

Case Study

Northumberland

Drive Efficiency and Compliance: Northumberland Council's FleetFocus Success Story

Northumberland Council, responsible for a diverse fleet of 765 vehicles, embarked on a journey to transform their fleet operations back in 2021. Northumberland Council's Fleet Manager, Davey Robertson, wanted to strategically improve the fleet operations by upgrading their fleet management software to a solution which focused on improving workshop operation, instantly identifying non-compliance risks, and recording accurate and timely financial data.

"Our previous fleet software was functional, but I'd say outdated and unsupported, it had limited ability to be customised, and it was prone to errors in transferring data to our finance system which was then time-consuming to check and correct. Although limited in functionality the workshop & back-office support staff were 'comfortable' with using the old system, so we had to choose something that benefitted the workshop operations, delivered accurate and timely financial data and most importantly immediately flagged high-risk areas of non-compliance. FleetFocus ticked all these boxes."



The implementation of AssetWorks FleetFocus has yielded substantial improvements in Northumberland Council's operations and decision-making processes. As Robertson shares,

“ The ability to create and set up different coding structures and assign these to individual assets and vehicles has resulted in much tighter control of revenue costs and income.”

This enhanced control has significantly reduced errors in cost allocation, ensuring that expenses align with the correct budget lines in the fleet account and the users' budget. The newfound capability for budget monitoring and forecasting of under and overspends has empowered the council to swiftly identify risks and take appropriate actions. With over £1.2 million in fleet-related charges processed each month for internal departments and external customers, the robustness and accuracy of these financial operations have become paramount to Northumberland Council's success.

When asked about their favourite FleetFocus features, Northumberland Council highlighted the versatile capabilities of the software. As Robertson elaborated, "There are a lot of menus and features that we have been able to improve the way we operate and still a lot of functions we haven't implemented or even tested out yet." This adaptability has allowed them to tailor FleetFocus to their specific operational needs effectively. The fleet team particularly value the Performance Dashboards and KPI's, which offer a visually engaging way to audit workshop activities and compliance checks. These features can be customised to monitor critical tasks such as MOTs, LOLER inspections, VED expiries,

open purchase orders, and work orders. One standout aspect is the ability to drill down into data effortlessly by clicking on the KPI's and exporting the details, saving significant time in their daily operations. As they reflect on these functionalities, it's evident that FleetFocus has become an essential tool for optimising their fleet management processes.

Furthermore, this transition to FleetFocus has conveyed to the staff a commitment to investing in advanced technology to simplify their work activities, fostering a positive and productive work environment. In addition to the operational benefits, the council has also mitigated risks of non-compliance, thanks to the readily accessible real-time data provided by FleetFocus. This capability ensures that any potential issues or discrepancies can be promptly identified and addressed, reinforcing the council's commitment to operational excellence and legal compliance in their fleet management practices.



Tackling Workshop Efficiency with Paperless Workflows

Once FleetFocus was an integral tool for the team they also introduced AssetWorks EDGE, the mobile companion to FleetFocus. With FleetFocus EDGE employees can access the FleetFocus system from any device. For example, a technician can log in from a computer to review assigned tasks, use a tablet to log time while conducting maintenance on the workshop floor, and later use a smartphone to review and submit timecards. The introduction of the EDGE, which involved shifting from traditional paper-based checklists and inspection sheets to electronic systems across Northumberland Council's four workshops, initially raised concerns among some workshop staff. However, as Robertson emphasised,

“ We had a bit of work in creating the checklist templates for all the different vehicles and plant we operate, but once this was set up and we had ½ day training at each workshop, it has resulted in huge benefits.”

With the EDGE, technicians now complete tasks electronically using handheld tablets. This digital approach not only streamlines the process but also offers several advantages. Data is captured seamlessly, allowing for the assignment of notes and images to provide comprehensive records of maintenance and repairs. Additionally, the system forecasts the next scheduled inspection, aiding in proactive maintenance planning. A noteworthy benefit is that dashboards are updated overnight, ensuring prompt work completion without reliance on back-office staff to input paper job cards. This transition to the EDGE represents a significant enhancement in Northumberland Council's ability to track and manage vehicle maintenance and repairs, resulting in increased efficiency and accuracy in their fleet management operations.

EDGE has played a pivotal role in Northumberland Council's efforts to optimise its operations and achieve significant reductions in overall fleet costs. As one council representative highlighted, “The workshops have become more streamlined, and less time is spent completing documentation.” This streamlined workflow has translated into less downtime for their fleet, ensuring that vehicles remain in active service, and contributing to increased operational efficiency.

Moreover, FleetFocus has been instrumental in reducing the council's risk of non-compliance. Real-time access to easily identified data has empowered the council to promptly address potential compliance issues. This proactive approach not only ensures that operations adhere to legal and regulatory standards but also mitigates the associated risks and costs.

Additionally, EDGE has also advanced Northumberland Council's sustainability achievements. It is estimated that by implementing EDGE, Northumberland Council has saved over 75,360 sheets of paper which is 9 trees or 8.8 tonnes of CO₂.



Harnessing Data for Strategic Success

With so much data now being collected, Northumberland Council harnessed the robust data reporting functionality within FleetFocus to drive their strategic planning and performance evaluation. As emphasised by Robertson, “There are several ways we extract the data by using the reporting functions available within FleetFocus to access standard reports and create bespoke reports, we have also linked Crystal Report Writer and Microsoft Power BI.”

One tangible example of how this data-driven approach has made a significant impact in their ability to estimate replacement due dates and expected replacement costs for each asset. By leveraging FleetFocus data, they can accurately forecast the required capital budgets for their Fleet Replacement Programme. This strategic foresight not only ensures the timely replacement of ageing assets but also optimises budget allocation, ultimately contributing to cost efficiency and operational effectiveness. In essence, FleetFocus’ data reporting capabilities have become a vital tool in Northumberland Council’s decision-making processes, enabling them to make informed, forward-thinking choices that enhance their fleet management practices.

Fueling More Efficiency in Northumberland’s Future

FuelFocus is Northumberland’s’ next addition to their AssetWorks ecosystem of solutions and is set to go live in 2023. The decision to adopt FuelFocus as an integral component of their fleet management strategy stemmed from Northumberland Council’s need for a fully integrated solution and a single, unified data source over their twelve fuelling sites. Their choice was informed by first-hand experiences of the challenges posed by data errors when transferring hundreds of transactions between disparate systems. Recognising the importance of seamless data management and the potential for significant cost savings, they had been actively exploring alternatives for their fuel management software for several years. Consequently, when they transitioned to FleetFocus, selecting FuelFocus as the fuel

management component was a logical and compelling choice, aligning seamlessly with their commitment to operational efficiency and data accuracy.

The implementation of FuelFocus holds great promise for Northumberland Council in terms of optimising its fuel management processes. Robertson articulated their expectations, stating, “Any fuel transactions will be reported against the vehicle daily, no waiting until we import data at the end of each month.” This real-time reporting capability promises to enhance their control over fuel-related operations, ensuring that they have up-to-date insights for decision-making.

Moreover, the council anticipates a reduction in errors associated with manually inputting delivery quantities and prices into separate systems. Given the significant cost implications of fuel, mitigating these administrative errors is paramount. FuelFocus is expected to provide a more efficient and accurate approach to fuel management, ultimately minimising risks and enhancing the overall reliability and cost-effectiveness of Northumberland Council’s fleet operations.



To learn more about AssetWorks FleetFocus EDGE, please visit assetworks.co.uk.