

The Challenges of a Charity's Grey Fleet Management and the Smarter Solution



Managing a grey fleet, where employees use their own vehicles for work, is a daunting task, especially for organisations like charities that operate with limited resources. Without the right tools, ensuring compliance, safety, and fitness for purpose can become overwhelming, exposing organisations to unnecessary risks.

This article shares the real-world experiences of an individual who managed the fleet of a UK charity while balancing many other responsibilities. **Grey fleet vehicles made up a significant portion of the vehicles used for work, with around 1,000 employee-owned vehicles in use.**

In this environment, company vehicles were usually allocated only to employees covering more than 10,000 work miles annually, leaving those travelling fewer miles to rely on their personal vehicles for work-related driving. This article highlights the challenges this individual faced and explores how a solution like Verifleet could have transformed the way in which they approached fleet risk management.

Real-Life Challenges of Managing Grey Fleet Vehicles

When speaking to the fleet manager, it quickly became clear that **grey fleet management was the most complex and neglected area of overall fleet administration.** Vehicles supplied to the charity via leasing companies were well-managed, as much of the administrative burden was handled by those providers. Grey fleet, however, had very little in terms of dedicated policies and focus.

When asked about specific grey fleet policies and how employees using their own vehicles for work were made aware of requirements and expectations, the fleet manager struggled to recall any comprehensive guidelines. They mentioned a small section on grey fleet within

the broader motor policy document. This lack of focus was surprising, given that grey fleet vehicles made up a significantly larger proportion of the total fleet than leased or owned vehicles. Unfortunately, this is often the norm.

We discussed the organisation's legal duty of care to ensure that all vehicles used for work purposes, regardless of ownership, are safe and compliant. The fleet manager was well aware of this responsibility but admitted that **keeping track of 1,000 employee-owned vehicles was an impossible task.** They estimated that it would require a small, dedicated team working full-time just to bring things under control.

We also touched on volunteers. Volunteers using their own vehicles for charitable purposes should inform their insurance providers that this is the case. Organisations are not obliged to demonstrate the same level scrutiny across these vehicles but a responsible organisation would ensure that these vehicles were roadworthy and road-legal if they had the resources to do so in a cost and time effective manner. This felt like an unachievable dream for the individual I was talking to.

When asked how key details such as MOT, tax, and insurance renewal dates were tracked, I expected to hear about a spreadsheet with 1,000 rows of data. To my surprise, these details were not tracked at all. The fleet manager explained that, given the resource constraints, the best they could manage was **random spot-checks on a very small number of vehicles and drivers per month.**

“With the time available, the best I could manage was small number of random spot checks a month. Often there were issues with those alone.”

These spot-checks required drivers to email copies of their driving licence, MOT certificate, and insurance policy for manual inspection. Even this limited process was resource-intensive, often requiring multiple follow-ups with the selected drivers. The fleet manager revealed that more often than not, at least one of the vehicles would have an issue with its insurance. A common problem was drivers assuming that "commuting" covered occasional business trips, when in fact, business use must be explicitly declared. Other issues included mileage declarations below actual usage and address mismatches between licences and insurance documents, all of which should align.

After discussing legal compliance, we turned to vehicle maintenance. The fleet manager confirmed that there was no formal process to ensure drivers regularly checked items like tyres, lights and fluids. While some organisations implement maintenance checklists for drivers to complete weekly or monthly, these are often paper-based, and collecting and collating the results is an overwhelming manual task.

Despite their best efforts, the fleet manager admitted they could never be certain that all vehicles used by the organisation were legal and safe. The lack of robust tools left them feeling exposed to significant risks and compliance gaps. They were very aware of the safety and liability risks and were far from negligent. They did everything they could within the constraints of time and resources, but the challenges were simply too great.



The Hidden Costs of Inadequate Grey Fleet Management

Neglecting grey fleet management can lead to significant risks and challenges for organisations, especially charities relying on employee-owned vehicles for work purposes. While managing these vehicles may seem secondary to core operations, the consequences of poor oversight can be severe.

Legal and Financial Risks

Key legal and financial risks include:

- **Uninsured Business Use:** Many employees incorrectly assume that "commuting" covers occasional business trips under their insurance policy. Using a vehicle for work without business-use insurance can invalidate the policy, leaving the driver effectively uninsured. This is a criminal offence in the UK, with penalties including fines, penalty points, and even driving bans of up to 12 months.
- **Expired MOTs or Tax:** Vehicles without a valid MOT or tax can result in fines of up to £1,000 or more. Untaxed vehicles may also be seized, causing significant disruption to operations.

Safety Risks

The safety of employees, volunteers, and the public depends on roadworthy vehicles. While volunteers are not subject to the same levels of scrutiny as employees claiming mileage for using their cars, a responsible organisation should demonstrate their duty of care for all individuals driving it's on behalf, regardless of vehicle ownership.

