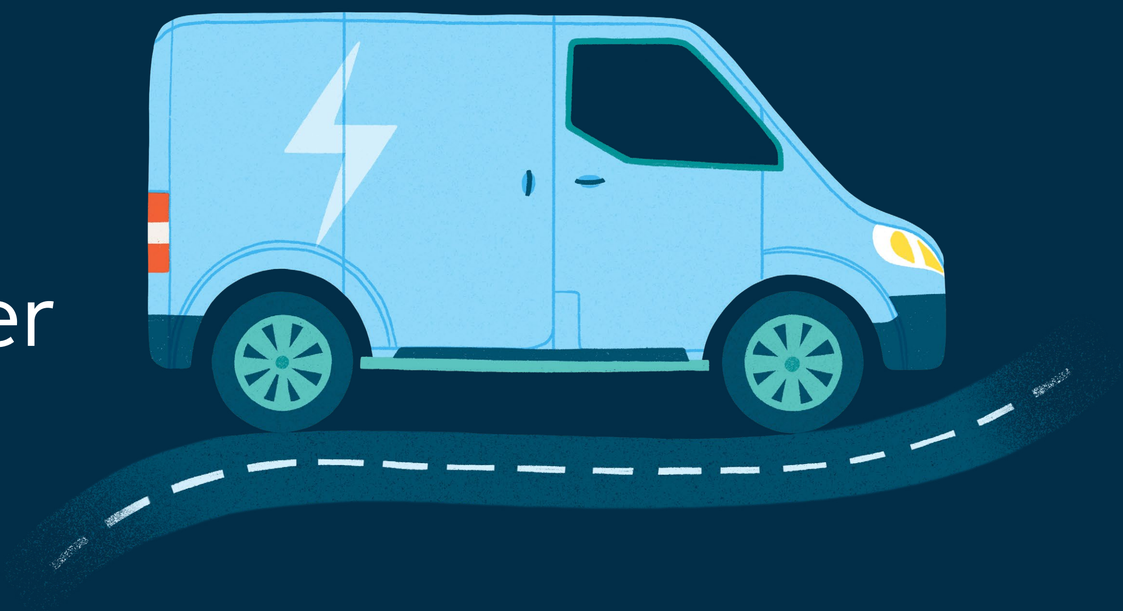
DRIVE EFFICIENTLY | FLEET AUDIT | REDUCE MILEAGE | PREPARE FOR ELECTRIC

Climate Springboard

Fleet

Simple steps to a smaller carbon footprint



Last updated January 2026

Welcome!

Cars, vans and lorries emit 28% of Scotland's greenhouse gases each year, making transport the sector that contributes most to climate change.

Switching to electric vehicles (EVs), which have no tailpipe emissions, will be a big part of fixing this problem. This transition is already well under way. The price of EVs continues to fall. In June 2025, 1 in 4 new cars sold in the UK were battery powered. And by 2030, sales of new petrol and diesel cars will be banned.

So, yes, it is absolutely time to begin the switch to electric transport, whether that's applying for grants or installing charging points. But that's not the whole picture. Here's where this guide comes in.

It contains 12 simple pre-EV steps you can take to reduce the carbon footprint of your fleet of company-owned vehicles, saving on fuel costs at the same time. Done right, you should also have healthier and happier colleagues, thanks to less time spent stuck in traffic breathing dirty air.

While this guide is mainly about road vehicles, you can still follow the steps if you own boats or ride-on lawnmowers.

By the end, you will have:

- Data showing how many miles your fleet drives in a month
- Started spending less money on fuel by driving more efficiently
- Reduced your business's carbon footprint, moving towards net zero

Once you're done, read Climate Springboard's business guides on electricity and heating.

Contents

Get your team on board

Some of the steps in this guide can be completed by one person.

But many steps require you to work with colleagues to encourage small changes to their daily routines. Others might need you to spend company money or get permission to test things, like car tyre pressure.

You don't need speak to *everyone* before getting started. But have the following people in mind:

Senior manager:
You may need their approval to introduce certain measures or make purchases

Fleet manager:
Someone with an overview of your fleet of vehicles, including any fuel cards and maintenance records.

Financial officer/manager:
Someone who can share company finances so you can track how much is spent on car fuel

Spokesperson
Someone who will be good at communicating the changes you're making and bringing others along for the journey

Volunteers:
Many hands make light work!

