



Department for Transport

Public attitudes towards electric vehicles: 2016 (Revised)

About this release

This report summarises people's attitudes towards electric vehicles.

The report is based on a survey module, which was included in the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) February 2016 Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (formerly the Omnibus Survey). The questions were commissioned and designed by the Department for Transport.

The statistics in this report relate to adults aged 16 and over living in private households in Great Britain. Where sample sizes are sufficient, differences by factors such as sex, age and region have been examined.

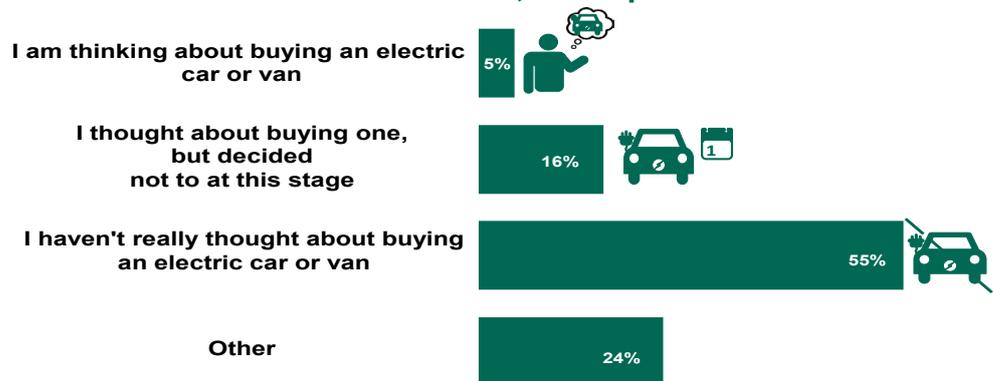
A similar module of questions was included in the February 2015 and February 2014 Opinions and Lifestyle Survey so some comparisons can be made over time.

New registrations of ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) in the UK have rapidly grown over the last two years. During January to March 2016, 11,755 new ULEVs were registered for the first time in the UK, an increase of 31% on one year before and 508% on two years previously. From January to the end of March 2016, ULEVs represented 1.0% of all new registrations, compared with 0.8% over the previous year, and 0.2% over the year before that.

This report looks at people's attitudes towards electric vehicles. The 2016 survey found that 5% of respondents said they were thinking about buying an electric car or van. These results were similar to those from the 2015 and 2014 surveys.

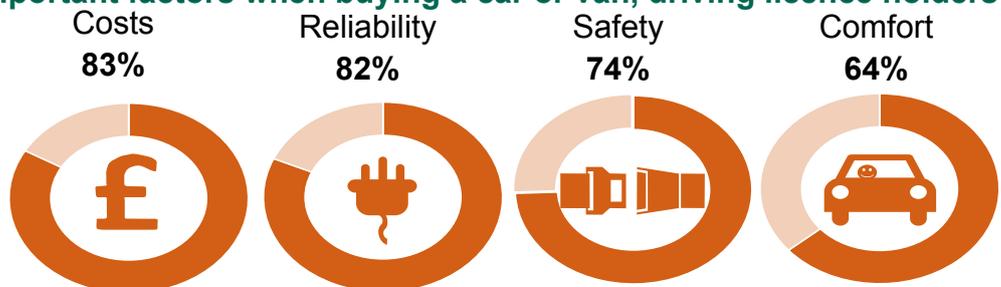
This publication has been revised since first publication on 7th July, due to amendments to the original weightings from the Omnibus survey. These changes are small, but have affected some of the comparisons made in the survey.

Attitudes to electric cars and vans, all respondents



Driving licence holders reported that the most important factors they considered when buying a car or van were costs and reliability.

Important factors when buying a car or van, driving licence holders only



Note: more than one response allowed, total will add up to more than 100%.

How to interpret the results

Any differences over time or between groups described in this publication are statistically significant at the 5% level (i.e. it is 95 per cent certain that the difference exists between the groups).

