

Providing facilities and comfort for on-site workers

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For countless employees, welfare vans provide much needed facilities which wouldn't otherwise be available at a project or building site.

They've been around for quite a few years, but Ryan Gratton, Director at **WELFARE VANS4LESS** regards the opportunity to provide extra comfort, as well as the basics, for people working hard in all weathers and sometimes difficult conditions, as a really crucial service which he is passionate about.

He was no stranger to the vehicle industry having worked in his family's 40-year-old car rental business 'Afford Rent A Car' for more than eight years, but back in 2018, he spotted a gap in the market to provide what he describes as 'high quality at a sensible price.' The concept was to be really flexible, offering welfare vans from a single day right up to long-term contracts covering months and even years. Ryan's god parents Tony Moore and Tony Dobson backed the idea and made it come alive.

"We hope that we are making our customers feel part of the family! We started with just two vans and we now have a fleet of 190, along with 30 welfare cabins for larger scale projects," said Ryan.

All the vans offer canteen-style tables and chairs in a heated 'room', kettles and microwave cooking and toilet facilities – but as the business has grown, the firm is also starting to customise vans to individual customer needs.

"I think one of the secrets of our success has been to continually talk to our clients – asking for feedback or if there are any extra facilities we can build in.

"We're now offering extra full-size sockets so people can charge up their laptops, and in the larger cabins, we can provide dual lighting options (day or night lights), for people requiring sleeping breaks."

The cabins, which are all bespoke and can have a variety of different configurations, can also incorporate additional facilities such as drying rooms for wet clothing or equipment.

"We have many rail clients and their projects can be very demanding, using large-scale machinery and heavy materials to say nothing of high voltage power and multiple teams and shifts. The teams on site want somewhere comfy to relax during their break – and during COVID this has led to the demand for even more welfare vehicles on site to comply with social distancing." explained Ryan.

As well as being a COVID-compliant company in terms of its own practices, **WELFAREVANS4LESS** offers onsite COVID cleans using a technique called 'fogging'.

"Fogging is a highly effective way to sanitise all areas of your van – it reduces airborne contaminants and disinfects even hard to reach areas. It's something we do routinely as a way of cleaning vans, cabins and even our portable toilets between contracts. We also offer this on any contract and also for customers' own or other hired-in plant and welfare facilities," said Ryan.

In addition to accommodating individual client requirements, the company is also mindful of environmental issues and offers solar powered vans, which as well as supporting any organisation's green credentials, can also be extremely cost-effective, weather permitting!

There are also plans to develop fully electric welfare vehicles before too long.

For the future, Ryan wants to see the firm grow even more: "From being just an idea, our welfare van business is now taking over my life", he jokes, 'but I wouldn't have it any other way. We are a family-run business and we want all of our clients to feel they are part of that family in the way that we look after them, the service and the quality of vans that we provide. We believe it is a winning formula – for us and for all our clients."

Photo credit: WELFAREVANS4LESS