Motivation

Even if your team is clued up about the climate emergency, they may still have reservations about changes to their daily routine. Old habits die hard.

From our experience supporting businesses, we recommend you...

Have in-person conversations. We respond much better to being spoken to directly than reading emails or posters. Give people space to voice any concerns – you might find they are just looking for reassurance.

Ask for ideas. People are far more likely to take ownership of a task that they suggested. Some of the most successful initiatives we've seen came from senior managers listening to their staff, rather than imposing top-down measures.

Communicate the bigger picture. Explain the connection between fossil fuels, carbon emissions and your company's commitment to meeting Scotland's goal of net zero by 2045. Learn more about drivers here.

Talk about money. Businesses that fail to act toward net zero will pay the cost. And it's not just storm damage – reducing emissions now can help you to avoid regulatory fines and keep important contracts.

Incentives and competition

Consider rewarding teams or individuals based on their energy-saving achievements.

CASE STUDY

One Glasgow building services firm had great success by introducing a four-day week. To qualify for the extra day off, staff must meet productivity targets. This created a strong incentive. Helpdesk staff started mapping out the jobs and driving routes for engineers to minimise travel distances and avoid peak times and traffic. This led to a 17% drop in overall mileage.

In 2010, the UK Government cut its carbon emissions by 10% in one year by introducing an energy-saving competition between departments.

You don't need to use cash. The offer of treats, vouchers or simply bragging rights can motivate staff to take part.

Update staff weekly on how they're doing.

Write a short email sharing the figures for fuel use and estimated money savings. (This gives you an extra reason to keep on top of the data)

Drive efficiently

Objectives:

By the end of part one, you will:

- Be driving the vehicles in your fleet more efficiently
- Have started to save money on fuel costs
- Have a well-maintained fleet of vehicles

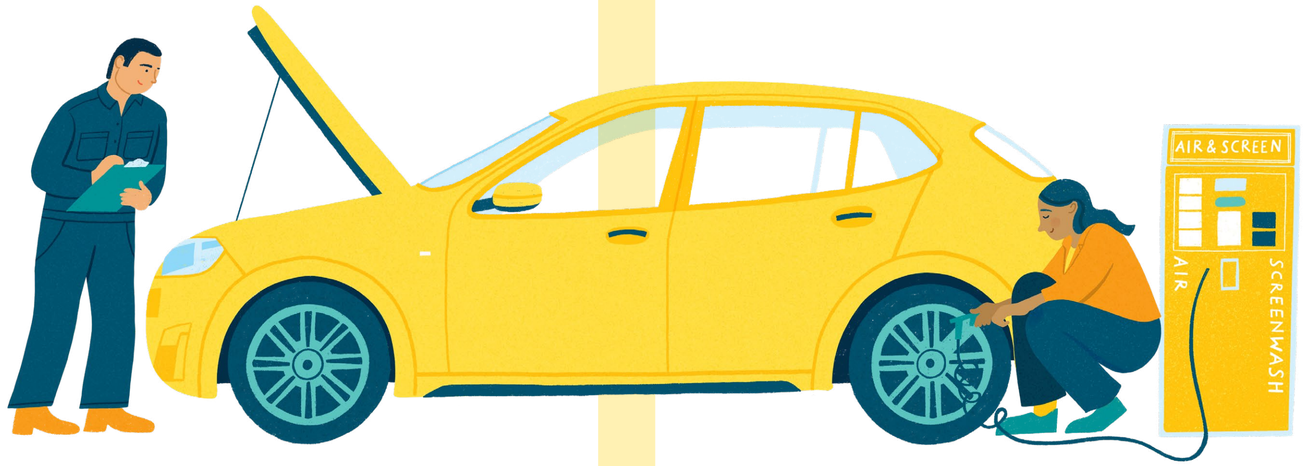
STEP 1

Maintain your fleet

Set aside a few hours to review your fleet maintenance routine.

Time: 2 hours

Cost: £0.00



Book in a service

Check when the vehicles in your fleet were last serviced. Book in any vehicles that have gone too long without a service.

How often? Every 12 months (or 12,000 miles)

Why? Doing this regularly will help your engine work more effectively and use less fuel.

Tip: *If you use a digital calendar, set a reminder on the same date every year to ensure you keep up the habit.*

Keep up the (tyre) pressure

Check and adjust the tyre pressure of the vehicles in your fleet.

