

## Let's Talk Fleet Risk - Episode 23

### Gareth Jones – Speedy Services

**Simon:** Welcome to this edition of Let's Talk Fleet Risk – a podcast for those who manage drivers and their vehicles and want to reduce road risk in their organisation.

My guest for this episode of the podcast is Gareth Jones who is Group Fleet Compliance Manager at Speedy Asset Services.

Speedy Asset Services is the most recent good management case study that we've published on the Driving for Better Business website and I'm going to talk to Gareth about some of that in more detail.

Welcome to the Podcast Gareth.

**Simon:** Gareth – you've been with Speedy a long time so could you start with a summary of how you came to be involved in driver safety and fleet compliance, and what your role entails at Speedy?

**Gareth:** Thank you Simon. My journey into transport and fleet and driver training started many moons ago when I was employed with HM Armed Forces. From there, I spent a lot of time at DHL International in the driver training department. I first came to Speedy in 2007, as the Driver Trainer, and stayed there for just short of 7 years – covering all aspects of driver training, driver behaviour training, CPC which had just come in, accident management training, and various other training courses.

I then left the business for just over 18 months, and then came back to the business as the Group Fleet Compliance Manager, where my role then involved the HGV and van compliance, road risk management, and also duties around driver behaviours, and also dangerous goods safety advisor.

**Simon:** So, it's obviously a very complex role - you're running over 1,000 vehicles at Speedy but they're not all just simple vans. You've got a lot of specialist vehicles, and open back vehicles where safe loading is critical. What are the key safety and compliance challenges you face in your day to day operations?

**Gareth:** The key challenges are that we must make sure that everybody who uses the road is always safe – that includes our drivers, but also all of the vulnerable road users at the same time. We all have a duty of care to make sure that everybody is safe at all times. So we ensure that our drivers go through a load security training programme for various types of vehicles.

So, we have a load security training programme for our tanker drivers. Some people wouldn't class that as a load, but it is a load – it's liquid. We have a load security course

called The Light Side, for our transit drivers, and we have a heavy load security course for our heavy side drivers. We also have a load security course for our powered access side of the division which is run through the International Powered Access Federation. And all of that is captured on our internal training portal, so people can log in and see the progress, which has expiry dates and completion dates etcetera.

**Simon:** Safe and secure loading I think is one of the main challenges on the roads for most fleets – a lot of vehicles that get stopped by the DVSA and enforcement authorities are overweight, and it's often not managed, so it's really good to see you've got so many procedures and training programmes in place to make sure you've got all of that covered.

**Gareth:** Safety is at the heart of everything Speedy do – we have a simple rule: “fit one extra strap, just in case”.

**Simon:** Wise words. So, if we look at how you manage driver behaviour first, your case study shows a 13% reduction in collisions in 2022 over 2021 and a 90% recovery of uninsured loss. What have been the key factors in those achievements? What have you been doing?

**Gareth:** I think what you must first look at when you look at driver behaviour is that you need the data to understand where the driving behaviours and where you can have some wins. And with regard to wins, if you think about speeding – well if someone is speeding, what usually comes after that is a harsh braking event. So, if you look at the harsh braking and speeding events together as one event, you'll get two actual subjects that you can cover off. And again, it's simple things like speaking with the drivers, looking at the time of days these speeding events are happening, looking at the level of the speeding event, looking at the harsh braking event.

That's not to say all harsh braking events are a bad thing – if someone has seen something like a ball or a child running out from the side of the road, and a harsh braking event happens, then that's a good thing. It means they've seen it; they've observed it.

Talking to our drivers, and going through their driving behaviour... we send out monthly reports to our Chief Operating Officer, and that's cascaded all the way down to the Depot Manager who then speaks to the drivers – and we manage that locally. With regard to our recovery from our uninsured losses, we have a fantastic Claims Manager who came into the business 4 or 5 years ago now, and we now actively manage our uninsured loss recovery – and she does it very well, to the point where she managed to get in excess of 5 figures back last year. I think it's an area that sometimes some people forget to actually claim back.

**Simon:** It can make a huge difference to the bottom line and allow you to invest that in other areas.

So, we're talking about speeding and harsh braking events, and all that data comes from systems like telematics and cameras. It's clearly something that all vehicle operators should be looking at – I think with nearly all the really impressive case studies we share on our website, those improvements have been achieved with the

help of that kind of technology but for operators who don't use telematics and cameras, the impression is that there'll be a lot of push back from drivers. How would you recommend fleet safety managers start that process of implementation?

**Gareth:** With telematics, we've had telematics in our vehicles since 2009 with relative very little pushback on the telematics as I remember back then. Like with any telematics data, it's like a phone – it does go out of signal, and there are areas of the country where sometimes the telematics data does drop its signal, or you can get what's called a Dual Speed Alert – so you could be driving on the A168 in North Yorkshire, or you could be driving on the A1. And if you're driving on the A1, the speed limit is 70, but on the A168 it's only 50. But because both roads run parallel you do sometimes get a discrepancy.

But unless businesses are willing to fit the telematics, you're never truly going to understand driver behaviour to the point where you can better manage it. With regard to the cameras, we first installed cameras into our vehicles in early 2013 to be compliant with the new FORS & CLOCS regulations. Subsequently, we've now increased our cameras to having left, right, front, rear, load, and driver facing. We have then subsequently integrated our camera system company into our telematics system company, so that in the event of a harsh event, where the G-force has been triggered, it will automatically download the footage from 5 seconds before, during and after. That alert is then sent through to myself, the Fleet Director and the Claims Manager to view the footage.