In this publication

- Background information [p2](#)
- Knowledge and attitudes [p3](#)
- Government grant [p5](#)
- Important factors [p6](#)
- Deterring factors [p7](#)
- Encouraging factors [p8](#)
- Sample design notes [p9](#)

Background information on respondents

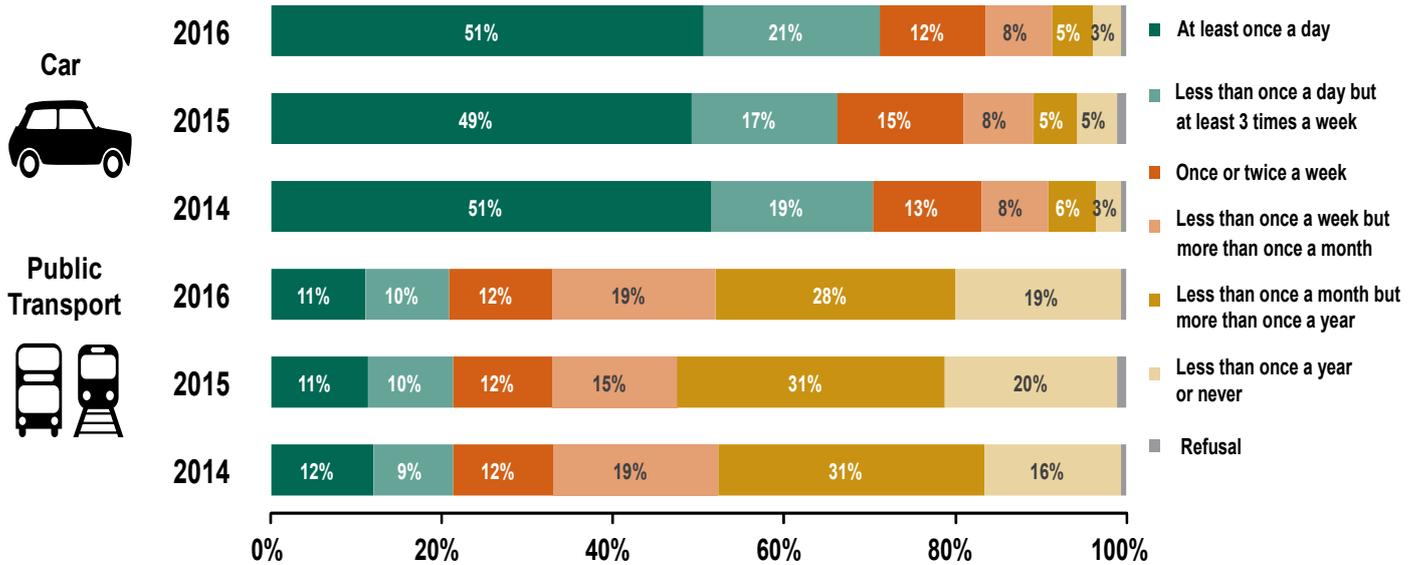
This section gives results on respondents' travel behaviours to give context to their attitudes towards electric vehicles.

Car



Four out of five (84%) respondents in 2016 reported travelling by car as a driver or passenger at least once or twice a week. Of these, 51% reported travelling by car at least once a day, 21% at least 3 times a week and 12% once or twice a week. The results for 2016 were not significantly different to those in 2015.

Frequency of car and public transport use: 2014, 2015 and 2016 results



Sources: ONS Omnibus Survey February 2014, 2015 & 2016: Unweighted bases, all respondents: 962 (2014), 1034 (2015) and 908 (2016). Note: Refusals are those who did not answer the question.

Public Transport



A third of respondents (33%) in 2016 reported travelling by public transport at least once or twice a week, of which 11% said they travelled by public transport at least once a day, 10% at least 3 times a week and 12% once or twice a week. In addition, 19% reported that they travelled by public transport less than once a year or never.