How often? Once a month – make it part of your maintenance routine.

Why? Under-inflated tyres create more friction with the ground, using more fuel. Michelin has estimated that the average vehicle loses £110 per year on fuel due to low tyre pressure.

Tip: *Remind your drivers that under-inflated tyres are dangerous in wet weather. The lower the pressure, the higher your chances of aquaplaning.*

STEP 2

Fuel-efficient driving

This step relies on people changing their behaviour. Refer to the 'Get your team on board' section for ideas on how to build new habits and win over reluctant colleagues.

Time: 7 hours

££ Cost: £75 +

Book a fuel-efficient driver training course for your staff. This can be a great way to get everyone up to speed in one go. Prices start at £75 for a 7-hour course.

If you can't undertake training right now, have a meeting with your drivers to discuss introducing the following rules. Make it part of your new driver onboarding.

Don't break harshly

Avoid unnecessary braking and acceleration, as this uses more fuel. Ask drivers to always keep a good distance from the car in front.

Close windows

At high speeds, open windows create enough wind resistance to increase fuel use by 20%. Put red stickers by the buttons to remind drivers.

Use air con sparingly

Air con uses engine power, therefore fuel. Discourage overuse by making 'off' the default setting and encouraging staff to wear weather-appropriate clothing.

Switch off engine when stationary

Turn off your engine if you're going to be stationary for more than 20 seconds. Idling is highly wasteful of fuel, adds to air pollution and doing it for too long is illegal.

Travel light

Remove unused roof boxes. Clear out any clutter and unneeded cargo. In other words, anything that adds unnecessary weight and wind resistance.

