to give them the chance to ask questions and talk.

We have always taken mental health seriously, so team members have an initial 'hot debrief' after certain jobs with their peers, there will be a welfare check-in after that and then there's also access to occupational health workers.

We've put break rooms in place at A&Es across London where there is access to food and refreshments and it's a place where

teams can take a quiet five minutes if they need it.

#### **3PM: CHECK STOCK LEVELS ACROSS OUR STATIONS**

We consolidated our 63 ambulance stations down to 30 to help reduce the logistical burden of stocking that many sites. It means we can concentrate on those specific locations and it's something we will keep going with until at least September. We have also established three new warehouses where we have consolidated our kit supply to restock our vehicles.

As you can imagine, there is a lot going on so the management team at LAS has gone to a seven-day week, with five days on, two days

off. We've also brought in executive support and additional resources from the British Army to help with logistics management and that has been a big help.

#### **4PM: REVIEW PPE OFFERS**

In the early days, the availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) was somewhat haphazard, but we're now at a level where it's not as much of a challenge. Anyone on the team that wants PPE has access to it.

We're getting a lot of offers to provide us with additional PPE, but the biggest challenge for me has actually been sorting through them to find out what is genuine and what is of the correct standard.

Some are from well-meaning individuals and some are fraudulent, so it's been an unexpected part of the job in recent weeks to make sure we have the right level of supply for paramedics and the teams.

#### **4PM: REVIEW DAILY GOVERNMENT BRIEFING**

We're taking our cues just like everyone else from the daily Government briefings and guidance from Public Health England. We're not getting a heads-up ahead of anyone else, so every day we have to think about what has been said and how that will affect the fleet and the teams the following day. Changes in the rules could mean an increase in calls coming in potentially and we have to be ready.

We have to look at the rules that are coming in and then we'll discuss internally to see how we can get that messaging right in plain English out to all the team and paramedics as quickly as possible.

I've always been immensely proud of what I do, but this situation has taught me the true power of working in a team that is connected, collaborative and has been agile to the needs of patients. You have to plan for the worst and hope for the best.

### **Factfile**

**ORGANISATION:** London Ambulance Service

**DIRECTOR – STRATEGIC ASSETS &**

**PROPERTY:** Justin Wand

**FLEET SIZE:** 1,252 (676 ambulances, 140 vans, 200 cars, plus motorcycles and 82 grey fleet)



## FRONTLINE FLEETS: CASE STUDIES

**JACK BINDER**, PARAMEDIC, LONDON AMBULANCE SERVICE  
**TOM BINDER**, LEADING FIREFIGHTER, LONDON FIRE BRIGADE



Paramedic Jack Binder (right)  
with his firefighter brother Tom

**L**ondon Ambulance Service paramedic Jack Binder and his London Fire Brigade brother, leading firefighter Tom Binder, have been working together responding to those in need across the capital as part of a new bluelight partnership to help boost the ambulance service's response to Covid-19.

The new partnership across the two emergency services has helped the ambulance service respond to the demands of the Covid-19 crisis with up to 300 staff from London Fire Brigade helping to drive ambulances and

assist medics as directed.

The bluelight brothers are both from Essex and have worked on several shifts together since Tom, 28, started his secondment with the ambulance service a month ago.

Tom says: "I really wanted to help make a difference during this global pandemic and help to take pressure off the ambulance service. After hearing first-hand from Jack and listening to what he does on a day-to-day basis, I didn't want to turn down this chance down."

Jack adds: "It has been great working so closely with Tom and responding to patients

together. Though I'm not sure he enjoys taking instructions from his younger brother!"

"It's a unique experience and I don't think anyone could have predicted this would happen a few months ago."

Growing up, the pair were inseparable. With Jack, at 27, just a year younger than Tom, they often get mistaken for twins at work.

Joining the London emergency services came naturally to the brothers, according to Jack: "Blue lights definitely run in our blood!"

Tom adds: "Our grandparents were both in the Metropolitan Police and our dad is a retired group commander in the Brigade."

"Hearing all the stories and jobs that they would go to, I could see no other career option growing up. It's all I ever wanted to do."

Since being seconded to London Ambulance Service, Tom has responded to a variety of jobs across the capital. He says: "I have been to everything from attending to a new born baby to suspected strokes and cardiac arrest patients."

