



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Px³
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Benchmarking the Carbon Footprint of the DWP

Px³ assists the UK's largest public service department on its journey to Net Zero



The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is responsible for welfare, pensions and child maintenance policy. As the UK's biggest public service department it administers the State Pension and a range of working age, disability and ill health benefits to around 20 million claimants and customers.

As a major government department the DWP is part of the STAR (Sustainable Technology Advisory and Reporting) group, and submits an annual report to DEFRA (Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) on their carbon footprint.

In common with most organisations the DWP was looking for ways to improve the quality of their reporting, particularly as the "Greening Government" ICT strategy has increased the focus on the need to make ICT itself more sustainable and also to use ICT to support sustainability initiatives across the public sector.

One of the DWP's strategic technology partners is Citrix who provide digital workspace and application access solutions which support flexible working. Citrix offered to fund a project for an independent consultancy, Px³ Ltd, to undertake a detailed study of the carbon emissions produced by their end user computing estate.

With nearly 300,000 devices in scope (covering desktops, laptops and monitors) the department was keen to understand both Scope 2 (electricity usage) and Scope 3 (embodied emissions from manufacturing, transport, packaging and waste).

Px³ use a methodology and modelling tool which has been used to calculate the carbon emissions of more than a million ICT devices in use across 164 countries.

The results indicated that the use of the devices at the DWP is producing over 1m kgs of CO₂e each year. To put that in perspective, it is the equivalent of driving 4m miles in an average car and would (1,600 times round the world) and would require a mature forest of over 1,300 acres to remove the pollution from the atmosphere.

In addition to the Scope 2 emissions from the electricity use, Px³ were also able to calculate the Scope 3 “embodied emissions” for the DWP’s devices, including those held in stock, which came to a total of over 90m metric tonnes of CO₂e.

The project sponsor at the DWP was Tony Sudworth, Sustainability Lead for DWP Digital who commented: *“to manage towards a goal of Net Zero emissions we first needed to understand where we are today. This research work by Px³ provides a starting point for us to now aim to drive down the emissions from the DWP IT infrastructure to meet the Greening Government commitments”*.

Reviewing the findings, Ewen Anderson, CIO at Px3 responded *“It’s great to see the UK public sector taking the lead and such an active role. Getting this baseline data and identifying ways to reduce their Scope 2 and 3 carbon emissions is an essential part of any plan to achieve Net Zero.”*