

fleet forum ^{UK}
connecting the UK's fleet community
- Formerly Fleet Academy

Join the



Fleet World magazine's UK Fleet Forum – formerly Fleet Academy – provides a forum where fleet industry experts can exchange views on a wide range of topics, from taxation to speeding fines.

At the heart of the UK Fleet Forum is a team of fleet professionals who play a key role in the industry, either as fleet managers, consultants or fleet suppliers. These fleet experts provide a regular feed of information that is posted on the website forum in the form of discussion topics.

Typical areas of interest include, but are not limited to: taxation, finance and accounting, legislation, environmental issues, fleet safety, insurance, fleet management, supply issues and security.

Fleet suppliers are permitted to respond to queries if it is felt that their response represents honest and impartial advice. This aspect of the service is strictly moderated in order to ensure that the quality of information provided remains of the highest standard.

We have already attracted a strong network of fleet professionals, and our expert contributors have submitted a number of thought provoking discussion topics, a few of which are previewed to the right.

We hope you will consider joining us in this exciting new venture into the world of fleet.

To find out more about the UK Fleet Forum and request membership, please visit:

theukfleetforum.co.uk

Are increases in magistrates' court fine limits draconian?

Natalie Middleton, Business Editor, Fleet World

The recent announcement of new maximum fines available to magistrates has caused concern for motoring and fleet groups, but I can't help wondering if they've missed the point.

Announced by Justice Minister Jeremy Wright, the proposed new fines form part of wide-ranging reforms to the penalties that can be imposed by magistrates.

The four-fold increase in maximum fines available to magistrates means that the maximum fine for speeding on motorways could rise to £10k whilst maximum fines for breaking the limit on dual carriageways and other roads would rise from £1,000 to £4,000, along with the maximum fine for using a mobile telephone at the wheel.

Yet the measures have been branded draconian by the boss of fleet management firm OVL Group, who says the Government needs to look again at the balance between endorsement and enforcement when it comes to cutting road deaths.

Martin Wedge, MD of the Oxfordshire-based group, said: 'The Government is thinking of higher penalties – up to £10,000 for speeding and unlimited fines for drink driving, but this is putting the cart before the horse. Road deaths, according to the IAM, cost the UK economy £16bn per year. But solving the problem through longer training and education is a more sustainable way of reducing that cost than any quick – fix large fines – those that cannot readily be paid and will cost the courts thousands of pounds to enforce.'

'Let us instead look more at a model that better balances endorsement of good driving and enforcement of existing laws against bad behaviour behind the wheel.'

Meanwhile Edmund King, president of the Automobile Association, told the *Daily Telegraph*: 'We would not condone excessive speeding in any way but fines have to be proportionate to the offence and one has to question whether increasing the fines four-fold is proportionate, and it probably is not.'

'If we had more cops in cars on the motorway that would be a much more effective deterrent.'

He has a point to be honest, we can talk all day about effective deterrents – but the fact is that, just like with last year's introduction of on-the-spot fines for careless driving, we'll need more cops in cars just to catch the perpetrators in the first place. Otherwise it's just another harmless threat.

debate...

in association with



Les Owen, Senior Compliance Associate, Compliance Bureau, replied...

Natalie, you bring another good discussion to the forum. I fear the Government is not joined up in its approach to driving on UK roads. Your contributors rightly point out one delay such as young drivers not being allowed to take to the road. There have been more contradictions in approach over the years, from every colour of government.

Another good point raised is that without roads policing officers, any offences are less likely to be brought to court. Too many police forces in the UK have reduced police numbers in roads policing and yet officers do so much more than their title suggests – I wager that they do more crime arrests than we give them credit for.

Let us not forget though that fines are attributed by magistrates and are usually more proportional than just the maximum levels quoted in this article. Very few will ever get to those levels of fines.

To support Edmund King, we need proportionality. But this key argument comes from the principles of enforcement that ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers) employs. There must be proportionality, targeting, consistency and transparency in dealing with offenders.

Roads policing police officers spend a significant part of their day advising and educating to reduce incidents and they have done a magnificent job over the past 15 years (look at the KSI statistics).

Let us have more roads policing, more joined-up thinking and less government interference for their political point scoring or just to oppose the other party. As Martin Wedge points out, if we reduce road deaths we save the country money, which can be better employed on road safety. If we start the other way around and spend more on road safety, we will save money on road deaths.

Having spent many years policing, and now assisting companies and organisations to reduce road incidents I know that more can be done with education, engineering and then some enforcement – but all of these are part of a package. We regularly advise others how to manage staff who drive at work and avoid incidents, and thus save companies money.

Meet the experts...

Lyndon Wood,
CEO, constructaquote.com



Lyndon started his insurance company at the age of 19, and the odds were not in his favour. He gave up his job selling insurance and decided to go it alone with no qualifications but with an acute business head and a light-bulb moment. 25 years on and he remains CEO of constructaquote.com, Moorhouse and SunZu.

Lyndon remains quirky and unconventional and is recognised as a pioneer who tackles business hurdles and takes pride in passing on his business knowledge to any aspiring entrepreneurs.

Dan Gilkes, Editor,
VAN Fleet World



Dan trained and worked as a construction and transport engineer and a transport coordinator, before moving into B2B journalism in 1988.

With more than 25 years' experience across many titles in the transport, LCV and construction markets, he has car, motorcycle and Class 1 HGV licences and has driven every van, and many of the heavy trucks, launched in the last three decades.

Paul Gogolinski,
CEO, Total Fleet Solutions



Paul has over 30 years' automotive finance experience. In 1996, he helped start Mercedes-Benz Financial Services in South Africa, and was later appointed sales director and member of the board.

In Poland since 2004 (after five years as MD Daimler Fleet Management and two years MD Business Lease), Paul founded the PZWLP (Polish equivalent of the BVRLA) and has received several awards for initiatives in the area of fleet safety. Paul launched Total Fleet Solutions, the first fleet management consultancy in Poland for end users, in 2013, and has advised several leasing companies considering the Polish market.