

Image: Getty. All rights reserved

Feb 18, 2022 00:01 GMT

Slow roll-out of rapid and ultra-rapid chargers may hinder EV adoption, warns RAC

Drivers who can't charge an electric car at home risk being put off switching to zero-emission cars thanks to the sluggish roll-out of truly rapid public charge points, the RAC is warning after analysis of data shows less than a fifth (18%) of new installations last year were either rapid or ultra-rapid devices.*

The number of public EV chargers increased by 7,600 – a rise of 37% – in 2021, and by a further 604 in January 2022, taking the total in the UK to 28,979, but looking at the speed of chargers installed, the picture is rather less rosy.

In total, the figures show that, as of the start of this month, 5,279 – or 18% – of all public chargers are rapid or ultra-rapid devices, meaning in most cases drivers of electric cars are having to rely on the 23,700 non-rapid chargers when away from home. What's more, the number of faster chargers as a proportion of all the chargers installed actually reduced by 0.5% year-on-year.

While 6,324 non-rapid chargers were installed during 2021, nearly double the number than the year before (96% more), just 1,276 new rapid or ultra-rapid chargers were put in over the same period – which is only 21% more than were installed in 2020.

The RAC believes that as well as helping drivers for whom home charging isn't possible make the switch to electric, having sufficient rapid and ultra-

rapid chargers – ideally as part of charging hubs across the country – is also important in making it easier for electric car drivers to make longer trips.

The importance of having good and genuinely fast charging infrastructure is also brought into clear focus by the fact that new electric vehicle registrations are accelerating. Unfortunately, separate analysis by the RAC suggests that registrations are outpacing the installation of new public charge points – as of July 2021 there are now 77 battery electric vehicles for every one rapid and ultra-rapid charger, up from 42 vehicles per charger two years earlier.**

RAC director of electric vehicles Sarah Winward-Kotecha said:

“Without question it’s encouraging to see that last year, more new public chargers for electric cars were installed than ever before as drivers increasingly consider switching out of petrol or diesel-powered models. Between October and December alone nearly 2,500 were put in, which is the highest ever number fitted in any three-month period.

“Having enough public chargers is vital to encouraging the mass take-up of electric cars, but that’s only one part of the jigsaw – the speed of these chargers is also extremely important. The greater the number of truly rapid chargers, the easier charging becomes on longer trips and the more often charging spaces can be turned over and used by other drivers. From a convenience perspective, having the fastest possible public chargers available to drivers really is a win-win charging experience – providing they are priced fairly.

“These latest figures show we still have a long way to go. The number of public chargers isn’t keeping pace with the volume of new electric cars coming onto the road, and only a minority of devices being installed are rapid or ultra-rapid. This creates a real problem for motorists who rely on the public network because they can’t charge at home. And while slow chargers are fine for somebody who leaves their car at an office while they’re at work, they’re a lot less helpful in other places like supermarkets where a driver’s vehicle will be parked for a shorter period. What we don’t want to see are queues for charge points becoming a common sight as the electric revolution gathers pace.

“Of course, slower chargers have a place as part of the country’s developing

EV infrastructure but getting many more drivers to opt for an electric car might depend on there being a marked step up in terms of the number of faster chargers going in. Making sure all public chargers are easy to use, reliable and affordable is also vital, which is why we've joined the FairCharge campaign to fight for the VAT rate on public charging to be reduced from 20% to match the 5% levied on domestic electricity."

Automotive journalist and electric car ambassador Quentin Willson, who is spearheading the [RAC-backed FairCharge campaign](#), said: "The Government must make sure the benefits of the EV revolution are for everyone and not just the rich. While the increase in the number of chargers being rolled out is good we need a nationwide network of rapid and ultra-rapid chargers to reduce charging times."

The RAC is taking the lead when it comes to helping drivers make the switch to electric. As well as offering vehicle leasing deals, a favourable domestic electricity tariff and options for installing home charge point, the RAC also has patrol vans that can both give EVs an emergency charge or recover them safely if necessary. In January 2022, the RAC also put its first zero-emissions patrol van onto the road. For more details, see www.rac.co.uk/electric-cars.

In order to speed up the switch to electric cars by removing many of the barriers currently facing drivers, the RAC has helped found the FairCharge campaign. FairCharge aims to ensure the environmental, economic and social benefits of the electric car revolution are properly harnessed by pushing key EV issues to the forefront of the political agenda such as the cost, availability and speed of charging as well as battery range and the affordability of switching to an electric car.

Growth in public electric car charge points, by charger speed

	<u>All</u> device s	<u>Of which non- rapid</u> devices	<u>Of which rapid & ultra-rapid</u> devices			
As at end of...	Total	% change year-on-year	Total	% change year-on- year	Tot al	% change year-on- year

2019	16,505	60%	13,676	62%	2,829	51%
2020	20,775	26%	16,895	24%	3,880	37%
2021	28,375	37%	23,219	37%	5,156	33%
January 2022	28,979	n/a	23,700	n/a	5,279	n/a

* Based on figures from government datasets EVCD_002 and 'Monthly total number of electric vehicle public charging devices available in the UK, 1 February 2022'. 'Rapid and ultra-rapid devices' are those whose fastest connector is rated at 25kW and above. It takes between 7 hours and 9 hours 35 minutes to charge a Kia e-Niro's battery from 0% to 80% on a non-rapid charger, and between 1 hour 15 minutes and 54 minutes on a rapid or ultra-rapid charger (source: Kia website, www.kia.com/uk/electric-hybrid-cars/public-charging-points/, accessed 25 January 2022)

** Based on latest figures from government dataset VEH0133b

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