He has found the training he received as a firefighter in immediate emergency care and incident command has proved really useful and he has been able to easily apply it to his role while working alongside medics.

Jack said: "I'm really proud of my brother. Not just with his willingness to help during this crisis but also with everything he has done at the London Fire Brigade. He often rings me after his shifts and speaks with so much enthusiasm for everything he is doing at London Ambulance Service."

The partnership has been a great learning experience for both the medics and the firefighters involved and has helped the ambulance service continue to respond to the most seriously ill and injured patients during the peak of the pandemic.

Tom said: "Bluelight services have always had a good working relationship. This partnership is only going to make things even better."

## FRONTLINE TWEETS - SOME OF THE THANK YOU MESSAGES SPOTTED ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Let's give a **HUGE #Thumbs Up** for Your-Postie and show them how much we appreciate all their hard work.

By dressing up they are cheering up our local community while providing such an important service AND raising money for Musgrove Park! Thank you!  
*Coronavirus Community Help Taunton on Twitter.*

Thank you, Land Rover, for all your incredible support to the British Red Cross and many other frontline agencies fighting Covid-19. Respect to all of you key workers at this time and thank you for going above and beyond for us all!  
*Bear Grylls (@Bear Grylls) on Twitter.*



Absolutely great partnership and support from our friends at JLR. Playing their part supporting Covid-19 new activities with essential deliveries in our communities.  
*Lee Baker (@Lee\_BakerFRS) on Twitter.*







# 'Everything that will turn a wheel is working now'

Justin Laney, general manager – fleet at John Lewis Partnership, reveals the impact the Covid-19 crisis has had on JLP. Here, he offers an insight into a typical day in the life of his fleet operation. As told to *Matt de Prez*

## 7AM: START WORK

Since the start of the lockdown I've been working from home and one of the biggest changes for me is that I'm getting a lot more sleep! I used to get up at 5.30am to drive to Bracknell, which is about 45 miles from my house.

Now, I get an extra hour in bed before I make my way to my study. The start to my day is certainly a lot easier than it used to be.

As always, a check on emails is first thing on my agenda.

## 7.15AM: CHECK DOWNTIME REPORT

I always look at the downtime report at the start of the day. We have a live downtime tracker that shows what proportion of the fleet is off the road at any location.

The John Lewis Partnership is formed of Waitrose, which is very busy at the moment, and John Lewis, which is certainly much quieter as the shops are closed.

The Waitrose home delivery fleet is absolutely stuck at the moment, as are the trucks that deliver stock to the branches.

Everything that will turn a wheel is working right now within the Waitrose home delivery fleet. If we are short of vehicles in one area, we have a spare vehicle fleet that can be deployed where needed. We also have a 'mothballed fleet' of decommissioned vehicles that we can put back into service pretty quickly. That is how we usually get through peak times such as Christmas and it allows us to avoid renting.

## 8AM: SPEAK TO MY MANAGER

As we no longer see each other face-to-face, I have a call with my manager every day at 8am – that's a real brief call to see how things are going and highlight any key issues.

## 8.30AM: STEERING GROUP CALL

My next call is with all of the leadership team within central transport. We have an update on where we are with Covid, including a tracker for how many people are off and when we are expecting them back.

There has been a lot of assistance from within the partnership with regards to John Lewis staff helping out on the Waitrose side. That's looked after by the operations team – my job is purely about the vehicles and we put the vehicles wherever the business needs them.

We need to discuss the acquisition of new vehicles. The Waitrose home delivery fleet has about 1,000 vehicles now, but we expect that to grow to 1,400 by the end of the year.

We've seen a doubling of the Waitrose home delivery business since the coronavirus lockdown. Most of that has been accommodated by filling up all the available slots, but we'll need to expand the fleet this year quite substantially.

Pretty much everything we would be doing normally we are doing. All the major projects are still progressing, including our work to switch the truck fleet from diesel to bio-methane.

## 11AM: WORKSHOP MANAGER CALL

During the daily workshop managers call that's when a lot of things such as advice for staying safe in a Covid environment are communicated.

All our heavy trucks and trailers are maintained in the workshops along with some of the home delivery vehicles.

On the heavy trucks, maintenance hasn't really changed at all. With the vans we have made some adjustments to the maintenance regime on the very newest equipment to increase uptime.

