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# REFLEX: DRIVING FORWARD ELECTRIFICATION SINCE 2016

Supporting fleets to transition to electric vehicles while remaining safe and efficient has long been a priority for Reflex Vehicle Hire

**W**ith more than eight years' experience in helping customers on the journey to electrification (Reflex Vehicle Hire started to provide electric vehicles [EVs] to fleets in 2016) it is well placed to offer a wealth of advice to time-pressed fleet managers wanting to set out on the journey.

Not only is Reflex's staff equipped with expert knowledge of all things electric, but all the company's vehicles are fitted with technology that monitors average journey time and mileage per day, meaning Reflex can identify exactly which vehicles within a fleet are suitable to switch to an EV alternative.

The company operates from a four-acre site in Loughborough, Leicestershire, comprising offices and workshops. It also has depots at Manchester and Glasgow.

It was one of the first in the industry to provide vehicle tracking and dashcams throughout the fleet as standard, and to limit its vans to top speeds of 70mph.

Electrifying a fleet can seem daunting. However, add to the mix that many of Reflex's customers work in utility, construction and rail sectors – and use commercial vehicles – then this transition can seem even more complicated.

It could be that the companies operate a crew of workers who share the same vehicle, so where do they charge it? Do all drivers get a home charge point? Not always practical. On site? Not always possible. At a depot? They may be working many miles from base, so not always feasible.

Understandably, this can cause a headache for fleet managers and, in some cases, convince them that electrification wouldn't work for their business.

Reflex is committed to helping those companies unravel such complexities and assure them that, whatever the situation, there is a solution.

Other fleet managers may want to get on the journey, but simply do not know which steps to take first.

Reflex's priority is to help change customers' mindsets about electrification by dispelling many of the myths that have developed around it. Many have a thirst for electrification, but don't know where to start. Or perhaps they are companies that have made a start and now want to progress further.

The telematics offered in all of Reflex's vehicles allows the company to monitor each journey made so they can contact their customers and advise them they are ready to make the change.

Once a fleet manager is engaged in the process, then Reflex will work alongside them to identify which drivers are enthusiastic about driving an electric vehicle.

Engagement with all stakeholders can be key to a successful transition. There is no better advocate for driving an EV than a member of the workforce who has already done so and loved the experience.

Such enthusiasm creates intrigue and interest across the business and more drivers are then willing to put their hand up when asked 'who wants to get behind the wheel of an EV?'

Reflex can also advise fleet managers about any Government grants that are available to those making the switch to electric.



## Electrification challenges

To better understand and address fleet concerns around electrification, Reflex carried out a survey among companies mainly in the utility, construction and rail sectors

**R**eflex recently conducted a survey primarily targeting companies in the utility, construction, and rail sectors as part of its commitment to understand and address fleets' concerns and requirements surrounding electrification.

This proactive approach will allow it to tailor its products and solutions to an individual fleet's needs. The findings also provide a unique insight into how fleets want to progress on their journey to electrification, with the vast majority of respondents (87%) yet to start the process. However, when they do, 13% will prioritise cars and 8% vans, while 78% are uncertain which to tackle first.

Fleet managers identified several challenges in electrification, including concerns about range (36%), charging infrastructure (48%), vehicle selection (12%), and cost (3%). Similarly, drivers highlighted worries about range (36%), charging availability (58%), and vehicle choice (8%).

In these situations, Reflex is able to discuss with the customer what options are available and how its suite of products and expertise can help.

Regarding necessary infrastructure upgrades or installations needed to support the transition, 35% of respondents chose home charging stations and 21% workplace charging. Others were grid enhancements (14%), anticipation of hydrogen options (7%), and contracting site upgrades (21%).

Awareness of available grants was limited, with only 32% indicating familiarity, while the majority (68%) were unaware of such incentives. Again, the Reflex sales team can address this and can share details of the help available.

Additionally, a high percentage (91%) of fleet managers expressed dissatisfaction with the current payload and towing capacities of EVs. Public charging infrastructure was deemed unsuitable by 87% of respondents. Preferences regarding charging locations were varied, with 46% favouring home charging, 31% opting for on-site facilities, with 23% interested in both options.

### Living life as an EV driver

Reflex sales director Lisa Spong is keen to draw on her own experiences as an EV driver and recently took the keys to a new electric company vehicle.

She admits to having previously experienced a degree of range anxiety, but is now confident she can make long journeys peppered with planned stops at a well-known coffee chain that offers charging facilities.

"Instead of getting a coffee and then filling the car up with diesel, I now plug in first and then go and enjoy a coffee," she says. "It's often the case that chargers are available for use. Infrastructure is constantly improving to accommodate the growing number of EV drivers."

Rest stops on long business journeys should form part of a company's duty of care obligations so that's the perfect time for crews to stop for a coffee and charge at the same time. They could use this time to plan how they will tackle the job they are going to.

