

# Flag up the quality

A combination of courteous staff and excellent growth saw Fleet Auction Group named Auction House of the Year 2017

By **Roger Brown**



FLEET AUCTION GROUP prides itself on promoting best practice in the industry and creating a professional and accountable environment in which vendors and buyers can conduct their business.

Its immaculate, modern auction centre in Coalville has some of the industry's best facilities, with training and conference rooms as well as a restaurant.

Sales director Mike Gray tells *CM* the group's success at the 2017 CM Awards is testament to the hard work of all its staff. "We are absolutely delighted to have won this award which reflects our commitment to provide the best possible customer service, together with highly competitive terms of business," he says. "Our long-established client base is wide and varied, from owner-driver to major blue chip companies and vehicle manufacturers."

At any auction organised by Fleet Auction Group, vehicles come with corporate livery removed and, where possible, with all documentation complete.

## Buyer confidence

If necessary it can help arrange and manage a mechanical rectification, which gives buyers the confidence that a clean and straightforward sale will take place.

Gray, who has more than 35 years' experience in the auction industry, says: "We charge a fixed fee buyer's premium which gives simple and transparent auction charges for both seller and buyer alike."

Fleet Auction Group's Large Goods Vehicle sale – for trucks and trailers – grew more than 70% over the 18 months from January 2016 to May 2017.

In the most recent period, it sold 4,252 lots with a combined value of £18m compared with its previous performance over the same period of 2,413 lots sold with a combined value of £10.5m.

"We regularly sell for most truck manufacturers, leasing firms, rental companies, international, national and local fleets, finance houses and banks," says Gray.

"In addition, we also have a specialist local authority and blue light sector which currently numbers around 50 different authorities and equates to approximately 20% of the country's councils.

"Our name is synonymous with quality and attention to detail, and our sales have attracted purchasers from around the world," he adds.

Fleet Auction Group is auction partner for one of the UK's busiest airports, as well as the disposal partner of a major international management company that works with the country's reserve fire and rescue service.

It is also the sole auction partner to a large truck manufacturer for its closed auction events.

Says Gray: "We also host auctions in mainland Europe for multi-lingual audiences and in non-sterling currencies."

According to Gray, Fleet Auction Group's market share has expanded through its understanding of the





## Testimonials

**CM's panel of** independent judges, alongside our independent shopper, said the success of Fleet Auction Group in the Auction House of the Year category was due to a combination of the courtesy of its staff and its excellent growth figures.

The company's awards submission included a series of highly complimentary testimonials from customers.

One said the firm's "customer service and attention to detail have always been first class" and praised its willingness to go the extra mile in collecting vehicles. Another remarked: "We have found them to be professional, courteous and prompt in all of our dealings with them over the past decade or so. Payment is always prompt and the facilities and the welcome at Coalville are second to none."

One customer said the auctioneer has one of the best online bidding systems around. It added: "The Fleet Auction Group continuously exceed our expectations by delivering exceptional service."



importance and desire of its clients to fully decommission vehicles and make them as neutral as possible before sale.

Particular care is taken where it sells former ambulances, paramedic and fire and rescue vehicles.

### Vehicles neutralised

Gray says: "We go to great lengths to remove the 'battenburg' effect signage, radio devices, horns, sirens and lights, and even perform deep-clean sanitation. This completely neutralises the vehicles, negating the probability of them reappearing in their original guise for illicit purposes."

At Fleet Auction Group, all buyers must have a valid VAT registration number and bank account, and it does not accept cash as a form of payment, which, according to the company, guarantees a comprehensive audit trail for all transactions.

The firm is aware that checking VAT status and confirming bank references can cause some minor delays

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in registering new buyers. However, Gray says: "We see these as justifiable pre-trading checks and the policies are applauded by our vendors.

"Together with our clients we believe that in ever-changing modern day circumstances, we need to be totally vigilant against any fraudulent, criminal or terrorist activity."

### Online bidding

At Fleet Auction Group events, buyers in the hall compete side by side with online customers, whose bids are displayed on screens.

"Buyers have a wide range of buying platforms to choose from when sourcing stock and our aim is to be their preferred route," Gray tells *CM*.

The company lists every trailer, truck, van or item of plant and equipment it has for sale, and includes thorough condition reports, cosmetic damage appraisals and a portfolio of photographic images.

It also discloses any known faults, which it believes gives buyers more confidence and encourages stronger bidding.

"Fleet Auction Group offer a large selection of quality stock to our buyers, along with industry leading value and customer service," says Gray.

"Our continually increasing client base and sales record is testimony to our philosophy of setting standards.

"We'd like to continue to do the best job possible for our customers and build on our success in the years to come." ■

## Protruck

**In January**, a two-day auction of vehicles from defunct wholesale distributor Palmer & Harvey resulted in the sale of more than 200 trucks and trailers.

The own-account operator went into administration in November with the loss of 2,500 jobs, and administrator PwC, working with asset valuation company Hilco Global, appointed Fleet Auction Group and its sister company, Doncaster-based Protruck, to sell the fleet.

On one day, about 100 trucks from the haulier's southern operating centres were sold at Coalville, on another, Protruck auctioned approximately 100 trucks from the firm's northern depots.

Gray says: "We saw strong online bidding from overseas buyers."