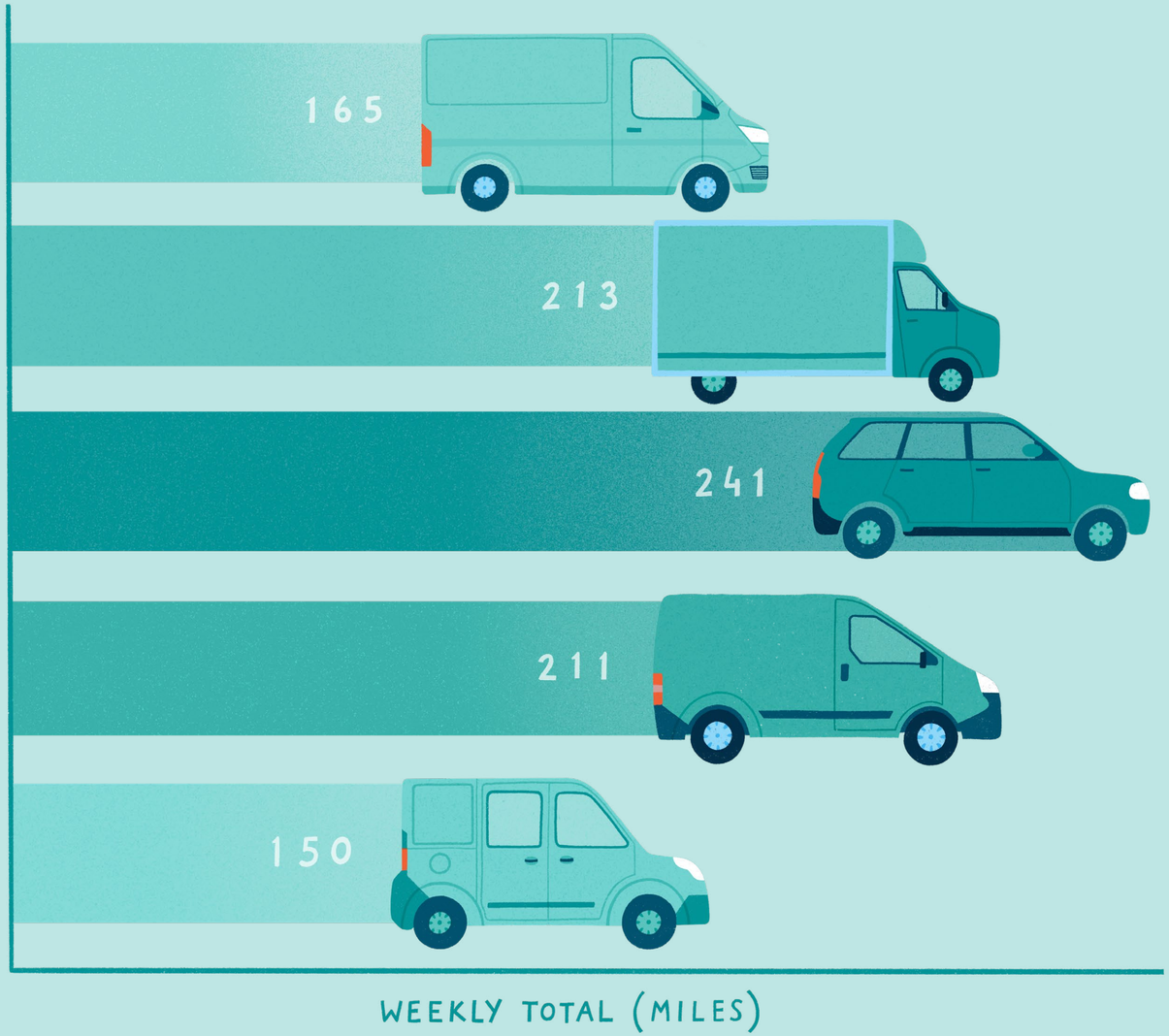
Stay under the speed limit

Driving a van at 75mph uses 37% more fuel than driving at 60mph! Give your drivers enough time to get to their destination to discourage speeding.

Fleet audit

Objectives:
By the end of part two, you will:

- Have a system in place for collecting useful fleet data
- Know which vehicles, drivers and departments in your company drive the most
- Be ready to start taking action to cut vehicle emissions



STEP 3

Start logging mileage

Skip this step if you use fleet telematics (or would prefer to start collecting more detailed data straight away). In this step, you'll record basic data about journeys made by drivers in your fleet of vehicles. This will help you understand where you could be more efficient.

Time: Ongoing

Cost: £0

If you aren't already, ask your drivers to record their mileage for each journey made.

Most SMEs with working fleets already track their daily fuel use. Wherever you are already tracking this information (such as a logbook or Excel spreadsheet), add a way to record mileage too.

This will look slightly different in each company – consider what works best for your staff.

If you'd like a starting point, download a copy of our Data Collection spreadsheet. Open the 'Fleet' tab and customise the table to suit your needs.

Date	Vehicle ID	Fuel type	Driver/s	Daily total (miles)
1/1/2026	E51 1QS	Diesel	Sam Anderson	46
1/1/2026	093 HVV	Petrol	Chen Liao, Mo Winter	114
1/1/2026	R24 GBL	Diesel	Alex Williams	63

If multiple drivers use the same vehicle in one day, aim to record both names

Compare odometer readings from the start and end of the day to get the daily total

How much data is enough?

If your fleet has a consistent driving pattern (e.g. you repeat the same journeys each week) then you may only need a few weeks' data to start noticing patterns – see Step 5.

If your fleet's activity is more inconsistent (e.g. lots of random destinations, irregular timings), collect data for at least one month or a period that reflects the seasonal / operational pattern of your fleet.

STEP 4

Get fleet telematics

Telematics is like a smart meter for your fleet. Small devices placed in each vehicle (or a driver smartphone) collect detailed journey data, which you can view and analyse on an online portal.

Time: 1-3 weeks

Cost: £7+ per vehicle month

1.

Find a provider

Spend some time researching a telematics provider. Depending on your needs and the size of your fleet, this could take a few days.

Get a quote from at least three different companies before deciding. Well-reviewed UK providers include Lightfoot, Geotab, RAM Tracking, Quartix and Webfleet.

2.

Set up

Getting this right depends on people. Set aside some time to train your drivers in how to correctly use any new 'black box' hardware inside vehicles. Many telematics providers now use a smartphone app instead.

***Tip:** Make space for your drivers to ask questions and make suggestions! This is a great opportunity to bring them along on the net zero journey.*

3.

Start recording data

For each journey, your system should record as a minimum:

- Vehicle ID
- Fuel type
- Driver name and/or department
- Distance travelled
- Start and end locations
- Specific route taken
- Journey time
- Date and time

Vehicle telematics can provide data about driving efficiency: acceleration, braking, idle time, etc. This kind of detailed feedback can really encourage more fuel-efficient driving behaviour!

