



Toyota Fleet: County Contractors Hard Workers Win Toyota Van Contract

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A leading corporate refurbishment and maintenance contractor has switched its light commercial fleet to Toyota – principally because it believes the Hiace vans cannot be beaten for reliability. And by reducing the size of its vehicles, County Contractors also expects to save on costs, including fuel-savings from the D-4D diesel engines.

Covering the South & South West of England and South Wales, County Contractors of Weston-super-Mare employs over 150 tradesmen and is ideally located to serve its wide ranging database of blue chip clients. These clients are throughout the retail & leisure markets, education sector, NHS trusts and social housing organisations. They have all contributed to County's continuing success that has led to a turnover of over £13M and include names such as Boots, Le Meriden, Marriott, Co-op and Tesco.

The company handles major refurbishment projects, general contracts, shopfitting, decorating and maintenance, throughout the South West of England & South Wales and also provides a bespoke round-the-clock reactive maintenance service. Both Hiace 280 short-wheelbase and 300 long-wheelbase 280GS vans, powered by 2.5 litre turbo D-4D engines, are being used by County Contractors, 15 of which are available for rapid response by County's maintenance division.

The vans, along with an Avensis and two Corolla cars for supervisors, have been supplied on a three-year contract hire deal by local leasing company Zone Contracts. The vehicles are expected to average 25,000 miles a year. "With the steady growth of our company, we switched from outright purchase to contract hire seven years ago to help us with fleet management, and this is our third contract," said Peter Mercer, County Contractors' Business Development Manager.

"Three local and three national companies tendered and Zone came out on top for vans. We knew it was an excellent service provider with good ties to Toyota Fleet, and we also knew

about the reliability and quality of build of the Toyota product. With our decision to reduce and standardise the size of vehicles in our van fleet this time round, Zone was able to provide a very competitive deal."

The Toyota vans are replacing mainly Ford Transits. "Of all the equivalent vehicles we looked at, the Hiaces were the most rugged – and reliability is the top factor," explained Peter Mercer. The company had witnessed Toyota's durability first-hand, having had two "battered and bruised" H- and N-reg Hilux pickups, an N-reg Hiace and a Corolla diesel estate on its strength for a number of years and several 100,000's of miles.

"They're still going strong, and even the toughest driver, who has managed to cover a couple of hundred thousand miles in the Hiace, hasn't managed to break it yet!" said Peter. "We've had experience of reliability problems with other manufacturers, but with our clientele, especially on the 24-7 service, breakdowns simply aren't an option – our image has to be totally professional. We're looking forward to a lack of aggravation over the next three years from Toyota and Zone!"

The Toyota LCVs, which will usually be used two-up, also bring benefits for the occupants, said Peter. "Driver comfort is very good, and the Hiaces give the equivalent of a car drive in a van. The driving position is great, the cab is well insulated and among other things there is adjustable and power steering and, for added security, central locking. Safety features include full metal bulkheads, which we didn't have before."

"This is a good example of Toyota's hard-earned reputation for reliability giving us a head start when coupled with highly competitive costs," said Jon Pollock, General Manager of Toyota Fleet. "A Company such as County Contractors can't risk letting down its own customers – and it has solid evidence of just how tough our light commercials are."

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