

KEEPING THE PRESSURE ON

The Car Wash Association (CWA) continues to work tirelessly to bring Government's attention to the issues arising from the plethora of non-compliant hand car washes (HCW) which still operate across the UK, writes CWA chair Brian Madderson.

The latest data published by the Home Office from its Illegal Immigration Unit shows that in the nine months to September 30, 2023 more than 70 HCW operations were fined nearly £1.5 million for offences of using non-registered workers, one of them in two separate quarters.

The fines have been revised from February 17 this year such that a first offence penalty is tripled from £15,000 to £45,000 per person and a repeat offence is tripled from £20,000 to £60,000. Such fines should act as a deterrent provided that the Home Office is effective at collecting them.

With this compelling evidence, it is extraordinary and inexplicable that another Home Office department, the Modern Slavery Unit, which has received significant funding increases in recent years has failed to engage with industry following the submission of the excellent report co-written by the Responsible Car Wash Scheme and Nottingham Trent University (NTU) in September 2022. Repeated requests to senior civil servants enquiring as to the status of the report are met with comments such as "Ministers are reviewing the issues". In Yes, Minister speak, this implies that the report is gathering dust on someone's shelf!

Fortunately, NTU has the indefatigable Professor Ian Clark leading its Work, Informalization & Place Research Group and they have received internal funding for 2024. This is



allowing them to research a National Licensing Scheme for HCW that was first proposed by Matthew Taylor when he was Interim Director of the Office for Labour Market Enforcement in February 2020.

The CWA welcomed Professor Clark and his team to the recent bi-annual Committee meeting held at the RMI head office in London. (Details can be viewed on the Car Wash Association's members' website.)

With bookmakers now quoting Labour as 8/1 on to form the next Government after an Autumn General Election, the CWA will be working with LabourList to hold a webinar next month so that the hand car wash travesty can be aired to a wide variety of potential Labour leaders.

CWA COMMITTEE UPDATE

The continuing drive towards a mandatory licensing scheme for hand car washes (HCWs) topped the agenda at the Car Wash Association's (CWA) latest Committee meeting on March 19.

Nottingham Trent University's Professor Ian Clark, Rich Pickford, James Hunter and Nidhi Sharma presented their latest research on hand car washes and the informal economy.

A large body of research data from NTU, gathered over what has been nearly a decade, has now been overlaid with data from the Clewer Initiative's Safe Car Wash app, which enables anyone who uses hand car washes to identify and report slavery.

NTU research indicates that there are 5,000 to 6,000 HCWs in the UK where significant labour market and business malpractice is seen, and the ongoing fragmented approach to policing the sector is allowing this to go unchecked. Poor labour conditions, nonpayment of minimum wage, lack of liability insurance, and trade licences (for storage of trade chemicals and effluent) is frequently lacking in these type of HCWs.

The Committee was also updated on the latest lobbying work of the CWA and on industry developments, including the development of the Moonbeam concept (see page 4).

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- SCOTTISH ROADSHOW OCTOBER 24
- YORKSHIRE ROADSHOW NOVEMBER 21



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MOTORHOME OPPORTUNITIES



This is one way that car wash business owners can house the disposal unit for toilet cassettes. The box can be bought for about £350 and be plumbed into existing drainage pipes.

With more than 400,000 DVLA-registered motor caravans as well as many vans with windows in the UK, car wash operators are being urged to assess the opportunity that offering service facilities for motorhomes may offer. Charles Shelbourne of CAMpRA explains more.

There has been a huge boom in motorhome ownership during and since the coronavirus lockdown in 2020. CAMpRA (see www.campra.org.uk/business-hub), the Campaign for Real Aires in the UK, a motorhome owners' group, now has more than 35,000 members on Facebook.

We at CAMpRA have seen that motorhome touring stopover availability in the UK needs to be improved. So, we are advising councils and private landowners on how to establish safe off-road parking/stopover parks, in popular destinations and working on building a supportive rest-stop infrastructure for motorhome tourism throughout the UK.

We have partly looked abroad for inspiration, to countries such as France, which has a network of 2,000 overnight stopping points, known as Aires, which French law dictates can only be used by motorhomes.

These offer service points which are needed by motorhome tourists every three to four days. Service points provide facilities to empty a motorhome's onboard water tanks – washing-up water ('grey waste') and 'toilet waste', kept in cassettes, into sewer drains, and to replenish



with fresh water.

Service points are currently only found on campsites in the UK (and many are closed off-season from October to Easter). However, they are facilities that a car wash operator could easily provide by adapting the existing plumbing for water and waste on-site.

So, there is a golden opportunity for the car wash industry to step in and offer service points in convenient locations for passing touring motorhomes.

It is a simple job to adapt the premises to service campervans and motorhomes as they tour. At your site, look for the location of a sewer manhole to see where a toilet waste point could be installed. Can you build a drive-over drain there too, and provide a drinking water tap for a

hosepipe?

Every van that is travelling on a road near you could earn you £3-5 a visit if you offer a service point, and would not need assistance, as refilling is a self-service operation, that takes just 10 to 15 minutes.

Plus, many motorhomes would need a clean after weeks away from home.

CAMPRA can also promote each car wash business offering a motorhome service point on the popular SearchForSites website/app.

A document on the CAMpRA website gives more details instructions on Service Point requirements.

See https://campra.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/business_hub/03_Providing_a_Service_Point_for_Motorcaravans.pdf.