Different travel behaviours might be expected given other characteristics of respondents.



Females are more likely to travel one or twice a week by car/van compared to men (15% and 10% respectively).



People with a degree are more likely to travel at least three times a week by public transport compared to those without a degree (27% and 19% respectively). People without a degree are more likely to travel once or twice a week by car than those with a degree (14% and 8% respectively).



Tables:

Frequency of car and van travel: [Table ATT0501](#)

Frequency of public transport travel: [Table ATT0502](#)

Findings for all respondents:



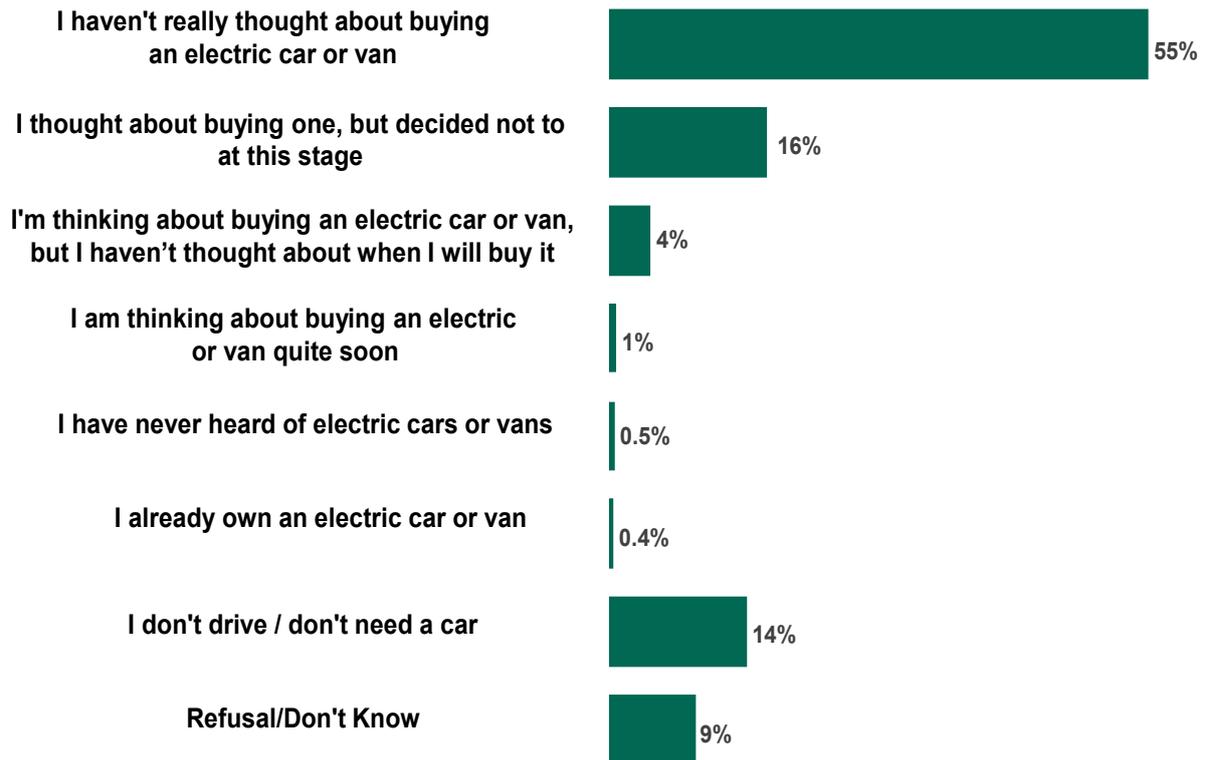
In 2016, three people in the survey reported owning an electric car. There were 5% of respondents who said they were thinking about buying an electric car or van, 55% said that they had not thought about buying one, with an additional 16% saying that they had thought about buying one but decided not to at this stage. These result were not significantly different to those in 2014 and 2015.