Without robust checks, organisations may unknowingly allow unsafe vehicles to be used for work purposes. DVSA data tells us that over **two million vehicles failed their MOTs due to tyre-related defects between 2023 and 2024**. Such issues, if unchecked, could lead to **fines of up to £2,500 together with three penalty points**

per defective tyre. Vehicles on the road that are not sufficiently maintained and checked significantly raise the probability of road collisions which can lead to serious injuries and fatalities.

Reputational Damage

A single incident involving a non-compliant or unsafe grey fleet vehicle can have far-reaching implications for an charity's reputation. Donors, partners, and the public may question the organisation's commitment to safety and responsibility, which could impact fundraising efforts and long-term support.

Operational Inefficiencies

Without a formal process for tracking and managing ALL fleet vehicles, **charities risk operational delays.** For example, if a vehicle is unavailable due to compliance issues, it can disrupt critical services or delay mission-driven activities. **Reactive management also leads to inefficiencies,** with staff spending unnecessary time addressing preventable issues.

Environmental Impact

Grey fleet vehicles, on average, are over eight years old and tend to have CO2 emissions approximately 50% higher than newer, company-provided vehicles. However, with proper management and maintenance, these vehicles can operate as environmentally friendly as possible, helping organisations align with their sustainability goals.

Neglecting vehicle maintenance not only increases emissions but can also lead to other environmental issues, such as hazardous fluid leaks. Many of these issues can be prevented through regular maintenance checks and proactive management. By ensuring grey fleet vehicles are roadworthy and well-maintained, charities can demonstrate their commitment to managing environmental impacts.



A Smarter Approach with Verifleet

At leisure, I walked the fleet manager through the features of Verifleet, discussing the existing manual processes, if any, that could be replaced by each feature Verifleet offers. It was amazing to see the realisation as the solutions came to life, showing how our platform could have genuinely been transformative in their role. **Managing the 1,000-vehicle grey fleet would have been far easier and significantly more efficient with Verifleet,** completely eliminating the need for the cumbersome and limited process of spot-checking just a few vehicles per month.

Automatic Vehicle Classification and Risk Prioritisation

We explored how Verifleet's automatic vehicle classification and risk prioritisation work in practice. The platform ensures the most critical issues, such as **vehicles lacking a current MOT, road tax, or valid and sufficient insurance,** are addressed first. Following these, Verifleet focuses on vehicles at risk of becoming unsafe, such as those flagged with **tyre, brake or any other potentially dangerous issues.** This intelligent prioritisation guides fleet managers to target the most urgent risks first.

Eliminating Manual Administration

Verifleet **replaces error-prone spreadsheets with an intuitive, automated platform,** eliminating unnecessary manual tasks. Instead

of spending time chasing updates or managing unwieldy data, fleet managers can focus on high-value tasks that truly impact overall fleet risk management. Verifleet takes care of the administrative work, letting fleet managers concentrate on what matters most.

Simplified Driver Engagement

Verifleet streamlines communication with drivers by **automatically issuing and collecting vehicle maintenance checks**. Drivers are notified, and reminded, when key dates for MOTs, tax, and insurance are approaching. The platform provides clear visibility for fleet managers, highlighting drivers who may not be fulfilling their responsibilities, ensuring focus on the right areas and providing peace of mind.

Close to Real-Time Risk Visibility

Fleet managers no longer need to manually update details in spreadsheets. Verifleet synchronises information daily with the DVSA, ensuring fleet data is always up to date and accurate. This provides close-to-real-time visibility, enabling managers to make informed decisions quickly and confidently.

Improving Financial Outcomes

By demonstrating robust risk management, organisations can strengthen their position during insurance premium negotiations. Verifleet not only helps ensure compliance and safety but can also **unlock potential cost savings**, improving financial outcomes and providing a tangible return on investment.



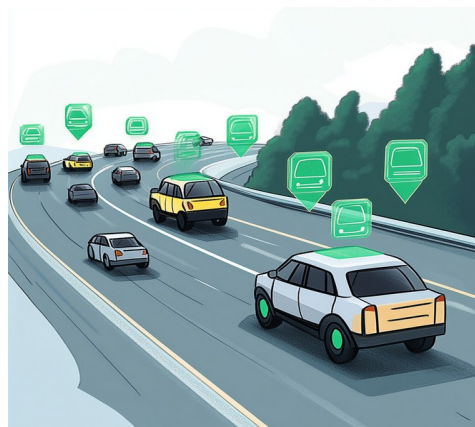
Empowering Fleet Managers

Managing a grey fleet in any organisation is no small task, even for enlightened fleet managers who understand and appreciate the risks but are held back by inefficient systems. **The story of the UK charity fleet manager is a familiar one:** despite their diligence, the absence of modern tools left them without the peace of mind that all vehicles were safe, compliant, and well-maintained.

This article has highlighted the pain points many organisations face when managing grey fleets. If these challenges resonate with you, it is time to act.

A Special Invitation to UK Charities

We invite fleet managers and decision-makers from UK charities to take the next step. At Verifleet, we are ready to provide a **personalised demonstration and trial of our platform**, so you can experience first-hand how it simplifies fleet management and enhances compliance. We are confident that Verifleet will save you time and money while making your fleet risk management more effective and fit for purpose.



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