



Image: Getty. All rights reserved

Oct 14, 2022 00:01 BST

More drivers than ever expect to go electric next time but many likely to delay making the switch

As many as 14% of drivers – more than ever before – say their next car will be electric (EV), but the proportion of those expecting to be in an EV in the next five years has reduced in the last year, new RAC research with more than 3,000 drivers* shows.

While figures for the [RAC Report on Motoring 2022*](#) indicate the number of drivers planning to change their vehicle in the near future has declined

steadily in the aftermath of the pandemic – in 2019 36% expected to move to a different model within the next two years, whereas only 28% of drivers said this in 2022 – fewer drivers than ever plan to opt for a conventionally fuelled vehicle as their next car, yet a greater proportion than ever expect to get an EV. Just 41% of drivers say their next vehicle will run on petrol – down from 45% in 2021 and 52% back in 2018 – while only 13% will choose a diesel (16% in 2021 and 18% in 2018).

The 14% who plan to go electric when they next change vehicles has increased significantly from 10% in 2021 and represents a huge rise on the figure of 3% in 2018. Hybrid vehicles also account for a significant portion of drivers' next car preferences with a fifth (19%) saying they intend to switch to a conventional hybrid and one-in-10 (10%) wanting a plug-in hybrid.

However, the proportion of drivers who do not know when they will acquire their first electric vehicle has increased to 42% from 36% in 2021. As a result, those expecting to get an EV in the next five years has dropped from 17% to 15% in 2022. Similarly, the proportion who think they will be driving electric in five to 10 years has declined from 25% last year to 21% this year.

Among those not planning to change their vehicle in the next five years (15%), the majority (77%) say this is simply because they are happy with their current model. But 14% point to rising costs elsewhere (for example energy and fuel), while 8% blame high second-hand vehicle prices and the same proportion (8%) say their income has reduced as a result of the pandemic.

Looking at drivers who do intend to get a new car in the next five years – a significant drop to 56% in 2022 from 73% in 2019 – a quarter (24%) say their plans to trade up have been delayed by the pandemic-related issues. Of this group, 47% say they have postponed a change because of high second-hand prices while 38% are driving less following the pandemic. A further 37% say their income has fallen due to Covid-19 and 29% point to problems with the availability of new vehicles. However, as many as 37% of all drivers have no plans to change their cars or don't know when they will do so, up from 33% in both 2021 and 2020, and 25% in 2019.

The RAC Report on Motoring research also looked at the reasons why drivers are not considering an electric vehicle as their next car. Of those who say

they will not be going electric next time (86%), six-in-10 (60%) believe there are not enough public charging points, while 51% are concerned about the reliability of the public charging network and 49% are waiting for battery technology to improve range a vehicle can travel on a single charge.

Some 47% say they are discouraged by the rising cost of electricity, while 46% are concerned about their ability to make long journeys. Interestingly, fewer drivers are put off by the price of battery-powered cars than in previous years: only 38% say this is an issue in 2022, down from 57% in 2021.

Other concerns include a lack of off-street parking, which would make it hard to charge a vehicle at home (26%) and worries over the complexity of the charging process (19%). What's more, only 16% of non-electric vehicle drivers perceive public chargers to be easy to use – although this group should be reassured by the 51% of current electric vehicle drivers who do find them easy.

Last year, the most common reason behind drivers planning to go electric was concern about the environmental impact of petrol and diesel cars, cited by 66% – a figure which has fallen to 57% in 2022. This has been overtaken by the appeal of lower running costs, highlighted by 64% of drivers compared to 52% 12 months ago. This has no doubt been exacerbated by the near record-high prices of petrol and diesel, coupled with drivers becoming more aware of the cost benefits of electric vehicles. Even though rising electricity prices caused by the war in Ukraine have made driving an electric vehicle more expensive, RAC data shows it's still 10p-a-mile cheaper to drive an EV than a petrol car which does 40 miles to the gallon (EV: 9p a mile charged at home versus 19p a mile for petrol).