Direct communication with technicians is more difficult. We tried video calls but it is more difficult in that environment. It's about making sure the

local workshop manager is informed. I was really concerned about what would happen if we had half the workshop off sick with the virus, but we've managed to function as normal. In terms of a service, it is pretty normal. We've got a lot of separation and PPE (personal protective equipment) to make sure the technicians are safe.

## NOON: LUNCH AND EXERCISE

It's easy sit at the computer all day when working from home. When working at Bracknell, the site is huge and it's easy to clock up steps walking between meetings.

## 1PM: WORKSHOP VISIT

I visited our Magna Park workshop in Milton Keynes to ensure they were all satisfied with their PPE and were happy. Workshop people are one step back from the frontline. They aren't meeting customers, but they still go into work because the trucks have to deliver food to shops – it's very much a key occupation. As a food retailer we get some priority over sourcing PPE. Sometimes the PPE destined for us gets diverted to the NHS, but our access is better than an individual workshop.

## 3.30PM: TEAM HUDDLE

For home-based workers we have two video huddles per week. In the office, we would usually have one. It gives the chance to share a brief update on what is happening within the department and get the chance to ask questions.

We are prioritising video calls, partly because so much of human communication is non-verbal, but also because for someone working on their own from home it can be very lonely.

Some of these calls have 50 people all on video. That works really well.

Within the teams, if there is something to celebrate, we'll do that within the huddle. It is always good to celebrate good stuff.

## 5PM: VIRTUAL DRINKS WITH COLLEAGUES

Every Friday the company hosts virtual drinks with a quiz. It brings everyone together on a social level and is good fun.

## Factfile

**ORGANISATION:** John Lewis Partnership

**GENERAL MANAGER – FLEET:** Justin Laney

**FLEET SIZE:** 3,500 (1,350 vans and light trucks, 350 rigid, 600 HGVs and 1,000 trailers)

**WORKSHOPS:** Seven currently, with an eighth set to open in August. Operated by 100 members of staff



## FRONTLINE TWEETS - SOME OF THE THANK YOU MESSAGES SPOTTED ON SOCIAL MEDIA

As we were leaving what was quite a difficult incident this afternoon (a man was experiencing a mental health crisis), we were approached by two-year-old Jacob and his mum Caterina, who left us some goodies on our vehicles. This wonderful act of kindness in support of emergency services through the current crisis is something to be celebrated. Thank you, Jacob and Caterina, they were very well received!  
*Policing Peterborough on Facebook.*



Thank you, The AA, for helping with some car trouble while on shift today. Called in at 17.10 and on-site at 17.25, unbelievable! Thank you to the lovely Richard and #TeamAA for supporting NHS key workers during Covid-19.  
*Cher Hallett (@MissCherBear) on Twitter.*



We're proud to announce that Keys Property Management has teamed up with Castell Howell Cash and Carry to provide key workers with treats and bottles of water to help throughout these difficult times. Diolch o gallon/thank you!  
*Keys Property (keys\_property1) on Twitter.*

Our wonderfully kind volunteers doing some essential PPE delivery to Exeter! Big thanks again to Land Rover for the loan of the Defender.  
*British Red Cross Somerset Emergency Responders (@brcsomerset) on Twitter.*



Thank you so much Jaguar Land Rover for your very kind donation of visors for our community nursing North team.  
*Kim Drummond (KimDrummond6) on Twitter.*



# 'Local authorities have stood up to the test'

Graham Telfer, Gateshead Council fleet manager, has made sure vital services for his borough in Tyne and Wear are maintained, even with the odds stacked against his teams due to social distancing. As told to *Tom Seymour*.

## 7:30AM START WORK AT HEAD OFFICE

I'll start the day checking emails and making contact with the teams and review all the vehicles going out on their jobs across the borough. I have to be here centrally so I'm available if something goes wrong as we have to respond quickly.

Part of my job is making sure we can maintain services across refuse, garden waste, residual waste, recycling, grounds maintenance, cemetery undertakings and community-based services.

We have 35 26-tonne refuse vehicles in use and there has been a real challenge with how we operate them on a daily basis due to the fact they usually run with crews of three to four in a single vehicle. It's impossible to adhere to social distancing of two metres in that situation, so we've had to put together a support fleet with the two team members following the main refuse truck in separate vans. They'll park up and then follow the route for a certain area on foot, then head back to their vans to follow the truck to the next zone.