Tables:

Attitudes to electric cars and vans [Table ATT0503](#)

Current attitudes towards buying an electric car or van, all respondents: 2016 results



Source: ONS Omnibus Survey February 2016: Unweighted base, all respondents: 908.

 Men were more likely to report having considered buying an electric car or van but deciding not to at this stage than women (23% and 10% respectively).

 Women were more likely to report not driving or needing a car than men (18% and 11% respectively). Women were also more likely to report not thinking about buying an electric vehicle than men (60% and 51% respectively).

 Those with a degree were more likely to report that they had thought about buying an electric vehicle and decided not to at this stage than those without a degree (28% and 12% respectively).
Those without a degree were more likely to report not owning or needing a car than those with a degree (17% and 8% respectively).

 Those with an income of £26,000 or more were more likely to report having considered buying an electric car or van but deciding not to at this stage than those earning less than £26,000 (33%).

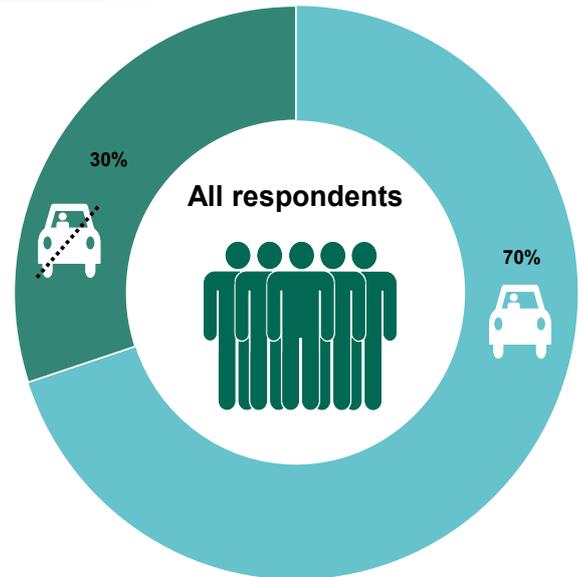
Findings for driving licence holders:



When just considering those respondents who have a **full driving licence**, 6% of them said that they were thinking about buying an electric vehicle.

