



Bailiffs Leave Vans To Collect Toyota Corollas

28 September 2000

Collect Services, the certificated bailiff and debt-collection company based in Ickenham, Middlesex, is swapping vans for cars for its 35-strong on-the-road team. It has chosen Toyota Corolla 1.4S two-door saloons to replace the Citroen Berlingo diesel vans it has been using for the past two years.

Collect covers the whole of England and Wales, and is one of the leading enforcement companies in collecting traffic offence fines, local authority revenue, magistrates' court fines and income tax. Over its 23 years in business it has opted for a succession of vehicle marques, either leased or purchased outright, based on two-yearly reviews of its fleet policy.

Bearing in mind the nature of its business, what did Collect look for in a vehicle? "One which bricks bounce off without leaving a dent and which does 0-60mph in 3.4 seconds for quick exits!" jokes director David Rayner. "Seriously, our main concern is reliability."

Drivers cover an average 35,000 miles a year. "Our fee income is based on the number of calls we do each day. Our drivers start early and cover on average 140 miles, making 50 or 60 calls daily. It's stop-start work, and a great way of testing things like doors, seats and ignition switches!"

Why the change from light commercials to cars? "Any careless damage is deducted from our drivers' bonuses, but they do seem to have more accidents in small vans. Often it's damage to lower areas of bodywork, when they hit posts and so on."

Loss of loadspace is not a problem, says David. "Some drivers carry wheel-clamps and on occasions have to remove small items from premises, but the vans were carrying mostly air." One of the drivers had already reported that the Corolla boot was spacious enough to carry five clamps with ease.

"The Corolla looks like a working car – but it certainly has style." says David. And with an average 41.5mpg fuel consumption on the combined cycle, he does not expect to lose out in switching from diesel to petrol - in fact he expects to make an overall saving in terms of whole life costs.

"The monthly rate we're paying is competitive against other vehicles," he says. The cars are on full-maintenance contract hire from Lombard Vehicle Management handed over at London's biggest Toyota dealer, Jemca, with nine further vehicles due to follow the initial delivery of 14, by November.

Drivers welcomed the arrival of the first Toyota Corolla cars. "Their reaction was brilliant," says David Rayner. "They found them comfortable and they're more than happy with the equipment levels. I've had favourable comments from the start, even down to touches like the time switch on the intermittent wipe."

"The Corolla is an infinitely flexible model for fleet customers," says Toyota Fleet's General Manager Mark Hall. "In the case of Collect Services, its combination of functionality, reliability and driver appeal seems to have made its mark."

ENDS