



## Škoda Misfire **but not a bad coil**

**W**e all come across misfires very regularly in our garages, whether in a diesel engine caused by a failed injector, or in a petrol engine with a failed coil-on-plug. However, as the engine management systems have developed, they have also thrown a few banana skins under the feet of the unsuspecting or overbooked technicians.

This is nothing new, but unfortunately we still see from some referrals that faults are being misdiagnosed as ignition faults, injector faults, etc when they are sometimes caused by mechanical issues being overlooked. In this Skoda it was caused by the engine management system trying to protect itself.



The gears on the throttle body all appeared to be in good condition

A customer arrived in with their 2021 Skoda Fabia with a 1 litre petrol engine. I confirmed customer fault, as there was an obvious misfire and the EML was on. An initial code scan gave me some direction. There was only one code (P0638 throttle actuator control range/performance) and it did not relate to ignition or fuel. That code relates to a throttle body fault.

On seeing there was only one fault, I ignored the misfire for now, to focus on the current stored fault. As would be later confirmed, I suspected this was an intentional misfire, or more accurately, a cylinder deactivation run by the management system of the engine.

The throttle body is very easily accessible on this engine. I removed the airbox and inspected the throttle body, which was found to be very clean. There were not any obstructions, but when trying to physically check the throttle flap, I noticed it did not spring back into the open position when pushed closed. I stripped the cover from the electronic component of the valve, but found no issue with the gears. It was then I found that the return spring for the flap was broken.

A new throttle body was sourced, fitted and basic settings carried out. The trouble code now cleared, whereas before it returned after cycling the key. The engine now ran perfectly and allowed for

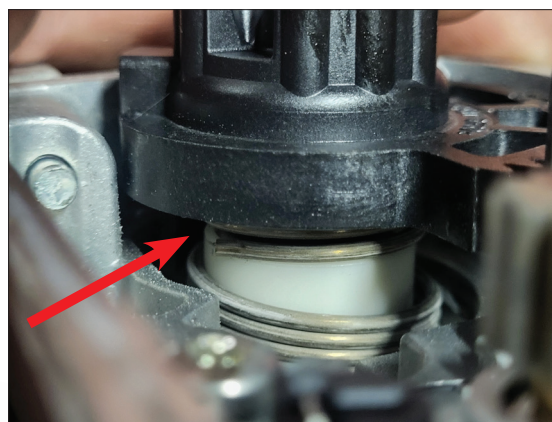
a road test to be carried out. With the road test done, engine running well and EML off, I double checked for trouble codes to confirm there were no more issues and all was good.

A very simple job, but if it was approached in the wrong way, it could have led to a lot of chasing my tail. If I had started unplugging coils to see which one was faulty, I may have diagnosed that the coil the management system had shut down was the culprit, instead of understanding that it was in fact an intentional deactivation.

This was one of the simpler jobs we come across, but a good example of taking a wider view of the issue and then finding direction to filter down to the root cause.



Keith Shanahan,  
Shanahan Auto Services



The return spring on the throttle body was broken, preventing the throttle from operating properly

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