

THE EVXPERIENCE REPORT

February 2023





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FOREWORD FROM TIM BUCHAN, CEO

Welcome to Zenith's first ever report into the lives and experiences of the UK's Electric Vehicle (EV) drivers – the 'Zenith EVX report'. With over 3,100 responses from our customers, this is the largest ever survey to explore the lived experience of driving an EV in the UK.

Zenith has, for many years, been a leader in the UK's transition to electric vehicles. We currently manage 170,000 vehicles, 22,500 of which are EVs.

Zenith's vision is to decarbonise the UK vehicle parc by eliminating tailpipe emissions. This is enabling us to support the evolution of sustainable motoring for many more drivers and businesses across the UK. That's why we wanted to go further and delve into the day-to-day realities of what it's like to drive an electric vehicle.

What struck me looking at the findings of this report was how much we enjoy driving EVs and how unlikely drivers are to switch back to fossil-fuelled petrol and diesel engines.

Looking at the concerns, while only a small proportion (15%) of drivers mainly use their car for long distances, there are still two overriding factors that concern EV drivers: the range of their EVs and the confidence that the charging infrastructure can get them from A to B. I'm confident that battery



technology will continue to develop, but what's clear is that the UK's infrastructure needs to continue to evolve.

And we all have a role to play in that – individuals, councils, Governments, the automotive sector and employers.

This research has highlighted to us that EV drivers are not necessarily getting the best deal. With road tax on the horizon, and higher VAT rates for those charging at public stations rather than at home – we need to ensure drivers see EVs as an affordable option.

Secondly, we recognise that the early adopters of EVs are skewed towards homeowners who can charge their vehicles cheaply on their driveways or in their garages. But as this skew shifts to include those in flats or with parking on street, the need for convenient and cost-effective charging will increase. That's why we are significantly increasing the number of subsidised charging spaces at our offices to help make a real difference for our employees and their families.

We're all on a journey towards Net Zero and we look forward to sharing our findings with you over the coming months and years. In the meantime, we hope you enjoy this report and please do get in touch if you have any questions or suggestions.

Best regards

A stylized blue ink signature of Tim Buchan.

TIM BUCHAN



ABOUT THE EVXPERIENCE REPORT

The Zenith EVXperience Report is the **largest ever survey** of UK electric vehicle (EV) drivers looking at their **actual lived experience** of driving an EV.

We commissioned research practitioners Maru/Matchbox to conduct an independent survey of over 3,100 of Zenith's electric car customers across its corporate and personal lease business, ZenAuto.

It aims to delve into the day-to-day realities of what it's like to drive an electric vehicle and, crucially, to track how these attitudes evolve over time.

To give us a meaningful point of difference, we also polled 1,430 petrol/diesel drivers on their attitudes towards driving so that we could track how the experience of driving an EV compares.

With the UK set to ban new petrol and diesel cars from 2030, it is vital that we make the most of the next seven years to make the transition

as simple and enjoyable as possible for drivers.

We plan to regularly publish this report to serve as a barometer of how this transition is going and to pose questions on what could be done to improve it.



EV DRIVERS STILL WOULDN'T GO
BACK TO PETROL/DIESEL:

86%

would not turn back from the EV journey and would still opt for an EV over a petrol or diesel vehicle, while the vast majority (86%) are confident that EV infrastructure will improve as more EVs are on the road over the next three years.

RISING COSTS ARE DRIVING A
CHANGE IN BEHAVIOUR:

50%

of respondents said that they are planning more of their journeys due to rising costs. Almost half (**46%**) are charging at home rather than at public stations and **31%** are driving less.

DRIVERS ARE ATTRACTED TO THE
LOW RUNNING AND OWNERSHIP
COSTS:

The No.1

best thing about the EV experience is the low running and ownership cost, both via Benefit-In-Kind (BiK taxation rates) and low running costs, according to company car/salary sacrifice drivers and personal lease drivers respectively. Despite rising energy costs, when compared to petrol/diesel drivers, EV drivers are much more satisfied by the cost of running their car.