STEP 5

Look for patterns

In this step you will ‘interview’ your data. Try to answer the questions opposite. In the next section, you will use this information to start making CO2-saving changes to your fleet operations.

Time: 1-2 hours

Cost: £0

Open your online telematics dashboard or take the mileage data you collected in Step 3.

Pick out the data for a set period, such as 1 month or 12 months.

If you're logging mileage:

Analyse the data and try to answer the following questions, which will help you in the next steps. If you get stuck, ask your drivers if they know the answers based on their experience.

If you have telematics:

Look for an ‘analytics’ page on the online platform. Some of the hard work may have already been done for you! Contact the provider if you’re unsure.

Question	The data you'll need
What is the **average** mileage per day for each vehicle?	Vehicle ID, distance travelled, date
What is the **most common** journey?	Start and end locations
Which vehicle(s) drove the **furthest**?	Vehicle ID, distanced travelled
Which vehicle(s) drove the **least**?	Vehicle ID, distanced travelled
Which vehicle(s) were used the **fewest days**?	Vehicle ID, date
Do some journeys consistently take **longer** due to congestion?	Start and end locations, journey time
Who drives the **most** on average?	Driver, distanced travelled
Which department drove the **furthest**?	Department, distanced travelled

Reduce mileage

This part is more like a menu of actions. You don’t need to complete them in order. Because these steps involve changing how your business operates, each one can take several months to complete. Feel free to work on a few at the same time.

Objectives:

By the end of part three, you will:

- Have a fleet that’s the right size for your business
- Have started saving fuel by driving shorter distances
- Have a team working on bigger changes to how (much) you travel

STEP 6

Right-size your fleet

Having a smaller number of well-used vehicles can substantially reduce your emissions and running costs. It will also make switching to electric cheaper.

Time: 1-6 months

Cost: £0.00

CASE STUDY

DEFRA

The UK government's environment, farming and rural affairs office has shrunk its fleet substantially since 2022, from around 4,000 cars down to 2,000. With some exceptions, vehicles used less than two days per week were removed from service. Read more

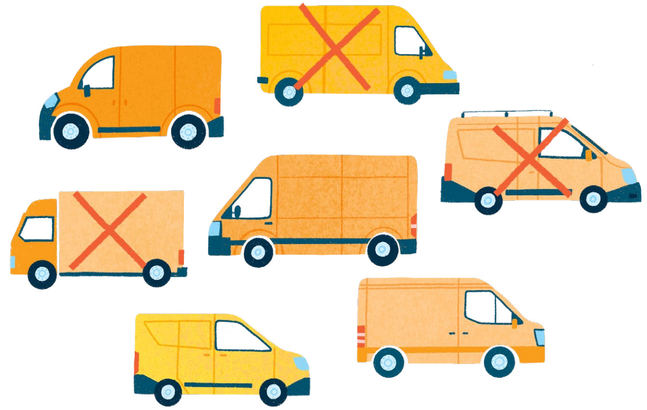
Review the data collected during your fleet audit (Part 2). Then consider these two options for downsizing your fleet.

Smaller vehicles

Review each vehicle and what it is mainly used for. Do you need a large vehicle for this job? If you carry cargo, are vehicles fully stocked or often half empty?

Instead, you could:

- Use a pool car or rental when you need a large or long-range vehicle
- Store rarely used specialist equipment in a depot or building
- Use a bespoke fit-out to add storage capacity
- Closely match the vehicle and equipment carried to the requirements of each job



Fewer vehicles

Review your fleet and pick out any vehicles with low mileage. Do you know why? Does its use justify the running costs, including fuel, tax and maintenance?

Set a minimum-use threshold (e.g. at least two days per week). Don't renew the lease for vehicles that fail the test.

For vehicles that drive under 6,000 miles a year (25 miles a day on average over 240 working days), it's likely cheaper to use hire cars or shared vehicles.

STEP 7

Introduce route planning

Reduce how much fuel you consume by taking the most direct route between destinations. The added benefits? Lower fuels costs and less time spent in traffic.

