

Case Study



Making ECO Stars Work for You!

One of the less obvious benefits of ECO Stars is that it creates a communication channel between the local authority and fleet operators. Silverdale Tours has turned the tables and recommended some changes they'd like to see, plus hear how they've taken full advantage of free driver training offered by ECO Stars.



Coach operator Silverdale Tours has been serving customers in the Nottingham area for more than 40 years since they first started providing transport in 1970. It's grown significantly since and now operates a fleet of 45 luxury coaches – from 21 to 73 seats – from their depot in Little Tennis Street South. The company offers a full range of leisure coach trips to popular destinations in the UK and as far afield as Europe as well as passenger transport services including school transport, private hire and conference work.

Joining ECO Stars

Silverdale were one of the early members of the ECO Stars Scheme in Nottingham and the first coach operator, joining in July 2012. They supplied a full fleet listing to the ECO Stars team – this was followed with an on-site visit to discuss their fleet and fuel management practices to complete the application form. Each individual vehicle was assessed along with the overall fleet management operation – the result was a four star rating.

Fleet Manager Simon Read said; "We were very pleased to receive a four star rating – it reflects the emphasis that we place on running the very best vehicles we can. It's very important to us to run coaches which are not only comfortable for our passengers, but also as fuel-efficient and efficiently managed as possible"

ECO Stars - What is it?

The *free* ECO Stars Fleet Recognition Scheme recognises and advises any business that operates a fleet of vehicles – from heavy goods, buses, coaches or vans to improve efficiency and reduce fuel consumption and emissions. Industry experts rate vehicles and overall fleet management performance - both operational and environmental –and award members an ECO Stars rating between 1 and 5.

Each member receives a tailored Road Map – an action plan designed to help members progress to higher rating levels by improving their fleet profile through key measures including fuel management, developing driver skills, vehicle specification and maintenance, performance monitoring and use of IT support systems.

The ECO Stars scheme is managed by transport consultants, Transport & Travel Research Ltd www.ttr-ltd.com.

The Road Map

As part of Silverdale's Road Map the ECO Stars team recommended key measures for the company to concentrate their resources on:

- **Fuel Monitoring** – Building on Silverdale's existing processes which measure fuel use and cost for individual vehicles, the recommended next steps were to capture mpg for individual drivers and set targets for improvement.
- **Driving Training** - Include an eco-driving module within the Driver CPC suite of courses
- **Fuel Champion**- Appoint a company fuel champion
Simon Read said, "The Road Map reinforced the approach we were taking to improve the efficiency of our fleet and has helped us to focus our efforts on the most effective measures".

SAFED Driver Training

One of the key benefits that members can gain from in the Nottingham ECO Stars scheme is access to free SAFED (Safe and Fuel Efficient driving) training. SAFED is a practical training course for commercial drivers that delivers fuel savings - typically 10% - and helps to improve safety and reduce accidents. It's accredited by the driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) and available for both HGV and PCV drivers.

Silverdale took full advantage – putting 25 drivers through the training which received very positive feedback. Several drivers have reported changing their behaviour while driving outside work, which will have an additional knock on effect for local air quality.

Fleet Changes

One of the major changes Silverdale has seen since joining ECO Stars is the retro-fitting of 16 vehicles with telematics equipment which allows the company to identify specific problems such as unnecessary idling or excessive revving to help make improvements including more efficient routing. This initiative may be extended depending on financial approval.

Improving efficiency has also been a key driver in Silverdale's vehicle procurement – the company has recently purchased a new Scania vehicle which provides inbuilt driver reports. Idling cut-out equipment has also been specified on several new vehicles with the aim of further reducing fuel use.

Fuel Efficiency

Since joining ECO Stars, Silverdale has continued to monitor fuel consumption very closely. As a first step towards establishing individual driver monitoring and targets, Silverdale is identifying drivers who could benefit from further training using the new information available from the vehicles that allow fuel monitoring.

Conclusions

When Silverdale Tours joined the scheme the ECO Stars team were impressed, highlighting the company as "a good example of a very fuel efficient fleet". They have continued their good work - using measures including driver training, performance motivation and retrofitting telematics.

Simon Read said; "We applaud the City Council's decision to run ECO Stars in Nottingham – we would like all local Councils to go one stage further to raise awareness of how vehicles affect our local environment through emissions, and reward our (and other companies'!) commitment to reducing that impact. There are lots of options from stronger promotion through to the consideration of a city-wide Low Emissions Zone."

He continued, "Another suggestion would be to follow the example of National Express which uses emissions criteria for accepting vehicles used on their franchise. We feel that all the public sector and publically funded institutions could use ECO Stars membership and ratings as an integral part of the selection criteria when purchasing transport services. With the innovation shown by the City Council on other transport issues a creative approach to introducing this into procurement processes should not be impossible."

Interested?

It couldn't be easier!

To join ECO Stars

call: 01543 416 416

email: ecostars@ttr-ltd.com

Silverdale Coaches is a member of Nottingham ECO Stars which is being delivered as part of the Nottingham Urban Area's successful Local Sustainable Transport Fund programme helping to establish Nottingham as an exemplar for integrated sustainable transport. For further details visit: www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/lsfprojects.