## 9AM: CHECK DELIVERIES FOR SCHOOL MEALS

We're not just using our light commercial vehicle (LCV) fleet to support the refuse teams, but also to help support schools to deliver packed lunches for those children of key workers and to make drops at food banks.

None of the schools can prep their own food on site at this time, so I will make sure our fleet is available to get deliveries out before lunch. That can be a real challenge. All the schools want the meals before the dinner bell rings.

We have a fleet of 300 vans across the council and what is available has been bolstered by vehicles that would normally be used for joinery or plumbing becoming freed-up. Those jobs have stopped or reduced. We're also using these vehicles to help distribute personal protective equipment (PPE)

to those who need it. We have an additional flex of 40 small vans through our supplier Northgate Vehicle Hire to provide additional capacity where we need it. We have a total of 200 drivers working across vehicles to keep services running smoothly.

## 10AM: CHECK-IN WITH THE WORKSHOP TEAMS

The original set-up for maintenance of vehicles has changed hugely. We have one, centralised depot for maintenance, but to maintain safe distances we're working to a 50% team reduction in shifts, so across the total team of 35, we'll have a team of 10 one week on, then the week after another team of 10 will come in.

There's some scope built in for eight or nine people to be off self-isolating if they or members of their family have symptoms. We're having to run things this way because we can't afford to have the entire team off and self-isolating as this would severely impact our capacity to maintain vehicles and keep vehicles on the road. We are deep cleaning vehicles every day with heavy duty disinfectant to give drivers some level of confidence and to support them in their role.

## Factfile

**ORGANISATION:** Gateshead Council  
**FLEET MANAGER WASTE SERVICES, GROUNDS MAINTENANCE AND FLEET MANAGEMENT COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT:** Graham Telfer

**FLEET SIZE:** 550 total (including 35 refuse vehicles up to 26 tonnes, 300 LCVs, four Luton vans, 200 trucks 7.5-tonne to 18-tonne, plus up to 40 additional small vans on short-term rental)

**NUMBER OF STAFF:** 235 (35 maintenance staff, 200 drivers)

## NOON: LOOK AT MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

We can't afford to let routine maintenance lapse so we're carrying on with all MOTs and servicing as we would normally. I don't want to be in a position where we're coming out of this and we have the entire fleet due for a service and MOT.

We're getting ourselves into a pattern so we don't find ourselves over encumbered and the scheduling has been thrown into disarray. Manufacturers' parts have generally been able to keep to next-day delivery.

## 2PM: INDUSTRY UPDATES

Guidance from the Department of Transport has been really clear and there have been regular updates coming through. So, that is part of my daily routine. I'll also check with the Freight Transport Association (FTA) and Driving for Better Business Covid-19 transport toolkit as that has been a good resource for guidance and keeping up-to-date. Every two or three days something changes.

## 5PM: VIDEO CONFERENCING

We've been checking in across the management teams using video conferencing every other day to update the latest on what's happening. I'll also do a workshop meeting face-to-face every day while maintaining the two metre social distancing.

## 10PM: FINAL EMAIL CHECK

While I'll leave the office at around 5pm, I'll still be checking emails in the evening to make sure there have been no urgent developments we need to be prepared for the following day.

The NHS and local authorities have stood up to the test. Instead of bouncing off the walls, we have successfully kept the lights on for the country and it has been a lesson in how to knuckle down and get on with what needs to be done.





## CASE STUDY

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### TONY ROBINSON, REFUSE COLLECTION DRIVER, GATESHEAD COUNCIL

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**T**he lockdown has created new challenges for Gateshead Council's refuse collection team as they maintain social distancing in a work environment that would normally see close contact between crews.

Tony Robinson, Gateshead refuse collection driver, said his shift is still starting at around 7.15am with the usual vehicle checks, before they set out on their rounds at 7.30am.

They would normally operate with a three-man crew in the truck, but now Robinson will drive solo and other members of the team will follow in separate vans to maintain social distancing.

Vehicles are deep cleaned before the start of the shift and there is a 'plentiful supply' of latex gloves, extra rolls of blue paper and sanitiser wipes to clean things down.

Robinson said: "I'm wiping down the cab, steering wheel and handles on an hourly basis.

