



CASE STUDY

Improving Compliance and Maintenance Performance at CAF Rolling Stock UK with Asset Essentials

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CAF Rolling Stock UK operates a major manufacturing and maintenance facility in Newport, South Wales, supporting the production of trains and trams for the UK rail network. The site typically accommodates between 250 and 450 staff, depending on project demand, while a four-person facilities team is responsible for keeping the entire operation running safely, compliantly and efficiently.

From air, water and gas systems to cranes, roller doors and specialist rail assets, the facilities team manages a wide range of critical infrastructure. Operating in a highly regulated rail environment, CAF Rolling Stock must meet strict safety and compliance standards, including IRIS (International Railway Industry Standard) audits, where failure would directly impact the ability to manufacture rolling stock.

CHALLENGE

Managing critical assets without losing control

Prior to implementing Asset Essentials, CAF Rolling Stock relied heavily on an Outlook calendar-based system to manage planned maintenance and statutory checks. While workable, the approach placed a significant burden on human intervention, meetings and manual tracking.

“As a team, we were only human,” explained Craig Swarbrick, Deputy Facilities Manager at CAF Rolling Stock UK. “You’d go out on the shop floor for one job and come back with ten more. Trying to remember everything while not missing critical checks was hard work.”

With maintenance tasks spanning weekly, monthly, quarterly and six monthly intervals, including the inspection of over 1,200 pieces of lifting equipment every six months, the risks of missed checks, inefficient planning and unplanned downtime were growing.

In a rail manufacturing environment, the cost of failure is high. Missed statutory checks or unplanned outages could halt production entirely. “If we miss certain checks, you’re talking about 100 people stopped instantly,” Craig said. “That’s a huge cost to the business.”



Customer: CAF Rolling Stock UK
Craig Swarbrick, Deputy Facilities Manager

Vitals: Producer of trains and trams for the UK rail network. Operates a major manufacturing and maintenance facility in Newport, South Wales with 250-450 staff and a four-person facilities team.

Challenge: The facilities team must manage a wide range of critical infrastructure in the highly regulated rail industry. There are strict safety and compliance standards including audits.

Solution: Implementing Asset Essentials gave the team a single platform for both planned maintenance and reactive work.

The software’s planning and forecasting capabilities allowed them to see schedules months in advance. As well, users across the facility can now directly raise maintenance requests and receive automated status updates.

Results: Using Asset Essentials, CAF Rolling Stock UK has been able to:

- Save 2.5 hours a week across multiple departments in planning meetings.
- Receive a £40,000 investment in speed doors, projected to deliver £20,000 in annual energy savings

CAF Rolling Stock needed a more structured, transparent and reliable system, one that reduced dependency on memory and meetings while improving visibility, compliance and communication across the site.

SOLUTION

A centralized platform for planned, reactive and strategic maintenance

CAF Rolling Stock officially launched Asset Essentials in November 2025, replacing Outlook calendars with a single, centralized platform for both planned preventive maintenance (PPM) and reactive work.

One of the most immediate benefits came from the planning and forecasting capabilities. "Asset Essentials brings everything to the forefront," Craig explained. "It shows us what's coming up, gives us advance warning, and removes the human element. We can see forecasted maintenance instead of relying on someone remembering to look ahead."

Planned maintenance schedules are now visible weeks and months in advance, allowing the team to factor in supplier lead times, resource availability and production priorities. The system also sends notifications, ensuring nothing critical is missed.

Reactive maintenance has also been transformed. End users across the site can raise requests directly in the system, which are then triaged daily by the facilities team. Crucially, requesters receive automated status updates.

"Where we used to have 30 minute meetings, we now have five minute triage meetings. That frees up about 2.5 hours a week...which is huge for us."

— Craig Swarbrick, Deputy Facilities Manager

RESULTS

Time saved, compliance strengthened and decisions backed by data

One of the clearest operational wins has been time efficiency. Regular coordination meetings have been reduced dramatically.

"Where we used to have 30 minute meetings, we now have five minute triage meetings," Craig explained. "That frees up about 2.5 hours a week across multiple departments, which is huge for us."

Audit readiness has also improved significantly. Asset Essentials consolidates asset histories, service records, purchasing data and documentation into a single digital record.

"For auditors, it looks far more professional," Craig said. "They can ask for an asset and immediately see its full history, from purchase through to service records. We've had really positive feedback from auditors on this."

Beyond compliance, CAF Rolling Stock is now using analytics and KPI dashboards to understand how work is distributed across the team and where maintenance effort is best spent.

"It shows where labor is going and how effective we are," Craig noted. "Telling someone they're doing well is one thing, showing them visually is another. That's been really motivating for the team."

Data insights have also driven tangible business decisions. Analytics revealed a high volume of roller door failures, prompting a reassessment of maintenance strategy. As a result, CAF Rolling Stock approved a £40,000 investment in speed doors, projected to deliver £20,000 in annual energy savings, while also improving reliability and production flow.

"Without the data, it would have been a gut feel," Craig said. "With data from Asset Essentials, we could build a proper business case and show exactly why the investment made sense."

Implementation and adoption

Despite the scale of change, the transition was well supported. CAF Rolling Stock praised our implementation team for their hands-on approach during what became a full “hard launch.”

“The onboarding was really good,” Craig said. “They spent time with the team, explained why we were doing it and how it worked. That made a big difference.”

While there was an initial cultural shift, particularly on the shop floor, adoption has been strong. “Everyone’s on board with it now and happy using it,” Craig added.

Looking ahead: from preventive to predictive

With Asset Essentials now embedded in daily operations, CAF Rolling Stock is looking ahead to more advanced use cases. These include predictive maintenance, sensor integration, and long-term planning for critical, ageing assets such as cranes and traversers, many of which represent single points of failure.

“We already do a lot of this manually,” Craig explained. “If the system could help predict failures electronically rather than relying on human judgement, that would be a big step forward.”

“Previously we had a clunky, manual system. Asset Essentials brings all the functionality we need into the future. Everything’s in one place. You don’t need to go searching.”

— Craig Swarbrick, Deputy Facilities Manager

A platform built for rail-grade demands

Reflecting on the journey so far, Craig summarized the impact simply: “Previously we had a clunky, manual system. Asset Essentials brings all the functionality we need it into the future. Everything’s in one place. You don’t need to go searching.”

For CAF Rolling Stock, Asset Essentials now provides the structure, visibility and assurance needed to manage critical assets with confidence, today and into the future.



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