

## NFDA TRUCK AND VAN UPDATE

February 2021



*DAF dominated truck registrations in 2020 with 32% market share*

Dear Colleague,

The latest truck registrations showed the market was down in 2020 compared to the previous year. In recent months, registrations have picked up with dealers experiencing demand from operators needing to upgrade their fleets as the economy recovers. These figures are confidential, please find the full details in our member newsletter.

Positively, the light commercial vehicle sector performed well in January, with a 2% increase in registrations, thanks to dealers' ability to meet demand through online services and deliveries, despite the current constraints affecting physical dealerships. Further information in the newsletter.

*NFDA is your trade body: we are here to help and advise you on regulatory and operational issues that affect your business. If you require any assistance, please do contact the helpline on 01788 538303.*

**Steve Latham**  
**NFDA Truck & Van Division Advisor**  
Mob: 07515 975 157  
Email: [stephen.latham@rmif.co.uk](mailto:stephen.latham@rmif.co.uk)

## 2020 TRUCK REGISTRATIONS

The latest truck registrations give us the full picture for 2020, a year that has seen unprecedented restrictions on supply mostly due to factory closures forced by the global pandemic.

In recent months, registrations have somewhat picked up, and dealers are seeing demand from operators needing to upgrade their fleets as the economy recovers. Early indications from dealers are January registrations will be very similar to the previous January before the pandemic. A robust aftersales market also underpins the industry, as operators have kept vehicles longer than expected.

**Please note: our agreement with the SMMT, who supplies this information, means these figures are confidential and should not be shared externally.**

Full details are available in our member newsletter.

---

## VAN SECTOR KEEPS ECONOMY ON THE ROAD AS SALES GROW IN JANUARY

Positively, the light commercial vehicle sector performed exceptionally well in January, with a 2% increase in registrations, thanks to dealers' ability to meet demand through online services and deliveries, despite the current constraints affecting physical dealerships.

SMMT figures showed the overall increase was driven by the demand for larger vans weighing more than 2.5-3.5 tonnes (up 25.4%) that are often used for goods distribution and online deliveries. These vehicles are generally purchased by larger operators who do not need showrooms to be open and plan their vehicle needs well in advance.

The strong demand in the heavy sector offset the significant declines in sales of lighter vans and pick-ups that are usually bought by smaller businesses, self-employed and semi-retail customers who would often transact in a showroom.

The biggest decline came from the small van sector under 2.0 tonnes, down 50.1%. These vehicles tend to be used as service vans and may indicate a possible decline in demand for service engineers and technicians that usually operate on call at residential properties.

Pick-ups suffered a 25.8% decline; many of these vehicles are acquired for the dual business and leisure purpose by the self-employed and are often ordered on dealer premises as customers require more detailed specifications.

The clear winner in volume terms in January was Ford, with a 35.7% market share as its Transit Custom and Heavy Transit took the first and second position in registrations. The third best seller was Vauxhall with a 12.3% market share, thanks to the success of its new Vivaro that offers a wide range of models including an electric version.

The recently introduced battery and plug-in electric vans have started to get some traction, with an overall 3.6% market share in a sector that has in the past been dominated by diesel powered vehicles.

These figures indicate a healthy economy and there is optimism about the 2021 LCV market, however there remain concerns around consumer confidence, the length of the lockdown and vehicle supply constraints that may hold the market back in the first quarter of this year.

## PM sets out England's route out of lockdown

The Prime Minister has set out the Government's approach to reopening England's economy after lockdown.

The plan, which is divided into four steps, will see all retail reopen, such as van showrooms, as part of step 2, which will take place no earlier than 12 April. The PM highlighted that the dates of each phase will be subject to an assessment of the data against the Government's four tests on vaccine deployment, the effect of vaccines on hospitalisations and deaths, infection rates and the risk of new variants.

The first stage will commence on 8 March, which will see schools and colleges open for all students.