Time: 2 weeks

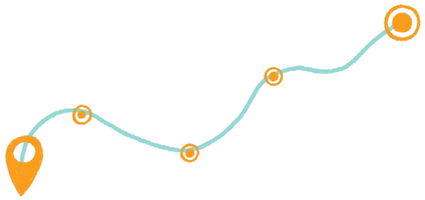
Cost: £0

CASE STUDY

Case study: McLays Foods

This award-winning Glasgow fresh meat and produce supplier moved many deliveries to off-peak times to avoid congestion, with the help of Geotab journey-tracking data. This made deliveries 17% quicker on average – the equivalent of taking a van off the road for 2 weeks a year.

Review the data collected during your fleet audit (Part 2). Then consider these options for improving your route planning.



Sequencing

Map out one day's destinations and then order them so that you avoid doubling back or driving further than necessary. Factor in fuel stops and tiredness breaks.

Plan ahead

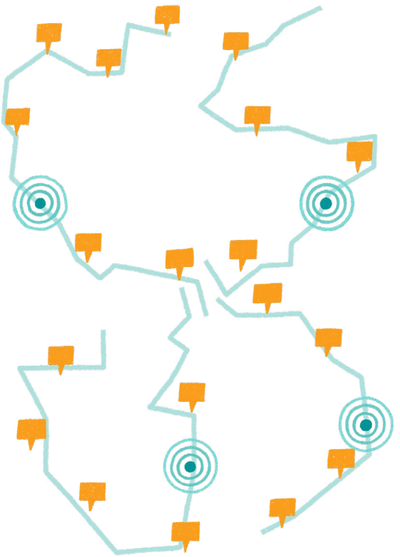
Contact your customers or stakeholders to schedule visits well in advance. This makes sequencing easier as you will have to make fewer last-minute changes.

Travel off-peak

Shift as many journeys as you can to off-peak times, including at night. This will mean less congestion and shorter journeys.

Combine journeys

Make use of return journeys from destinations, for example, to collect stock from a supplier or visit a different customer.



What about telematics?

Telematics and fleet management systems usually track the GPS location of fleet vehicles. This can enable quite advanced route planning throughout the workday, such as re-ordering your job queue, either automatically or with the help of HQ staff.

STEP 8

Rethink operations

Time to get creative. We are often inspired by the brilliant solutions that SMEs come up with to reduce the time spent in vehicles, but it's unique to each business.

Time: 1 month+

££ Cost: Variable

CASE STUDY

Case study: Alba Facilities Services

Hoping to improve employee well-being in a stressful industry, Glasgow-based Alba started a four-day week trial in 2024. Staff must hit productivity targets to qualify for the day off. The Alba fleet has seen 17% drop in overall mileage in a year (saving £17,500 in fuel costs), even more than the 15% reduction in working hours.

Create a fleet working group. Invite staff (especially drivers) to join.

Send this step to the working group and ask them to investigate how and if to introduce any at your company. Remember, this is just a starting point! Take inspiration from the linked case studies on page 23 of this guide and email us for free advice.

Mileage allowances

Generous cash allowances for grey fleet vehicles create a harmful incentive to drive more miles. Raise or lower your allowance based on vehicle choice (using CO2 emissions per mile as a benchmark).

Shorter work week

Consider adopting the four-day week. Scottish companies have had success reducing their fleet mileage by working fewer hours – while remaining profitable and productive. (See case study)

Video conferencing

Write a short and clear company policy for when to have meetings remotely instead of in person, to avoid making unnecessary car trips.

Carbon budgets

You could give teams an annual or quarterly budget for carbon emissions from fleet vehicles. This can be an effective source of inter-team competition but requires a good data collection system, such as telematics.

Prepare for electric

Objectives:

By the end of part four, you will:

- Be able to explain the benefits of EVs to your colleagues
- Have a short and long-term plan to switching to EVs
- Know where to go for funding to pay for more costly infrastructure

STEP 9

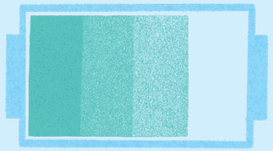
Dispel EV myths

Time to test your myth-busting muscles. Your workmates may have doubts about electric vehicles. Some are reasonable, but many are based on outdated information or sloppy news reports. Here we disprove four common misconceptions.