DRIVERS ARE STILL CONCERNED
ABOUT VEHICLE RANGE AND THE
ABILITY TO CHARGE WHEN THEY
NEED TO:

While only a small minority,

15%

of drivers mainly use their cars for long distance travel, limited range remains the number one concern for drivers, with **26%** finding the range of their EV worse than expected and **24%** highlighting how the charging experience was worse than expected.



INTRODUCING... THE EVXPERIENCE

THE EVX REPORT

The EVX report, which surveyed over 3,100 of Zenith's EV customers, found that EV drivers are overwhelmingly satisfied with their experience across six 'Key Experience Indicators' (KEIs), which range from their driving experience to a vehicle's mobile app, its range and the cost of running it.

Equivalent questions were also asked to a separate sample of petrol and diesel drivers to gain an understanding of how their experiences differ.

How do drivers feel about the EVXperience?

All in all, EV drivers are true converts. The Zenith EVX report found that 86% would not turn back and would still opt for an EV over a petrol or diesel vehicle.

The average across all six metrics is an encouraging 8.4 out of 10.

Put simply, once they get in their car, EV drivers love to drive it. They feel safe in it and they trust its reliability.

Overall, they have a positive experience with charging too and, while energy costs have increased, drivers are still happy with the cost of running their EV.

No experience can be wholly positive though and we can't ignore this. In a country where range anxiety is common, it's not surprising that it ranks as one of the lowest metrics, alongside the mobile apps too.

 For Personal Lease drivers, the low cost of charging remains the number one best thing

How does this compare to those driving petrol or diesel?

In order to give this data more meaning, we wanted to survey petrol and diesel drivers on their experience too.

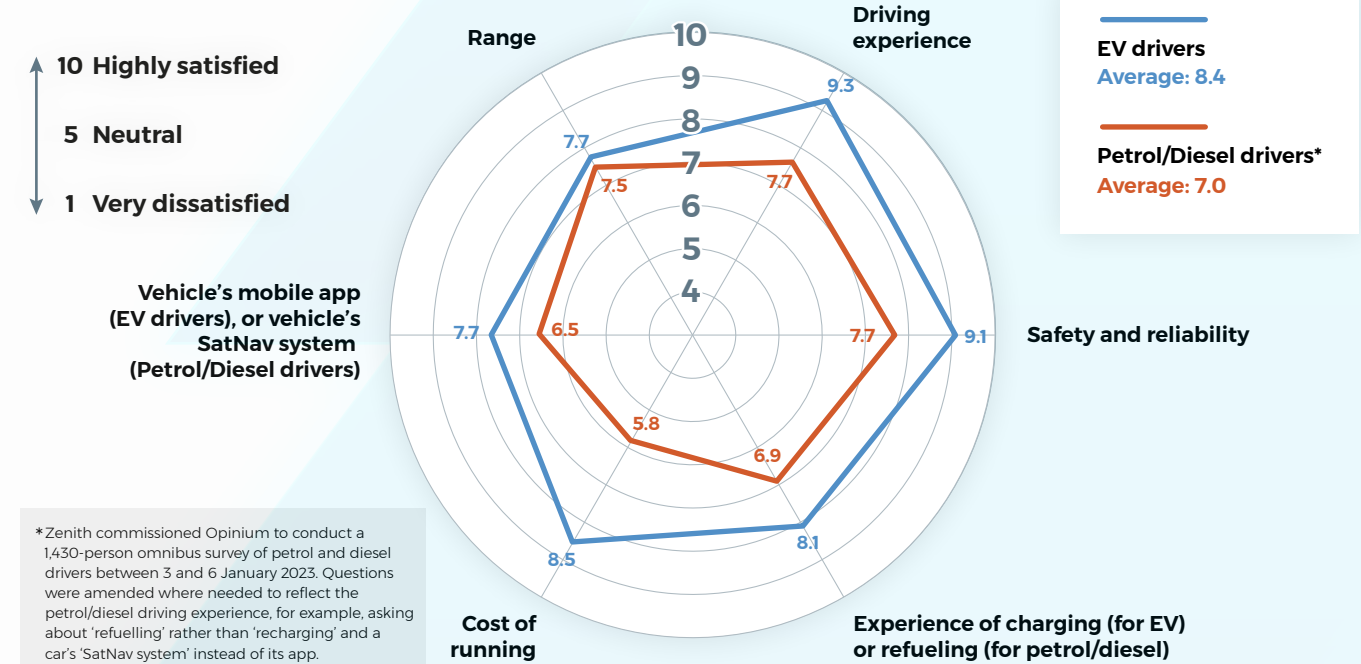
On a top line level, the results are striking. Satisfaction levels are higher amongst EV drivers than those driving petrol or diesel on every single metric.