### See also:

[PM statement to the House of Commons on roadmap for easing lockdown restrictions in England: 22 February 2021](#)

[HM Government - COVID-19 RESPONSE – SPRING 2021](#)

## VOLVO Viewpoint: road to 2050

Source: *Commercial Motor*

Please find below a summary of the article 'VOLVO VIEWPOINT: THE ROAD TO 2050' featured as a supplement in the latest edition of *Commercial Motor*. To view the full article please download *Commercial Motor* [here](#).

"The transition to alternative and low carbon fuels/energy is not easy and given the scope and segmentation of HGV operations, it is clear that one size does not fit all" as "the internal combustion engine and technologies in the heavy sector are still being developed", the article reads.

### Low carbon and renewable fuels

"Decarbonisation is not just about the vehicle technology it also about the fuel", points out Volvo. "An easy win is renewable synthetic diesel HVO (hydro treated vegetable oil) to EN15940, certified for use in all Volvo Euro-6 engines. A slight difference in fuel duty would see a significant net carbon reduction subject to availability with no in service changes required. The other low carbon fuel is gas in the form of LNG, as a long-haul alternative.

Today Volvo has more than 600 and the parc is growing along with the supporting infrastructure. CO2 tailpipe reductions can be up to 20%, with the potential of up 95% using renewable gas and HVO. On a five-year deal based on mileages of over 120,000km, the fuel duty differential between diesel and gas gives a sustainable pay back in around two and half years".

### Battery electric vehicles (BEV)



“Offering zero tailpipe emissions and meeting both the demands of CO2 and air quality with the added benefit of low noise, this technology is available now. The range of vehicles currently available from Volvo Trucks are 16 and 26 tonne, with electric construction vehicles on trial aiming to roll out in 2022/23.

“Like LNG, the transition to BEVs depends on the growth of the public infrastructure with the capacity to meet the energy demand of freight and public transport”, highlighted Volvo to Commercial Motor.

### **Long haul**

The key area of investment for adoption is “infrastructure”, for both hydrogen and electric. The Volvo Group sees the greatest potential for hydrogen fuel cells in heavier and longer transport. The growth will start around 2025 and it is important to secure the necessary hydrogen infrastructure as well as access to green hydrogen. “Volvo Group, Daimler Truck AG, Iveco, OMV, and Shell are working together to help create the conditions for the mass-market roll-out of hydrogen trucks in Europe”, Volvo added.

---

## **Harris Group to open Maxus UK headquarters in Warrington**

**[Source: Motor Trader](#)**

Harris Group is to open a UK headquarters in Birchwood Park, Warrington.

The Dublin-based group said the move will give it added capacity to grow sales in the UK in coming years. Last year it sold 115 Maxus electric vans in the UK and 788 LDV vans, according to SMMT figures. The LDV brand was changed to Maxus in April last year.



In 2009, LDV was bought by China’s largest automotive manufacturer, SAIC, and was manufactured under the Maxus moniker for the home market in addition to selected left-hand drive markets in Europe such as Spain, Belgium and The Netherlands.

In 2015, Dublin-based distributor, The Harris Group, secured the distribution rights to the brand for the UK, Ireland and right-hand drive Europe.

The Birchwood Park Headquarter will house UK-based employees as well as acting as a parts depot, with offices and a warehouse on site.

Mark Barrett, general manager of Harris Maxus said: “The creation of a UK HQ is an important step for our business activities and only strengthens our commitment to the UK market.

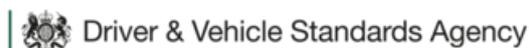
“Maxus has become a leader in the electric vehicle sector and our success in this area will only continue as electric vehicles become more and more popular in the years ahead.

“We are currently forecasting growth of 200% in 2021 and have plans to expand our network of dealers right across the UK. The past 12 months have been difficult for the industry, but we are looking forward to what the next year has in store.”