Time: 5 minutes

Cost: £0

The battery range on EVs is too short

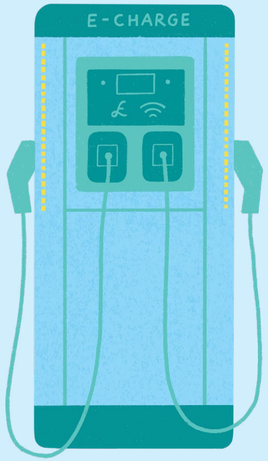


The average range on modern EVs is 236 miles (some can go more than 400 miles) which should cover most day-to-day journeys.

EVs take too long to charge

In practice, most recharging will happen overnight at your workplace or home when you're not using the vehicle. And increasingly, roadside service stations have 'ultra-rapid' chargers that can fully charge a 60kW car in 24 minutes, so this is unlikely to be a problem.

But there aren't enough charging points!



Many UK businesses are already thriving with fully electric fleets. As of August 2025, there are 85,163 EV charging points across the UK. Several thousand more are installed each month. Scotland alone has 7,100 public charge points. The Scottish government has a target to install 24,000 more by 2030, backed by £30 million in public funds.

They are too expensive

While it's true that the purchase price of a new EV is on average still higher than a conventional car, the lifetime cost is often less thanks to the much lower running costs. For example, charging an electric Vauxhall Vivaro van can cost as little as £316 per year on an EV tariff, compared to around £1,600 for the diesel equivalent. Servicing an EV costs £103 on average, compared to £151 for petrol cars.

STEP 10

Explore alternatives

If some vehicles in your fleet transport small amounts of equipment or goods, you may find that a more compact vehicle meets your needs just as well.

Time: 1-2 months

£££ Cost: £2,000 - £25,000 per vehicle

Consider these two zero-emission options:

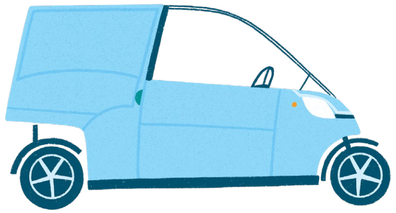
E-cargo bikes

An eCargo bike is an electrically assisted bicycle, tricycle or quadricycle with a purpose-built cargo carrying capacity. The bikes come in many different shapes and sizes and are already popular with food and drink suppliers, tradespeople and delivery companies.

Price: £2,000-12,000

Payload: up to 300kg

Range: Up to 50 miles assisted



Electric Powered Light Vehicles (PLVs)

These are two, three and lightweight four-wheeled vehicles, including electric mopeds, motorbikes, micro cars and ultra-light delivery vehicles. PLVs come in seven vehicle categories with top speeds ranging from 28 to 56 mph. Even the largest models cost less than £5 to recharge.

Price: £2,500-25,000

Payload: up to 500kg

Range: Up to 100 miles

Both types have the following benefits...

- Low maintenance and charging costs
- No road tax or parking charge
- LEZ-compliant
- Can navigate narrow streets, bicylce lanes and busy traffic
- Healthier staff

STEP 11

Make a plan

You don't need to switch your entire fleet to electric overnight.

Your plan will be unique to your business. But there are a few things that all SMEs will need to consider when shifting to an electric fleet:

Time: 1 month

Cost: £0

CASE STUDY

Case study: CSG Clean

CSG Clean, based in Aberdeen, have a fleet of 21 vehicles – from small cars to large trucks. In 2024, the company began a phased transition to electric by switching each vehicle at the end of its lease.

1

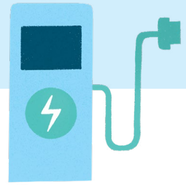
Daily range needs:

Decide which EV models are most suitable based on the average range travelled by each fleet driver or vehicle in a day. Don't pay for a van with a 300-mile battery range when you only need 250.

2

Vehicle replacement cycle:

From 2030, all new vehicles sold in the UK must be EVs or hybrids. For most companies, that's just one vehicle replacement cycle (5-7 years) away. Consider a phased shift – i.e., the next time a vehicle needs replaced, go electric.



3

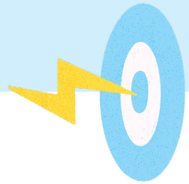
Charging points:

Large fleets can create a lot electricity demand, which may require upgrading the power supply to your premises or getting a bespoke set-up. See Step 12 for where you can get support and advice on this.

4

Salary sacrafice scheme:

Well suited to companies with a large grey fleet. Staff members can pay to lease a car from their salary, resulting in a lower rate of National Insurance, company car (BIK) tax and road tax.