The most significant difference comes down to cost.

Encouragingly, EV drivers are highly satisfied with the cost of running their vehicle, giving it a ranking of **8.5/10** on average. In contrast, satisfaction levels are much lower amongst petrol/diesel drivers, who gave it a ranking of **5.8/10**.

In the current cost-of-living crisis, these figures are important. We cannot underestimate the power of cost in motivating drivers to make the switch. We delve into how cost remains the main factor for EV drivers on page 11.

THE EVX INDEX: RESULTS



What are the most popular EVs?

Of course, the driving experience is likely to massively vary depending on the EV driven and when it was launched.

That's why we wanted to uncover the most popular EVs driven by our customers.

Tesla Models 3 and Y both appear up top, whilst the Renault Zoe, Audi E-tron and Hyundai Ioniq all appear in the top 5.



-  1. Tesla Model 3
-  2. Tesla Model Y
-  3. Renault Zoe
-  4. Audi E-tron
-  5. Hyundai Ioniq
-  6. Kia e-niro
-  7. Peugeot 208
-  8. VW ID.3
-  9. Nissan Leaf
-  10. Mercedes EQC

WHAT DO DRIVERS REALLY THINK ABOUT EVS?

We asked drivers the best and worst things about the EV experience. Interestingly, while all of the 'best' elements relate to a mixture of cost, environmental concerns and driving experience, all of the downsides related to charging and range.

THE BEST 5 THINGS ABOUT THE EV EXPERIENCE

-  **1. Low cost as Benefit-in-Kind (BiK)** [For company car/salary sacrifice drivers]
Low running costs [For personal lease drivers]
-  **2. Better for the environment**
-  **3. Low charging cost**
-  **4. Better driving experience**
-  **5. Having the option to charge at home/not need to visit a station**

THE WORST 5 THINGS ABOUT THE EV EXPERIENCE

-  **1. Limited range when travelling**
-  **2. The need to plan for where to charge when away from home**
-  **3. Unreliable public charging**
-  **4. Lack of ultra-rapid (e.g. 20 mins to 80%) public charging stations**
-  **5. Long recharging time**

COST SAVINGS TRUMP ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

The UK is a nation of car lovers with over 33m* cars on the road. Some own cars outright, but millions choose to lease a car either personally or through their company.

Those who receive a car from their company can either do so on 'company car' or 'salary sacrifice' terms. Company schemes include those where employees are provided a car as a business requirement or perk of the job. Or, increasingly, employers allow all employees access to the benefits of a company car through a salary sacrifice arrangement, where the cost of the car is deducted from salary before tax is applied.

There are some differences in the motivations for driving an EV across our customer base.

When questioned about the simple 'best' thing about the EV experience, almost half (47%) of company car drivers and almost a third (31%) of salary sacrifice drivers cited Benefit-in-Kind (BiK) as the number one point. That's why the Government's continued support is so vital to ensuring the uptake of EVs.

For those with a personal lease vehicle, three in 10 (30%) stated that low running costs were the best thing about the experience.

Environmental concerns closely followed as the second most common response to the 'best thing' about the EV experience, with 23% of company cars and 25% of salary sacrifice drivers citing it as the number one best thing.

