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American Carwash, London

Launched in 1984, The American Carwash Company was one of the first drive-through carwashes in the UK, with a young Ford Escort-driving Jeremy Clarkson among its earliest customers.

Now the company employs 120 people across four sites in central London, cleaning up to half a million vehicles annually. In addition to a basic carwash, the firm offers waxing, valeting, fleet cleaning and child carseat and buggy cleaning services resulting from unfortunate on-board accidents.

It comes as no surprise that a carwash would have high water usage and the company recognises the benefits of reducing its water consumption. Water efficiency measures used include metering at all four sites, and also on-site recycling facilities.

Chief Executive David Barnett hadn't heard about the changes to the water market: "I imagine the customer service will be much same principle as with the phone and electricity, where ultimately the end product you get is the same as before, but you're simply buying from a different retailer," he said.

"We use a lot of water, but our business is very weather-dependent. Whether it's summer or winter and it's sunny, we're busy. But when it's a rainy day, business gets very very quiet."

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To find out more about Open Water and to see if your business is eligible to choose who supplies its water and wastewater services, visit www.open-water.org.uk