5

Set electrification targets:

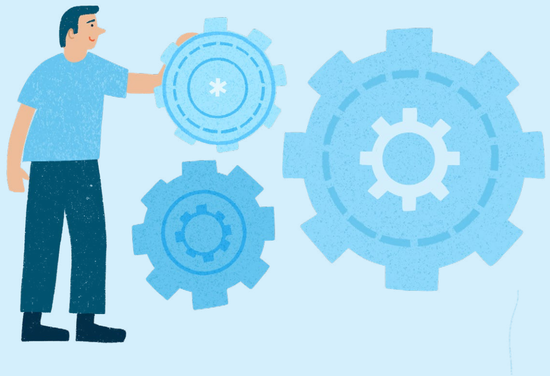
Aim for ambitious but achievable. This is crucial to helping you stay accountable and on track. E.g. 40% electric fleet by 2028, 100% by 2035. Email us for help setting targets.

STEP 12

Get funding and support

Time: Variable

Cost: £0



UK funding

- Low-emission vehicles plug-in grant - £2-25k discount at purchase
- Electric vehicle infrastructure grant – up to 15k total
- Electric vehicle chargepoint grant - £350 per socket, 40 max

Scotland funding

- Highlands & Islands Green Grant - Up to £250k
- Energy Saving Trust Electric Van Loan – Up to £40k
- Perth & Kinross Council Green Capital Development Grant - Up to £25k
- Glasgow City Council Green Business Grant - Up to £10k
- Invest in West Lothian Low Carbon & Energy Efficiency Grant - Up to £8k

Support:

Sustainability Solutions - This free tool by RBS gives replacement vehicle recommendations, based on analysis of telematics data or driver survey data

Energy Saving Trust – Offer paid advice and consultancy on how to switch to an electric fleet, with experience of large fleets

Fleet Zero – A full fleet transition package including charging, energy supply and mileage reimbursement. Paid service by Scottish Power and Fleet Alliance.

Check out Find Business Support for a regularly updated list of net-zero funding options.

Congratulations!

If you completed all 14 steps, you have substantially reduced your fleet's fuel consumption and associated greenhouse gas footprint. That’s amazing!

It’s a huge achievement, so take some time to celebrate.

We are so grateful for your efforts. They might seem small, but you’re making a real difference. You are part of the good news story about climate change that we don’t see enough in the papers.

What's next?

Reward your coworkers

Changing behaviour is hard work. To keep up the momentum, it’s crucial to show appreciation for those who have put in the hours.

Make some noise!

Publish a blog, social media post or press release (or all of them!) about what you’ve done. Be proud of your progress and honest about the challenges.

Create a climate strategy

Drop us an email at climatespringboard@ed.ac.uk and we’ll send you a template and advise you on how to get started – totally free.

Keep learning

Sign up to Climate Springboard, a free net zero training programme for SMEs anywhere in Scotland.

Join our community

Subscribe to our LinkedIn bulletin, where we share blogs, case studies, green policy updates and funding opportunities.

You're in (a) good company

Welcome to a community of 200+ Scottish businesses – of all shapes and sizes – who are committed to reducing their planet-warming emissions.

Case Studies

If you're looking for inspiration and ideas for how to make other aspects of your business more sustainable, read some case studies about the fantastic (and award-winning) SMEs that make up this community.

- **Alba Facilities Services:** The climate bonus of a four-day week
- **East Lothian Housing Association:** The nuts and bolts of switching your staff to electric cars
- **CSG Clean:** Cleaning firm takes climate action, one van at a time
- **Development Trusts Association Scotland:** 'Our staff spent 774 hours driving in 2024. That's 79 working days.'
- **McLays Foods:** 'Sustainability is the difference between winning and losing a contract'
- **LS Productions:** 'We hope to have a ripple effect across the industry'
- **Lazy Day Foods:** Sweet emissions savings for central belt bakery
- **CJM:** How an Ayrshire accountancy got serious about climate
- **Lisini Pub Group**: Green teams save £75,000 on energy in one year
- **Dornie Croft:** Mastering heat pumps in the Highlands

Tell us your story

We'd love to hear about the successes (and hiccups!) you've had on your net-zero journey since completing Climate Springboard or this guide. Please send us an email if you're open to taking part in a case study. It's a great way to raise your profile.

climatespringboard@ed.ac.uk