Driving the shift to zero-emission vehicles for the DVSA

The DVSA partnered with Capgemini to find the best way to transition its operational fleet to electric vehicles and meet government commitments on decarbonisation

Challenges of transitioning to a zero-emissions fleet

Domestic transport is the UK's largest-emitting sector, responsible for 28% of total greenhouse gas emissions. Phasing out petrol and diesel vehicles is key to the government's efforts to improve air quality and fulfil its climate pledges – in particular, the ambition for the UK to reach net zero by 2050.

As one of the largest owner-operator fleets in the UK with a combined fleet of over 30,000 cars and vans, it was critical for the government to lead the way on vehicle decarbonisation. In response,

Client: The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA)

Region: United Kingdom

Industry: Public sector

Client challenge:

The DVSA needed to decarbonise its vehicles by the end of 2027 to meet government commitments but lacked the data and expertise to transition so quickly to a zeroemissions fleet.

Solution:

A focused project helped determine the best way to transition the DVSA's fleet to electric vehicles, providing critical insights into charging infrastructure needs, cost implications, and operational impact.

Benefits:

- Helped to shape plans for the DVSA's transition to zero emission vehicles, which aim to eliminate an estimated 3,694 tonnes of CO2 emissions over the next five years
- Highlighted needs around charging infrastructure and compensation rates
- Provided information and support to try and address challenges from some staff sceptical about EVs and the impact on their work
- Helped inform longer-term policy decisions on the decarbonisation of transport

the Government Fleet Commitment (GFC) required all departments and organisations that use public money to deliver services to transition to a 100% zero-emission vehicle fleet by the end of 2027.

The DVSA operates a fleet of over 1,200 vehicles that carry out roadside and on-site vehicle safety tests. It needed options to transition to a zero-emissions fleet, but lacked the data, carbon modelling, and analytical expertise to do so at speed. So, it engaged Capgemini to help.

The agency and Capgemini worked together over a six-month period to determine the best way to transition the agency's operational fleet to electric vehicles, and help inform longer-term policy decisions on transport decarbonisation.

Initiatives with real-world viability

The challenge was not just about procurement. The DVSA needed to look at financial considerations, including the total cost of ownership, leasing arrangements and potential government funding models, as well as how to integrate EVs without disrupting key services. A major concern was infrastructure: how to ensure reliable access to charging, particularly for field-based staff working in remote locations.

The partners explored a number of transition options, weighing costs, benefits, and feasibility and looking at the latest technological advancements. They assessed the agency's transport use and needs, including fleet mileage, typical journeys, and the suitability of different vehicle models. The possibilities considered included scaling back the fleet entirely or moving to hydrogen-fuelled vehicles instead of EVs, as well as different locations for EV chargers.

Together, the DVSA and Capgemini created a Fleet Transition Insight Tool to test different scenarios. Using this, they ran trials on the real-world viability of home charging and charging at DVSA sites.

The biggest concern of DVSA staff was missing appointments for testing vehicles if they could not easily access charging stations when they needed to travel to testing sites. To prevent this, the partners carefully monitored telematics systems installed in the trial vehicles and ensured suitable schedules for charging.

A clear roadmap for the future

Throughout the project, the DVSA found that EV adoption is viable, although doing so presents challenges, particularly around charging infrastructure and ensuring adequate reimbursement for EV charging.

The agency learned that relying on public charging would likely affect productivity, and that while home-charging is a solution for many staff, other installations tailored to vehicle usage will be needed for those who can't accommodate a charger at home. HM Revenue & Customs compensation rate for EVs is low in comparison to the rise in electricity costs. As a result, a rate increase is being considered, which would aid the electrification of fleets across government.

It's estimated this will contribute to eliminating 3,694 tonnes of CO2 emissions over the next five years.

The UK government's Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) is sharing the findings with other departments. With the right infrastructure, policy support, and phased implementation, the DVSA and other public-sector organisations can now move successfully to a sustainable transport future.

"Working with Capgemini has transformed our EV transition. They truly understood our complex business challenges and their guidance and support has been instrumental in keeping DVSA at the forefront of fleet decarbonisation across government."

Carrie Dolan MBE,

Director of Corporate Services, DVSA

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