How drivers are adapting to rising energy costs

With rising energy costs, it's not a surprise that the majority of drivers (66%) are changing their driving behaviour too.

47% of company car drivers and 31% of salary sacrifice drivers cite Benefit-in-Kind (BiK) as the best thing about the EV experience

But how are they changing?

Over half (50.2%) of respondents said they planned more of their journeys, 46% were charging at home rather than at public stations and 31% have driven less.

However, with the UK Government now introducing road tax on EVs from 2025, there is a risk that – together with higher costs – drivers are put off EVs or are priced out of the market.

A new generation of cheaper EV models, primarily from Chinese manufacturers, could help to bring more EVs to our communities. Yet with the risk of uptake slowing down, more needs to be done to ensure EV driving remains cost effective, as well as a great experience.

WHAT IS BENEFIT-IN-KIND AND SALARY SACRIFICE?

Employees give up part of their gross salary and get a brand new car of their choice. But that's just the start. Insurance, maintenance, servicing, tyres, breakdown and glass cover, it's all included. As the car is a benefit for employees, they'll have to pay Benefit-in-Kind tax. For businesses, it's a hassle-free benefit that's proven to boost employee satisfaction, loyalty and retention. This is providing such deductions do not take an employee's salary below the National Minimum Wage.

*Source: Department for Transport: Vehicle Licensing Statistics: July – September 2022
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/vehicle-licensing-statistics-july-to-september-2022/vehicle-licensing-statistics-july-to-september-2022> (13.12.22)

HOW CHARGING AND RANGE ANXIETY AFFECTS DRIVERS

Most EV drivers will have thought about range and ease of charging before making the leap.

What if you get stuck on the side of the road? Are EVs worth it if you don't live in a major city with lots of EV charging infrastructure?

It's a conversation that often comes up with those that are toying with the idea and don't know whether to make the leap from a petrol or diesel vehicle to an EV.

The EVX report shows that this continues to be a concern for drivers, but perhaps less than those new to the world of EVs might expect:

- ◆ Almost a quarter (**24%**) found charging availability worse than expected, but **45%** found it as expected and almost a third (**31%**) better than expected.
- ◆ **78%** are fairly or very confident in the range displayed on their EV, suggesting concerns regarding range are more about whether there are enough places to charge when you're taking a longer journey.

Limited range remains the number one concern for drivers: **26%** found the range of their EV worse than expected

SHOULD NEW EV DRIVERS BE CONCERNED ABOUT RANGE AND CHARGING ANXIETY?

A significant amount of media coverage has focused on the rising cost of charging at public networks, as well as a perceived lack of stations.

Our research shows a number of issues with this analysis.

Range and charging anxiety are real issues for drivers. However, only **15%** mainly use their EV for longer trips (over 60 miles), with the majority taking short journeys, likely on a single charge.

*Source: <https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/electric-cars/charging/electric-car-public-charging-costs-rac-charge-watch/>

