



Jan 31, 2020 11:13 GMT

Twice as many drivers plan to ‘go electric’ next time round

Britain’s drivers are showing signs they are starting to embrace the new breed of low- and zero-emission electric vehicles being developed by manufacturers.

Research conducted for the [RAC Report on Motoring](#)* shows the number of drivers who say they will choose an electric car as their next vehicle has doubled with 6% of motorists – the equivalent of more than 2.5m drivers** – saying they intend to buy a pure electric battery-powered car when their existing vehicle needs to be replaced, compared to 12 months earlier.

When looking at those planning to buy any form of zero or ultra-low emission vehicle next – including pure-electric, plug-in hybrids and hydrogen fuel-cell vehicles, the percentage increases to 15%. This is higher than 2018 when the percentage was 12%.

There is also an increased willingness to buy conventional hybrids, which use a combination of a traditional combustion engine and a battery charged by the engine, with up to 21% of drivers surveyed saying they would do this compared to 17% in 2018.

In London – where concerns about emissions are higher, incomes are on average higher and charging points more prevalent – far more motorists are likely to say they intend to buy an ultra-low emission car next, with 26% planning to do so versus a national average of 15%.

On average, drivers surveyed for the RAC Report on Motoring want the minimum range of an electric vehicle to be 368 miles before they would consider getting one when their current vehicle needs to be replaced – the most popular range was 300 miles which was stated by a fifth (21%). On average, drivers do not see themselves driving a pure electric until 2030.

Currently, less than 1% of all the cars on the UK roads are pure electric as statistics show just 98,846*** were registered from new since 2010, with 37,850 registered in 2019 alone. Among just newly registered cars however, the percentage rises to 2%.

RAC head of policy Nicholas Lyes said:

“It is very encouraging there is an increased willingness among drivers to go full or part electric when they next change their vehicles. But, while this is positive, it is also concerning that the average driver doesn’t see themselves owning a pure electric car until 2030 – a point borne out by the fact that less than 1% of cars on the road are currently of this type.

“Drivers are also looking for a range that’s greater than all but one battery electric vehicle (BEV) on sale in the UK today. Despite this, the rate of take-up is beginning to accelerate with more than double the number of new BEVs being registered in 2019 than the year before. It was also the first time that more BEVs came on to our roads than plug-in hybrid electric vehicles which is

an important milestone.

“This year will also see the launch of many more BEVs, including smaller hatchbacks, as manufacturers aim to dramatically reduce the emissions of the cars they sell. Many manufacturers have already set ambitious targets on electrifying their offering to consumers.

“Even though the high upfront price of electric cars compared to similar-sized conventional vehicles is still a barrier to widespread take-up, concerns about vehicle ranges and nationwide availability of recharging points are now, in reality, becoming lesser issues despite drivers’ perceptions.

“The Government has recently confirmed that its plug-in car grant, which provides up to £3,500 towards the purchase of brand new low-emission vehicles, may not continue after 2020 due to an expected rise in sales. This will inevitably be a blow to some would-be purchasers and may serve to hinder sales growth.

“We strongly urge the Government to keep the plug-in car grant in place in some form until at least 2022 to continue stimulating the market. We also call on it to abolish vehicle excise duty for ultra-low emission vehicles, effectively reversing its 2017 decision to start charging plug-in hybrid vehicles car tax. This move would be popular with 30% of drivers questioned for the RAC Report on Motoring who felt this should be scrapped.”

Melanie Shufflebotham, co-founder of [the UK’s leading charging point platform Zap-Map](#), said:

“This RAC report, showing a significant increase in awareness of and demand for electric cars, echoes the surge in interest in EV charging seen on Zap-Map.

“Over the past 12 months the number of public chargers has increased by 50% and there are now more than 10,000 charging locations across the UK – more than petrol stations. Not only are there more charging points, but also chargers are higher speed and easier to access with contactless payment an option at many locations.

“While the electric car is not yet mass market, the UK public is beginning to embrace new patterns of mobility - in view of the expansion of new electric

models due in 2020 and the continued development of the UK charging infrastructure, 2020 looks to be a good year to go electric."

[View embedded content here](#)

The RAC is the first breakdown assistance company in the UK to introduce a mobile charging unit for electric vehicle owners who have run out of charge. [Find out more about RAC EV Boost.](#)

Notes to Editors

* Research for the RAC Report on Motoring 2019 was carried out by Quadrangle. In total 1,753 UK motorists (i.e. those who hold a full, current driving licence, drive at least once a month and have a motor vehicle in their household) were surveyed between 23 May and 3 June 2019, with the questionnaire taking around 30 minutes to complete.

** [Based on an extrapolation of all UK drivers – 42m: Great Britain 40,932,294 full licence holders as of August 2019 and Northern Ireland 1,111,996 full and eligible as of Q2 2019 \(total 42,044,290 drivers\).](#)

*** Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders – EV registrations:
<https://www.smmt.co.uk/category/news/registrations/evs-afvs/>.As of Q3 2019 there were 32,973,200 licensed UK cars [VEH0101](#).

Our dedicated line for journalists is +44 (0)1454 664 123. **Please note:** the press office is unable to help with individual customer enquiries - please visit the [RAC contacts page](#) for the right number to call.

ISDN radio studio facilities are available for interviews Monday to Friday.

About the RAC

The RAC provides complete peace of mind to 12m UK private and business drivers, whatever their motoring needs. Its services include:

- **Breakdown assistance.** Its highly-skilled, 1,600-strong branded patrol workforce attends more than two million breakdowns every year, fixing on average four out of five vehicles at the roadside. The RAC's patrol fleet is one of the most advanced in the world, and was the first to roll out both an [All-Wheels-Up recovery system](#), allowing the vast majority of vehicles to be recovered from a single patrol van, and [EV Boost](#) mobile electric vehicle charging units
- **Insurance.** The RAC is a top-five [car insurance](#) broker having surpassed the 500,000 policies-in-force milestone in 2018. It also offers '[black box](#)' [telematics policies](#), as well as home and travel insurance
- **Other motoring services.** The RAC leads in the development of new solutions for business, fleets, electric vehicles and future car technology. Its additional products and services include a [personal loans offering](#), a [used car buying website](#), [vehicle inspections and checks](#), [legal services](#) or up-to-the-minute [traffic and travel information](#). It also has a network of [Approved Dealers](#) and [Approved Garages](#) which combine the trust of RAC brand with local service and convenience

The RAC also works to support the interests of its members and UK drivers on the most important motoring issues which it identifies via the annual [RAC Report on Motoring](#) and the [RAC Opinion Panel](#). The Report on Motoring is the longest running analysis of driver opinion in the UK having been published every year since 1989.

For more information about the RAC, visit the [RAC website](#).

Contacts

RAC
Press Team

Contact the RAC Press Office

Press Contact

press.enquiries@rac.co.uk

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

ISDN number on request