Why Did BP Pulse Exit the Government Workplace Charging Scheme?

BP Pulse has withdrawn from the UK Government's Workplace Charging Scheme (WCS).

This has left many fleet managers and business owners asking:
Why would one of the biggest EV charging networks walk away from government grant funding?

The reasons point to strategy, margins, and market focus.

What Is the Workplace Charging Scheme (WCS)?

The Workplace Charging Scheme is a grant provided by the **Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV)** to support businesses installing EV chargers on their premises.

How it works:

- The scheme offers **up to £350 per socket**, up to **40 sockets** per applicant.
- That's a maximum of **£14,000 per business**, regardless of location or industry.
- It covers commercial properties, fleet depots, and staff parking areas.
- It is a **voucher-based system**. You apply for a voucher before installation.
- Only **OZEV-authorised installers and manufacturers** can deliver qualifying projects.
- Businesses must have off-street parking and must own or lease the site.

Eligible businesses include:

- Limited companies, sole traders, charities, and public sector organisations.
- Fleets of all sizes, from logistics to sales to maintenance vehicles.

- Employers offering EV charging to staff or visitors.

What's Involved in Using the WCS?

There's more to it than simply claiming a discount.

You need:

- Site surveys
- A confirmed OZEV installer
- Approved charge point models
- Pre-approval via the online application
- Installation within **6 months** of receiving your voucher

It's a controlled process with compliance checks. If paperwork isn't accurate or installations don't meet OZEV standards, funding is rejected.

Why Has BP Pulse Pulled Out?

BP Pulse was one of the key players in OZEV's approved installer list. Their decision to exit wasn't made lightly.

Here are the key factors that likely led to it:

1. **Focus on High-Speed Public Charging**

BP Pulse has publicly committed to expanding its **ultra-fast public charging network** across motorways, forecourts, and retail locations.

- Public chargers have **higher traffic and better ROI**.
- Charging hubs with 150kW+ units generate more income per site than 7kW or 22kW workplace units.
- Managing a growing DC network takes significant resources.

Strategy shift: Prioritising scale, throughput, and brand visibility over individual business installations.

2. **Profitability Concerns with Grant Restrictions**

WCS projects are **price-capped**. OZEV limits how much can be claimed for hardware and installation.

- Labour and cable runs are not always fully covered.
- Urban installations can be complex and costly.
- For large players like BP Pulse, margins may be too tight to justify the resource investment.

Result: BP may see better commercial returns by offering private-sector charging contracts without OZEV limits.

3. **Resource Efficiency and Project Volume**

WCS projects are often:

- Smaller in scale (e.g., 2 to 6 charge points)

- Heavily admin-led
- Slower to complete (due to voucher processing and eligibility checks)

BP Pulse may prefer **larger commercial tenders** with direct client contracts and streamlined internal delivery.

4. **Avoiding Scheme Admin and Compliance Pressure**

OZEV requires:

- Installer audits
- Proof of eligibility
- Proper certification and evidence at every stage
- Use of approved chargers only

Larger suppliers like BP Pulse operate nationwide. Keeping every installer fully WCS-compliant across regions may not justify the admin overhead.

What Does This Mean for Your Business?

If you're running a fleet or managing multiple locations, this change affects your choice of supplier.

You can still:

- Access up to £14,000 in OZEV grants
- Work with approved installers
- Choose from a wide range of WCS-compliant chargers

You'll need to:

- **Avoid suppliers no longer on the OZEV approved list**
- **Plan installs around voucher lead times**
- **Track each project carefully to meet compliance deadlines**

Is the WCS Still Worth Using?

Yes—if you plan and manage it well.

WCS can reduce upfront costs and help you install reliable infrastructure across multiple sites.

Benefits:

- Encourages EV uptake among staff
- Supports your ESG and net zero goals
- Future-proofs your premises for EV-only fleets
- Reduces the cost burden of first-time infrastructure rollouts

Challenges:

- Slower rollout due to approvals
- Limited to £350 per socket, which may not cover total install cost
- Doesn't apply to public charging or residential sites

What Should You Do Now?

1. **Work with OZEV-Approved Installers**

Only these can access funding. Ask for their registration number and check on the official government site.

2. **Audit Your Site**

Know how many chargers you can install, what grid upgrades may be needed, and how much funding will actually cover.

3. **Select Compliant Hardware**

Not every charger qualifies. Look for brands that appear on OZEV's approved equipment list.

4. **Track Your Vouchers**

Once approved, you have **6 months to complete** the install and submit your claim. Miss the window and the funding is lost.

5. **Think Beyond Funding**

Look for installers who offer full commercial charging support—not just box installation, but load management, backend software, and maintenance.

Still need funding support for your fleet?

WCS is still active—but not every provider will support it.

Work with OZEV-approved hardware and installers to deliver grant-eligible charging for fleets across the UK.