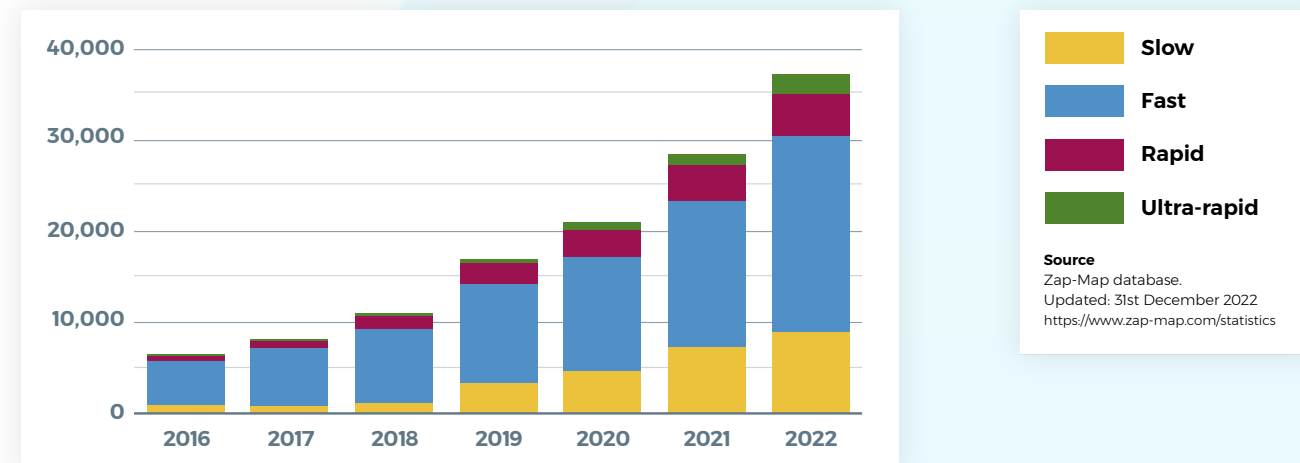
The majority (**61%**) of drivers choose to primarily charge off-street at home, with only 9% primarily using the public charging network as their main energy source.

The cost of public charging has crept up as energy prices have risen. However, home charging remains a good value option for customers, with a driver who fully charges an electric car with a 64kWh battery (**from 0% to 100%**) at home paying £22.22.*

The charging network is growing each year too, meaning more visible stations for more drivers. Indeed, the vast majority (**86%**) are confident that EV infrastructure will improve as more EVs are on the road over the next three years.

Only **15%** mainly use their EV for longer trips (over 60 miles), with the majority taking short journeys, likely on a single charge.

NUMBER OF UK CHARGING POINTS BY SPEED (2016 TO DATE)



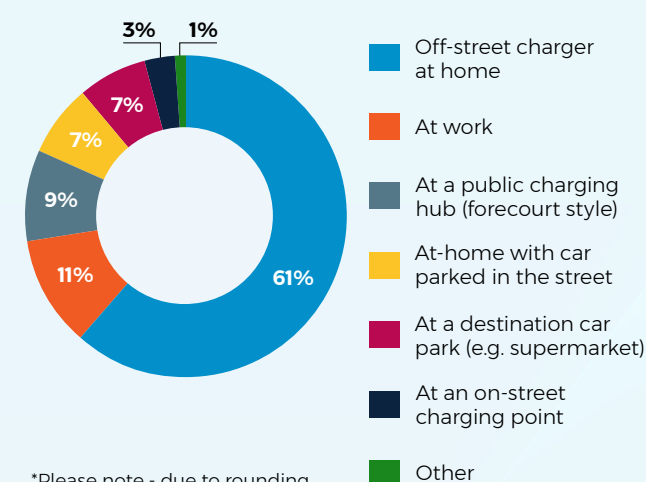
WHAT ADDITIONAL CHARGING POINTS DO DRIVERS WANT?

While the majority (**61%**) choose to primarily charge at home, drivers who can't, or simply have the desire to charge when out and about, want to see more stations at convenient locations, for example at supermarkets.

Dedicated EV hubs are also popular, as well as having stations at their workplace. That's why we are increasing the number of subsidised charging stations for our employees.

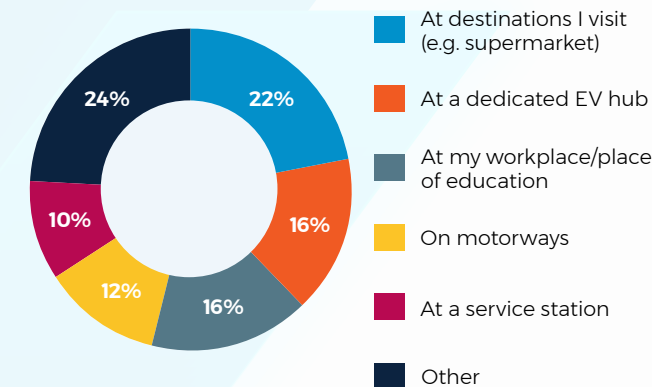


WHERE DRIVERS ARE CURRENTLY CHARGING



*Please note - due to rounding, not all graphs will total 100%

WHAT ADDITIONAL CHARGING SITES DRIVERS WANT TO SEE



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE LEASING SECTOR?