Spong has also had a home charger fitted so is able to experience the process first-hand. She found it to be stress-free and is happy to share her findings with customers. Reflex will be partnering with a charge point company who will carry out all home and workplace installations.

One fleet concern that often crops up is if an employee who has recently had a home charge point fitted leaves the company. No problem, the charge point provider can deinstall it.

Of course, this is all dependent on whether the driver can have a charge point fitted at their property as many people either do not have a driveway or live in, for example, a housing association property.

In those situations, Reflex will be putting a partnership in place which offers drivers a charge card that can be used at thousands of public charging points.

### EV:IE

Lisa Spong also highlights more extreme cases, where drivers have to travel many miles per day to reach where they are working, which can make the switch seem a much more difficult feat for fleet managers.

But Reflex's evaluation tool called EV:IE (Electric Vehicle Information Exchange) uses daily driving patterns to cross-check against currently available plug-in vehicles that deliver the required range, considering the impact of payload and equipment.

Data gathered about a company's individual fleet and journey patterns provides highly detailed analysis and establishes a clear cost comparison between current models and potential replacements for the future of their electric fleet.

It saves fleet managers the hugely time-consuming job of trawling through data and offers vital insights on fleet transition without the need for extensive additional analysis or research.

#### The system focuses on three areas:

**EV range** – uses daily driving patterns to cross-check against currently available plug-in vehicles that deliver the required range, even considering the impact of payload and equipment.

**Recharging** – identifies daily charging requirements and provides valuable insights on optimum recharging time for managers.

**Cost** – avoids 'greenflation' through a detailed cost comparison between ICE and EV, establishing a clear TCO (total cost of ownership). Includes variables such as the proportion of public/private charging, speed of the charging service and tariff being used.

The service also features an environmental impact summary, with a full calculation of potential CO<sub>2</sub> savings from making the switch.

Spong says: "EV:IE will tell us which vehicles are eligible for electrification and why. And if a fleet manager responds with 'my drivers are anxious about it' then we'll ask them to fill out a driver survey and we will tackle those anxieties, by either offering a free trial or having a charge point installed at their home."

"Even if we trial one vehicle that's another vehicle towards electrification. It's simplifying it and making it easy."



## Electric vehicle test drives

When drivers get behind the wheel of an EV for the first time they often love the experience. EVs are quiet, have impressive power and are cleaner for the environment

**A**llowing fleet managers and their drivers the chance to test new electric vehicles, both cars and vans, forms part of Reflex's Renewable Drive Programme.

The initiative offers fleets and their drivers hands-on real-life testing of light commercial vehicles (LCVs) and cars. Since launch in 2020, more than 40 trials have been completed.

Such an opportunity not only proves to fleets how easy it can be to start using EVs, but it can also alleviate any concerns they may have had.

There's no getting away from the fact that EVs will become part of everyday life and it's a case of when, not if, individual fleets get on board.

Last year, the Government's delayed the introduction of its ban on the sale of new ICE cars and vans by five years to 2035.

Three years earlier, it had announced that new ICE cars and vans would not be allowed to be sold in the UK from 2030.

Despite the postponement, many fleets are still surging ahead with their electrification plans. And it is widely thought that, should the Labour Party win the next general election, expected later this year, then it could revert to the original, earlier 2030 date.

Reflex also recognises that not all companies are ready to take the leap into electrification – which is why having facts and figures at its fingertips to present to fleet managers is key.

Spong says: "Not everyone is ready for electrification right now. And that includes some of our customers for reasons such as payload where there might not be suitable alternatives. We are not going to put EVs into a fleet when it won't suit them operationally. It wouldn't make sense and it wouldn't be fair on them."

Education and presenting facts are key factors when making the case of electrification – supporting the fleet managers on transitioning and then educating drivers about how making just a few adjustments to their journey planning is enough to make driving an EV a pleasant experience.



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Lisa Spong, Reflex Vehicle Hire sales director



# The many benefits of in-vehicle telematics

As part of its 'Safety as Standard' pledge, Reflex offers a unique suite of award-winning innovative telematics and safety products that come under its Drive with Reflex brand

**N**ot only does the data provided by such systems help Reflex understand how fleets can switch to electric, but it also aims to keep drivers and vehicles safe.

As standard, each vehicle has a forward-facing dashcam and vehicle tracking to monitor driver behaviour, such as harsh accelerating and braking or speeding, for example.

The different telematics systems offered include:

**Flexicam**, which has high-quality, forward-facing cameras, measures driver behaviour and crash detection, is cloud connected and provides reports and alerts.

**Flexicampro** monitors drivers for fatigue and distraction and triggers a warning if it senses danger. It aims to create safer drivers on the road who are alert and properly rested.