"The fact we're handling potentially hazardous items from people's houses that could be contaminated with Covid-19 is not lost on us or the teams, so we take this extremely seriously. It's at the back of my mind when I'm working."

The biggest changes to Robinson's job has been the fact there are more parked vehicles due to the lockdown which has made it more difficult to manoeuvre his 26-tonne truck.

The flipside of that is a fall in traffic congestion in the morning, so the crews can travel to their jobs slightly quicker than usual.

Robinson said: "Our shifts can take us an extra two hours on average due to the extra time it's taking due to the much greater volumes of refuse. People staying at home has meant there has been a lot of spring cleaning and clearing out of houses. There's just a lot more refuse for us to collect."



# FLEET & MOBILITY LIVE

fleetandmobilitylive.co.uk | October 6-7

**W**ith four theatres and 18 seminar sessions over two days, Fleet & Mobility Live 2020 will offer insight, learning and ideas to help every type of company running a fleet of cars, vans and/or trucks improve its efficiency and effectiveness while keeping staff safe.

In a break from recent years, we have moved away from the two main session streams, one for strategy and one for operations, to focus on the topics of most importance to fleets. However, the Discover Fleet Theatre, with its best practice guidance for HR directors, finance director and procurement directors involved in fleet decision making, will remain a fundamental part of the show.

Here, we outline the sessions planned, while the search for the best quality speakers is under way.

## EV THEATRE: FOUR SESSIONS

With benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax rates reducing to 0% from April, demand from company car drivers was expected to soar for electric vehicles (EVs) this year. The general view was that registrations numbers would only be restrained by the amount of supply availability.

Obviously, the coronavirus pandemic has impacted the new car market, but it remains the case that EVs will continue to take a growing share of fleet. Companies also believe that EVs can help bring cash takers back into the car scheme because of the huge savings on BIK.

In the EV Theatre, leaders from the electric vehicle industry will look at how fleets can accelerate their uptake of EVs, while those who have already made the investment will share their key learnings to help others evade the potential obstacles.

Case studies will consider the challenges around charging, procurement, running costs, maintenance, total cost of ownership and how moving to EVs has affected the fleet's daily operations.

## MOBILITY THEATRE: FOUR SESSIONS

Mobility, the multi-modal movement of people, goods and services, is fast becoming a priority for businesses, particularly those with operations in urban areas.

Cities and metropolitan regions are keen to 'clean the streets', removing congestion and pollution to improve the environment for residents and workers, and this has implications for companies who currently rely on cars and vans for operations travel and transport.

In this theatre, sessions will include a leading pioneer of mobility as a service (MaaS) providing a strategic view of success stories from other countries and how companies can expect the market to develop in the UK.

We will also look at the freight and logistics market, inviting a representative from the Department for Transport (DfT) to set out its future freight strategy, including how businesses can continue to operate in zero emission zones, plus a case study with a company taking an innovative approach to last mile delivery in urban areas.

Another session will assess the role of mobility credits, and how the position of fleet manager is evolving.

As companies prepare for the MaaS evolution, a session will look at how the responsibilities of fleet decision-makers are expanding beyond automotive and will, ultimately, encompass all areas of mobility. It will also reveal how mobility credits can be integrated into a fleet's transport strategy while a leading fleet expert will explain the value of introducing a mobility credit scheme.



## FLEET APPRECIATION FOR ESSENTIAL SERVICES

At Fleet & Mobility Live 2020, *Fleet News* will recognise and honour the amazing fleets that have kept the country going during the pandemic.

These essential services, including emergency services, delivery companies, utilities and construction, have kept their vehicles and drivers on the road, operating safely and

efficiently under the most difficult of circumstances.

We want to publicly recognise and thank them for their efforts by inviting them to join us at two special roundtables during Fleet & Mobility Live during which they can share their experiences of managing their fleets through the Covid-19 crisis, including

# WE

## 2020. Hall 20, NEC

### WHY DID YOU ATTEND FLEET LIVE IN 2019?

**86%**

to meet current or new suppliers

**58%**

to keep up to date with fleet policy and best practice

**56%**

to obtain information to help me do my job

**46%**

to find out about new products and services

**30%**

to understand more about new technology

**27%**

to learn more about low- and zero-emission vehicles

### DISCOVER FLEET THEATRE: SIX SESSIONS

Each day will have three sessions targeting the broader fleet decision-making unit and those newer to fleet management.