**Simon:** You've got to be able to see the context around each of those events.

**Gareth:** Yeah, it gives us what we call our Golden Hour to deal with the third party if we're deemed as liable, but also, we can better understand how the incident has taken place and interview the driver.

**Simon:** If we look at your vehicles now, I know you put a lot of investment into safety technology like cameras. Are you fitting other sort of other safety technology and why?

**Gareth:** Yeah, every day is a new day at Speedy and like I said earlier, safety is at the heart of everything we do, we're always on the lookout for the next bit of technology. We've already decided to fit the new AI cameras, which supersede Sidescan. So these take away the need for Sidescan at the front of the vehicle, and so takes away the false alerts when it's constantly buzzing off for rainwater, flies, cars, street furniture, rain, dust. The new AI cameras actually identify a hazard so that's really good, we've fitted those.

We've recently installed a system called the FHOSS, the cycle safety system, where it illuminates an orange laser line down the left side of the vehicle, 1 metre away from the vehicle that's only shown when the vehicle is turning left, on the indication. The more visibility you can give to cyclists and vulnerable road users of the vehicle's intentions then it's better for all road users. Like I said earlier, the safety of all road users is paramount to Speedy, not just ourselves.

**Simon:** I want to now get onto the key piece for me. We're publishing this podcast and your case study as part of our current quarterly focus which is on leadership and business benefits. So I want to ask how engaged the board and the rest of your senior leadership team are when it comes to managing driver safety, and how supportive they are with any new initiatives you want to pursue.

**Gareth:** First and foremost, the Fleet Director Aaron Powell used to do my role, so the support from him comes naturally as he's been where I've been. Our CEO, Dan Evans, has worked in various positions around the Speedy business, in sales, in the hire desk at the depot, he's even been a drop driver at one point and I have great admiration for Dan that he supports everything that myself, Aaron and the fleet team do – and it's his words that safety is at the heart of everything Speedy do.

**Simon:** I know you're very proud of the fact that Speedy's whole fleet has been accredited to FORS Gold for the 9 years now and that, you don't just put drivers through the courses, you put managers through the courses too. Why is that important?

**Gareth:** If you're going to manage a driver, there's no point putting a driver through that course if you don't understand the importance of the course and what it's going to deliver itself. Having the knowledge of the objectives that the course will give to the driver is not only beneficial to all other road users, it's beneficial to you that you manage drivers. And our managers do sometimes use our vehicles, so why not? Training is a free subject when it's internal, and what better can you get than upskilling your skills in an area that, like I said earlier, can benefit all other road users?

**Simon:** And road safety is a shared responsibility, isn't it?

**Gareth:** It's a shared responsibility. Everybody needs to be safe. So, everybody does the FORS training, even some of our staff who just take a van home at night because there's nowhere safe to leave the vehicle at night, they will do that training – the pedestrian safety, the cycle safety, and all other training that goes with it.

**Simon:** Very good. So for any fleet safety managers looking to better engage their board, success generally comes from being able to measure and monitor fleet activity properly so you can quantify risk and measure improvements & present it to the board. What are the key metrics you focus on? How do you monitor and report on that data?

**Gareth:** So we monitor our driver behaviour, we monitor tachograph infringement, and also, we have a Post-Accident Review Group meeting. So every month we gather all the information from our accidents, post-accident, we review all the data and look for the blame, whether driver, third party or 50-50. We then decide on a course of action for that, whether that be online driver training, classroom training, or a 1-to-1 driver training day, or if it needs to go to the next step in line with our policy.

It's about having the data to look into driver behaviour – you can't just sit down with a driver and say, "you were speeding". You need to look at when and where he was speeding, how long he was speeding. And then, like I say, understand why he was speeding - but also explain the dangers of speeding as well.

**Simon:** How closely do you work with your insurers, for instance, on understanding the incident data and claims data?

**Gareth:** Very well, so we work really well with our insurer and it is through our insurer that we initially put our Post-Accident Review Group together. That includes myself – the Road Risk Manager, Aaron Powell – the Fleet Director, our Claims Manager... but it also includes somebody from HR, and somebody from Health and Safety, so there's a clear, unbiased decision of which direction we should take the person involved in the accident in. That's held monthly, and like I say, we get buy-in from our insurer because we actively look at each incident.

Every accident is an invitation to an incident or an accident. It's up to you whether you turn up to it.

**Simon:** Very good. Some great lessons there for fleet managers and driver safety managers. Thanks for your time today, Gareth.

I'll put links to both Speedy's website and Gareth's LinkedIn profile in the show notes, and also links to the case study we've just published.

Thanks everyone for listening.

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**Simon:** If you manage drivers and their vehicles, and you face similar issues to those discussed in this podcast, there are links in the show notes to some useful resources on the Driving for Better Business website. And these are all free to access. If you enjoyed the conversation, please don't forget to hit subscribe - so you know when the next episode is released - and please also give us a 5 star review as this helps us to get up the podcast rankings and makes it more visible to others who might also find it useful. You can follow us - **that's @DrivingforBetterBusiness on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn**, and most importantly, please help us to spread the word. All our resources are free for those who manage fleets, and their employees who drive for work. Thank you for listening to Let's Talk Fleet Risk, and I look forward to welcoming you to the next episode.

### **Weblinks**

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