"These results show that drivers are embracing EVs and are responding well to the support and vision the Government has adopted through the Benefit-in-Kind framework."

"An EV company car or salary sacrifice vehicle can be a great way to motivate and retain employees as part of a comprehensive benefits package, as well as helping an organisation on its Net Zero journey."

IAN HUGHES
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
CORPORATE DIVISION



"We are seeing growing demand for EVs in our rental division – with drivers embracing electric for both short and long distance travel. Anecdotally, we find that those who use EVs are sold once they get behind the wheel. What we need next is to help ensure the network continues to grow and becomes as natural for customers as filling up a petrol tank."

ANDREW KIRBY
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
RENTAL



"The commercial sector is in the early stages of its transition and we are working on a number of experiments – with both EVs and alternative fuels – to work out what is most suitable."

MARTIN JENKINS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
COMMERCIAL DIVISION AND GROUP
STRATEGY DIRECTOR



"We have been speaking with the UK Government regularly, citing the EVX report, to campaign and raise awareness on how pivotal Benefit-in-Kind tax is on the uptake of electric vehicles."

CLAIRE EVANS
FLEET CONSULTANCY DIRECTOR



"Demand for EVs has never been higher. What we need now is to ensure that the next generation of drivers have access to a high-quality, but also more affordable, EV experience."

JOHN TRACY
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
ZENAUTO

METHODOLOGY

Zenith commissioned research practitioners Maru/Matchbox to conduct an independent survey of 3,142 of its 100% battery electric car customers across its corporate and personal lease businesses between 27th October and 4th November 2022.

Zenith also commissioned Opinium to conduct a 1,430-person omnibus survey of petrol and diesel drivers between 3rd and 6th January 2023. Questions were amended where needed to reflect the petrol/diesel driving experience, for example, asking about 'refuelling' rather than 'recharging' and a car's 'SatNav system' over its app.



ABOUT ZENITH



Zenith is the UK's leading independent leasing, fleet management and vehicle outsourcing business, with capabilities across all vehicle asset types, supporting business fleets, salary sacrifice and consumer cars.

Everything we do is delivered by trusted experts, underpinned by award-winning service, and enabled by our ongoing investment in technology delivery. Today that means we manage 170,000 customer vehicles.

Our purpose is to provide sustainable, innovative vehicle mobility solutions. In support of this we are part of the EV100, which brings together forward-looking companies to tackle the electric transport transition, reduce air pollution and climate change.

We have three divisions:

For businesses

Zenith Corporate

Whatever vehicle your business needs, our corporate division offers fully outsourced company car and van schemes, vehicle funding solutions, salary sacrifice solutions and short-term rental vehicles, as well as a comprehensive suite of ancillary services and products.

We'll fund it whichever way works best for you, and we'll manage it professionally, efficiently and with a relentless attention to detail. If it's got wheels, we get it.

Zenith Commercial

Our Commercial division offers fleet management services, maintenance and funding solutions for light commercial vehicles, HGVs and specialist vehicles. We are the UK's largest operator in large commercial vehicle management and trailer rental.

Our scale and expertise means we can source and specify almost any vehicle in any number, with flexible funding, fleet management, and rental support to match.

For consumers

Our Consumer division is comprised of two main businesses: ZenAuto and business process outsourcing, which offers back-office services for the finance arms of leading automotive manufacturing and consumer finance businesses.

ZenAuto

ZenAuto, our digital direct-to-consumer brand, offers flexible car plans that put you in control of the wheel. You have the freedom to upgrade your car every few years as your contract comes to end, with or without maintenance. We'll be with you every step along the way to ensure a hassle-free experience.



**We currently
manage
22,500 EVs.**

Get in touch

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