■ **Procurement:** Best practice on procurement skills, wholelife costs of fleet contracts and tips on managing suppliers.

■ **HR:** Driver wellbeing, managing risk and fatigue will be explored in this session with best practice advice from transport behaviour and mental health specialists.

■ **Finance:** The latest thinking from HMRC on company car taxation, potential changes covering areas like plug-in vehicles and grants. Experts will also look at the different funding options available to fleets.



### OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE: FOUR SESSIONS

Topics for these sessions will reflect the market challenges presented by coronavirus, as well as providing advice and guidance on key areas of business excellence across the fleet.

Running an efficient fleet has taken on a whole new perspective as some businesses come to terms with furloughed drivers and industry lockdowns, while others see demand rocket to record levels, including the emergency services and delivery operators, as they keep Britain moving.

We will provide insight into crisis management and running a fleet under the most intense pressures, as well as considering lessons learned from the current pandemic with disaster planning experts and fleet case studies.

Safety will remain a priority for all fleets, whose responsibilities towards the welfare and protection of drivers and other road users are undiminished. A fleet safety pioneer will outline the steps his company took to improve safety and reduce risk in its business.

Other sessions will include expert advice on using data to predict the future and be more pre-emptive, exploring how to bring together multiple sources of fleet data from telematics, fuel cards, connected cars and licence checks to reduce costs and improve efficiency.

Fleets will discover how to use e-learning to store driver data and create safety profiles, as well as how technology can manage fuel costs and reassess vehicle utilisation and productivity.

### EXHIBITORS TO DATE

AID Fuel Oils Group
Alfa Fleet/Tail Lift Services
ARI
Athlon UK
Autoserve
BP Fleet Solutions
Chevin Fleet Solutions
E-Driving
Fleet Check
Fleet Operations
FuelGenie
Grosvenor Leasing
HaynesPro (UK) Ltd
Jaama Ltd
JCT600 Vehicle Leasing Solutions
John Jordan Ltd
LAP Electrical Ltd
LeasePlan
Licence Check
Locks 4 Vans Ltd
Lytx
Masternaut
Maxus
Modul-System Ltd
Nexus Vehicle Rental
Northgate Vehicle Hire
Ogilvie Fleet
ProtectAVan Solutions Ltd
Quartix Ltd
RAM Mount UK Ltd
Reflex Vehicle Hire
Samsara
Smart Fleet Solutions
Solon Security
TCH Leasing
TTC Group
VisionTrack
Volkswagen Financial Services   Fleet
Webfleet Solutions
XPI Simulations
Zenith



what they learned and how it has influenced future practices.

We will then invite the fleets to a special 'Appreciation Lunch' where we will share some of their positive stories and provide additional insight into how the industry adapted to the crisis to keep essential services going and supporting key workers.



# FLEET & MOBILITY LIVE

6th -7th October 2020. Hall 20, NEC

The UK's leading event for the  
fleet and mobility community

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For exhibitor and sponsor enquires please  
contact [events@fleetandmobilitylive.com](mailto:events@fleetandmobilitylive.com)

**COVID-19 Notice:** Bauer Consumer Media/Fleet & Mobility Live are continuing to monitor the COVID-19 situation closely and will follow government advice. At this moment in time, we feel that the timing of Fleet & Mobility Live will offer the perfect opportunity to bring the industry back together after such exceptional times. We will ensure additional safety measures are in place to ensure strict hygiene standards are maintained throughout the event. Should you have any concerns about attending or exhibiting, please contact the events team - [events@fleetandmobilitylive.com](mailto:events@fleetandmobilitylive.com)





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## In the May issue

Working on the frontline in the Covid-19 pandemic

Used car market to avoid double digit decline in RVs seen during the banking crisis

Growing list of RDE2-compliant models 'won't stop' diesel's demise

Target 2050: Delivering net zero emissions

ULEV project: Results of the Nottingham experiment

Post Covid-19: Getting the post lockdown right

Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service/Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service: Working as one is better than two

Award-winning Skoda Superb: High hopes for first plug-in hybrid

Coronavirus webinar: Expert panel answers all your 'what happens next?' questions

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Our test fleet

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# FleetNe

## thank you



## On the front

Hear from the fleet managers and key workers at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic to save lives and