Founded in 1961, The Harris Group is an importer and distributor of commercial vehicles.

---

## URGENT DVSA Transport Office Portal (TOP) update: short-term unavailability of OCRS customer reports



Due to a technical issue with OCRS Customer Reports, these will be unavailable while DVSA works to fix the problem. They expect this to be around 8 weeks.

You can still access the following TOP services:

- vehicle test history
- encounter report
- top up your Pre-Funded Account (PFA)
- book an annual test at a Goods Vehicle Test Station (GVTS)

DVSA's enforcement work will continue whilst OCRS is unavailable. Enforcement staff will continue to use additional targeting information, such as encounter history. DVSA has apologised for any inconvenience and will inform us when the service is back up and running.

---

## DVLA DIGITAL SERVICES

We encourage our members to use these digital resources as they have not been impacted by the pandemic and are running as normal. DVLA's online services are the quickest, easiest and often cheapest way to deal with them.

Please find [HERE](#) the up-to-date list of digital services offered by the DVLA.

---

## MILS LEGAL UPDATE

### Covid-19: Can employees be required by their employer to get a vaccination?



With no firm end in sight to the coronavirus pandemic, it continues to significantly impact employers and the workforce. Although the vaccine is not yet available to be purchased privately, employers may want employees to take the vaccine as soon as they become eligible, under the voluntary NHS programme. A high vaccination rate would minimise the number of employees having to self-isolate and minimise the risk of employees becoming infected by workplace transmission.

[Can I require a vaccination?](#)

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, employers have a duty to ensure the health and safety of their employees so far as is reasonably practicable. To this end, requiring employees to be vaccinated against the coronavirus may seem like a reasonable request, particularly if it is difficult to employ other safety measures such as social distancing. However, the government has not made the vaccination compulsory, and there are a number of reasons why an employee may refuse a vaccine, whether, for example, due to medical or religious reasons. This may put the employer in a difficult position, both legally and in terms of employee relations.

### What if an employee refuses?

An employee's refusal to comply with a reasonable management instruction *may* be grounds for disciplinary action including dismissal. An employer will have to carefully consider the individual circumstances of the employee and whether the refusal is justified. The nature of the workplace will also have to be appropriately risk-assessed and considered by the employer: it may not be reasonable to require an office worker to be vaccinated should remote working be possible; however, it may be reasonable to require vaccination of a healthcare worker, whose patients are particularly vulnerable.

At the present time it would seem likely that disciplinary action would be a risky option for the employer, but the risk will depend on the facts of the case and the disciplinary action taken.

One particular aspect is the Equality Act 2010. Employees should not receive any less favourable treatment, or be put to a detriment arising from not being vaccinated due to protected characteristics such as age, religion, philosophical belief (e.g. so-called 'antivaxers' could seek to argue that an objection to vaccination could be considered a 'philosophical belief'), pregnancy etc... If, for example, a person had a medical condition that could affect their decision to take the vaccine, any less favourable treatment towards them could result in claims of discrimination on the grounds of disability. This, of course, is only one particular example, and there are other areas of vulnerability for the employer. It is therefore important that you take advice before proceeding.

### Conclusions

For now, employers should act cautiously in the mandating of a Covid-19 vaccination for the workforce. In the majority of cases, they may have to make the best of regular testing (not without its own difficulties), protective measures such as screening and sanitising stations, temperature checks and effective compliance with face coverings and social distancing rules.

This advice is general in nature and will need to be tailored to any one particular situation. Should you find yourself in the situation above, contact us at any stage for advice and assistance as appropriate.

*Motor Industry Legal Services*

*Motor Industry Legal Services (MILS Legal Ltd) provides fully comprehensive legal advice and representation to UK motor retailers for one annual fee. It is the only law firm in the UK which*

*specialises in motor law and motor trade law. MILS currently advises over 1,000 individual businesses within the sector as well as the Retail Motor Industry Federation (RMI) and its members.*

