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THE KEY TO MOBILITY

OVERCOMING FLEET EV'S CONFUSION OF CHARGES

Concern about access to charging points is one of the main barriers to wider adoption of electric vehicles in fleets, but Mike Todd, CEO of Volkswagen Financial Services, says making it easier for drivers to use all of the existing charging infrastructure can help overcome range and charging anxiety.

Access to charging points is regularly cited as one of the biggest concerns that fleet decision makers and their drivers have about making the switch to EV.

Our recent Sparking Debate Panel found that drivers, who were considering switching to an electric vehicle, were most worried about the range and running costs, availability of charging points and support on home charging.

Yet, despite these concerns, the number of charging points in public places is rapidly increasing, due to significant Government and private sector investment.

There are currently almost 40,000 EV connectors in the UK across more than 14,000 locations according to Zap-map and new regulations mean that many, if not all, large petrol stations and motorway services now provide electric and car charging points.

However, despite these ongoing improvements in the physical charging infrastructure, accessibility and payment methods for fleet drivers continues to be a real concern.

A confusion of charges

At this current time drivers can't always just pay to charge an electric vehicle in the same way they do for petrol or diesel.

The system is fragmented and there are many different providers, making it very difficult for business fleets to subscribe to every single one.

The providers also have different requirements, sometimes drivers can pay by card, other times they need to set up an account or have a special app.

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It has created a confusion of charges.

This is incredibly frustrating for fleet managers and drivers alike. Not only is this very difficult to administrate but it isn't easy for drivers to navigate multiple apps, accounts and passwords. For example, a petrol car driver may have a single fuel card that can be used at most filling stations, whereas an electric car driver could have ten or more different apps on their phone for different charging point providers.

If fleets can't rely on every charge point being accessible to them, this increases range anxiety in drivers and makes administration of payments a drain on time. While all rapid charge points installed from Spring 2020 should provide debit or credit card payment, fleets still need a better solution to increase confidence and make life easier for drivers.

Knitting together the network

There are many industry calls for a uniform payment method and system for charging points across the UK to knit together the network. Until that happens, one example of a solution is our own app called Charge&Fuel. This allows fleets to access and pay for EV charging points from many different providers through a single app.

We've teamed up with LogPay to enable drivers to pay at more than 3,000 charging points across the UK and Europe. The network that Charge&Fuel covers is still growing and will include fuel stations in the future.

The Charge&Fuel app had to prevent the need to open lots of different accounts. As a result we've seen it make life much easier for both fleet managers and drivers because they only need one account to access and pay for charging.

The purpose is to give one electronic monthly invoice for all transactions making tracking expenses and mileage claims a simpler process. When auditing season comes around, this can be so valuable.

Yet, perhaps, most importantly of all, it gives fleet drivers the confidence that they will be able to access charging points throughout the country – and many across Europe – without requiring a multitude of apps on their phones.

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Another hurdle to EV revolution overcome

Signing drivers up to this app along with other measures, such as providing home charging support and clear guidance on using public charging points, will help fleet managers to alleviate both range and charging anxiety.

As fleets look to make the transition towards electric vehicles, simply giving a wider access will make a big difference to fleet and driver experience of running electric vehicles. Our industry can overcome concerns and help to improve the uptake of electric vehicles in fleets and businesses. And once we've done that the EV revolution has overcome another hurdle on its journey towards success.

Ends

Information for editors

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