**Flexicamplus** offers the highest levels of vehicle insight including the latest camera technology with advanced telematics, with regular reports and instant alerts. It can also support driver scoring and fleet risk management programmes.

The benefits of such systems are many and varied, such as improving driver behaviour and reducing insurance claims if the footage can show that the driver was not at fault in the event of an incident.

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Lisa Spong

## Case study: Airport logistics specialists Amalga

Amalga is accelerating towards a zero-emission future after starting its green fleet journey following an extensive fleet analysis through Reflex Vehicle Hire’s ground-breaking EV:IE (Electric Vehicle Information Exchange) tool.

The airport logistics specialist, which provides services and support to some of Britain’s biggest airports, including Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, and Luton, has harnessed the power of the award-winning EV:IE service to identify and select the first pure electric vehicle that will revolutionise its dynamic fleet operations.

EV:IE offers a suite of data-rich insights and guidance designed to propel fleets from internal combustion-engined (ICE) vehicles to appropriate zero-emission alternatives.

Amalga’s introduction of a new Peugeot e-Partner marks the beginning of their electrifying adventure towards sustainability following a consultation with the EV:IE team, which provided insights into areas including vehicle performance, suitability and, importantly, lead times. The adoption of EVs is

helping Amalga’s 2026 Net Zero goal in support of Heathrow’s 2.0 Sustainability Strategy.

James Walker, operations manager for Amalga, says: “The team were really helpful and focused on our business. They talked us through the options and we discussed how to account for extended manufacturer lead times in our planning and ordering process.”

The new van is being put straight to use moving tools and materials between sites as part of Amalga’s extensive range of airport services, which include procurement, security screening, airside deliveries, cleaning, stock control, installs, and maintenance.

Amalga is a gold member of the Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme (FORS). It operates a fleet of nine vehicles, including six vans.

It is reviewing switching the remainder of the diesel fleet to hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) as a cleaner alternative to fossil fuels, ahead of an eventual switch to electric.

Reflex’s Lisa Spong says: “Every fleet in the country needs to prepare for the transition to electric energy over the coming decade as part of the Government’s Road to Zero strategy.

“It is important to plan ahead for the switch away from fossil fuels to ensure companies source the right vehicles and maintain a focus on cost efficiency and compliance. Through our EV:IE service, we are helping businesses

# Reflex is aiming for controlled growth

In early 2023, Reflex Vehicle Hire bought Hireway Vehicle Rental as part of its growth strategy in a £20 million deal

**A**t the time of the purchase, Oliver Waring, founder and chairman of Reflex Vehicle Hire, said: “Expansion is part of our five-year strategy and we are delighted to have achieved part our goal a year ahead of schedule. The chance to integrate Hireway Vehicle Rental into Reflex was a great opportunity as the two businesses are closely aligned, with a history of family ownership and a dedication to providing the highest levels of service to customers.

“This acquisition unlocks growth in a market where new vehicle supply has been scarce, and it will cement our reputation as the first-choice provider for business customers nationwide as we continue to disrupt the dominant suppliers in the industry.”

Spong adds that although the company is always looking for growth, at present its focus is on renewing its fleet and electrifying those fleets that can, in line with the government’s zero emission vehicle (ZEV) mandate.

Of course, this puts pressure on vehicle suppliers when placing an order with the manufacturer, although for Reflex it simply reinforces its desire to electrify its fleet.

Spong adds: “We have an appetite for growth and always have done. We’re looking for long-term partnerships where we work together to get to where we need to be by 2035.”

On how things might progress in fleet as we move nearer to the Government’s 2035 deadline, Spong says: “So long as technology evolves, and ranges and payloads get better, then everyone’s mindset will change over the next few years because we know electrification has got to happen.

“But we need the new technology, and we need the infrastructure, and we need more grants to help people.”

Spong is keen that electrification is taken seriously and not just seen as a tick box exercise.

She points to the fact that some large companies won’t award a contract to a supplier unless it has EVs on its fleet.

“But maybe that electric vehicle isn’t being used as it should be,” she argues. “It could just be used to do the tip run but it ticks a box to say, ‘yes, we have electric vehicles.’”

throughout the country to prepare for change and successfully adapt to an electric future.”

Reflex’s unique vehicle evaluation and transition service EV:IE launched in 2022, enabling fleet managers to develop an electrification strategy, particularly those in small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) where it can be a struggle to find the time and resource to plan for transition.

The UK Government intends to outlaw the sale of new petrol or diesel cars and vans starting in 2035. However, for many companies transition is likely to be a lengthy process as they source fit-for-purpose vehicles and embed new working practices.

This means they need to start the process early and work with expert partners who can offer the relevant guidance and expertise required for a successful switch.

For more details on the EV:IE service and the range of vans and cars available from Reflex Vehicle Hire, contact one of our expert team members.

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