Being able to charge their cars at home is a major appeal for 56% of those drivers who plan to choose an electric vehicle next. Some 33% say they only drive short distances so will be better suited to electric vehicles, 29% say they are attracted by the fact electric cars have fewer mechanical parts that can go wrong, and 27% like the fact they will not have to pay clean-air zone or congestion charges.

The RAC Report on Motoring also found that 33% of drivers do not have anywhere where they could charge an electric vehicle at home – 16% are only able to park on the road where there currently no public charge points available while 8% rent their homes so cannot install a domestic charge point

themselves and 9% have a designated parking space but nowhere to have a charger installed.

RAC EV spokesman Simon Williams said:

“It’s great to see an increasing proportion of drivers saying they will go electric next time they change their vehicles, with more than twice as many saying their next vehicles will be zero-emission than before the pandemic.

“But at the same time, it’s also very worrying that there are currently so many factors hindering take-up. A combination of the effects of Covid, ongoing availability issues in the new car market due to a global microchip shortage and the squeeze on household finances brought about by the cost-of-living crisis mean people keen to get into an EV are likely to put off doing so. Rising interest rates will also inevitably have a detrimental effect on the number of people who choose to buy new cars on finance.

“It’s very important to realise, however, that for those who can afford to make the switch it’s still cheaper to drive electric. While the rising cost of domestic electricity means the savings aren’t as great as they were, those who can charge at home are able to save 10p a mile compared to those driving a 40-mpg petrol car.

“We must not let the growing desire to go electric be derailed by rising electricity costs, higher interest rates and vehicle availability issues. We urgently call on the Government to reintroduce the £1,500 plug-in car grant for EVs below £30,000 as this had been successful in encouraging manufacturers to bring out cheaper models. The Government should also reduce the rate of VAT on public charge points to 5% to ensure the third of people who can’t charge at home are not disadvantaged.

“With the ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars just over seven years away, it’s vital as many people as possible are able to switch to electric, and this will only happen if EVs become more affordable.”

Motoring journalist, transport campaigner and founder of [FairCharge](#) Quentin Willson said:

“Despite strong geopolitical and economic headwinds, it’s very encouraging

that so many drivers still want to make their next car electric. The intention to switch from combustion cars to electric is up from previous years and shows that there's a significant body of drivers who want to take advantage of the lower ownership costs of EVs as well as making a difference to air quality and climate change. We now need the Government to help drivers with better infrastructure, offer more incentives and lower VAT on public charging. This is an historic moment in the transition to reducing transport emissions and moving from polluting fossil fuels to sustainable electricity. Future generations will depend on us to make the most of this opportunity.”

Read more from the [2022 RAC Report on Motoring](#).

* Source: RAC Report on Motoring 2022 – 30-minute online survey conducted with 3,102 drivers. Figures weighted to be nationally representative of UK drivers

The press office email address is press.enquiries@rac.co.uk and media centre is at media.rac.co.uk. **Please note:** the press office is unable to help with individual customer enquiries - please visit the [RAC contacts page](#) to find the right contact.

About the RAC

The RAC, an iconic UK brand, provides complete peace of mind to 13 million UK private and business drivers, whatever their motoring needs. As well as its premium nationwide breakdown assistance service – with an expert branded patrol workforce attending more than two million breakdowns every year – it offers a wide range of market-leading products across insurance, legal services, vehicle inspections and service, maintenance and repair. The RAC is also at the forefront in helping drivers make the switch to electric vehicles and leads in the development of new solutions for businesses and OEMs, partnering with the best in the motoring and mobility space.

Visit the [RAC website](#).

Contacts



RAC Press Office

Press Contact

press.office@rac.co.uk

Emails monitored during normal office hours. For breakdown queries, call 0330 159 0740

ISDN number on request