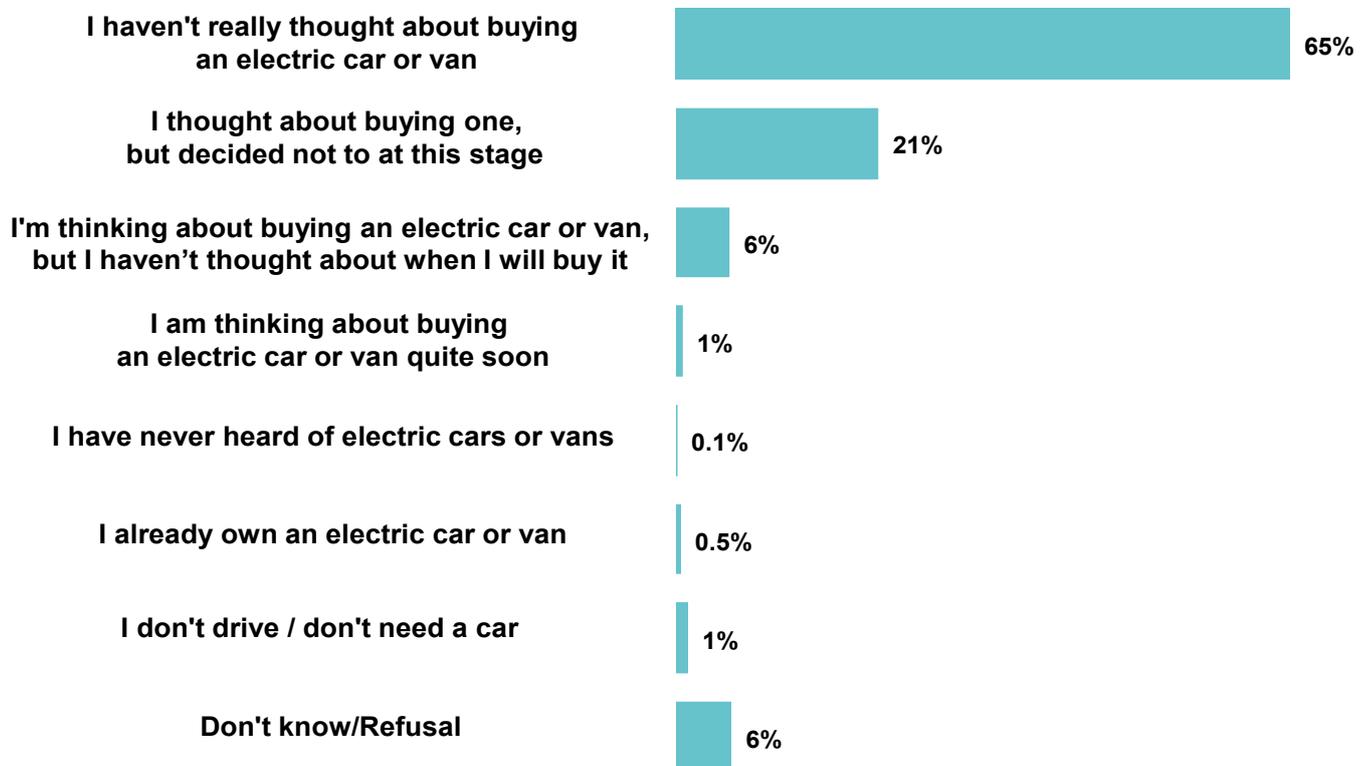


Additionally, the percentage who hadn't really thought about buying an electric car or van rose from the 55% reported by all respondents to 65% for driving licence holders.



These results were not significantly different to the 2015 or 2014 surveys.

Current attitudes towards buying an electric car or van, driving licence holders only: 2016 results



Source: ONS Omnibus Survey February 2016. Unweighted base: 654 (full licence holders).



Male drivers were more likely to report having considered buying an electric car or van but deciding not to at this stage than women (29% and 13% respectively), whereas women drivers were more likely to say that they hadn't thought about buying an electric car than men (75% and 56% respectively).



Those who hold a driving licence and have a degree were more likely to report that they had thought about buying an electric car or van but don't know when they will buy one, than those who hold a driving licence and have no degree (32% and 17% respectively).



Tables:

Attitudes to electric cars and vans. [Table ATT0503](#)

Knowledge of and attitude towards Government Grant (drivers only)

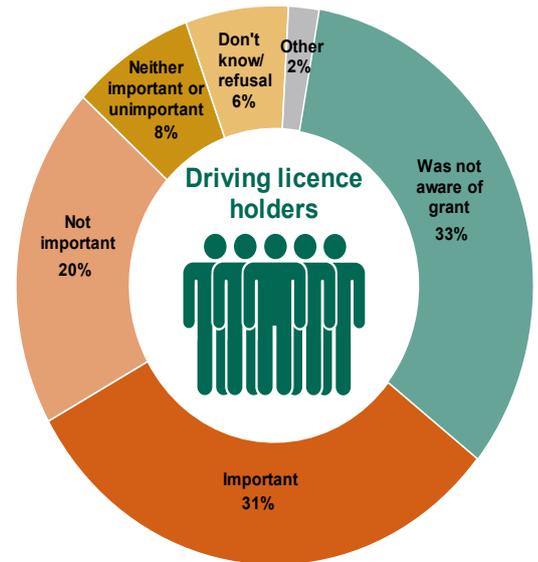
The government first introduced a plug-in electric vehicle grant for cars in 2011 and vans in 2012. A domestic chargepoint grant for eligible electric vehicle drivers was introduced in 2013. The eligibility criteria for the current grants can be found online [here](#) and [here](#).



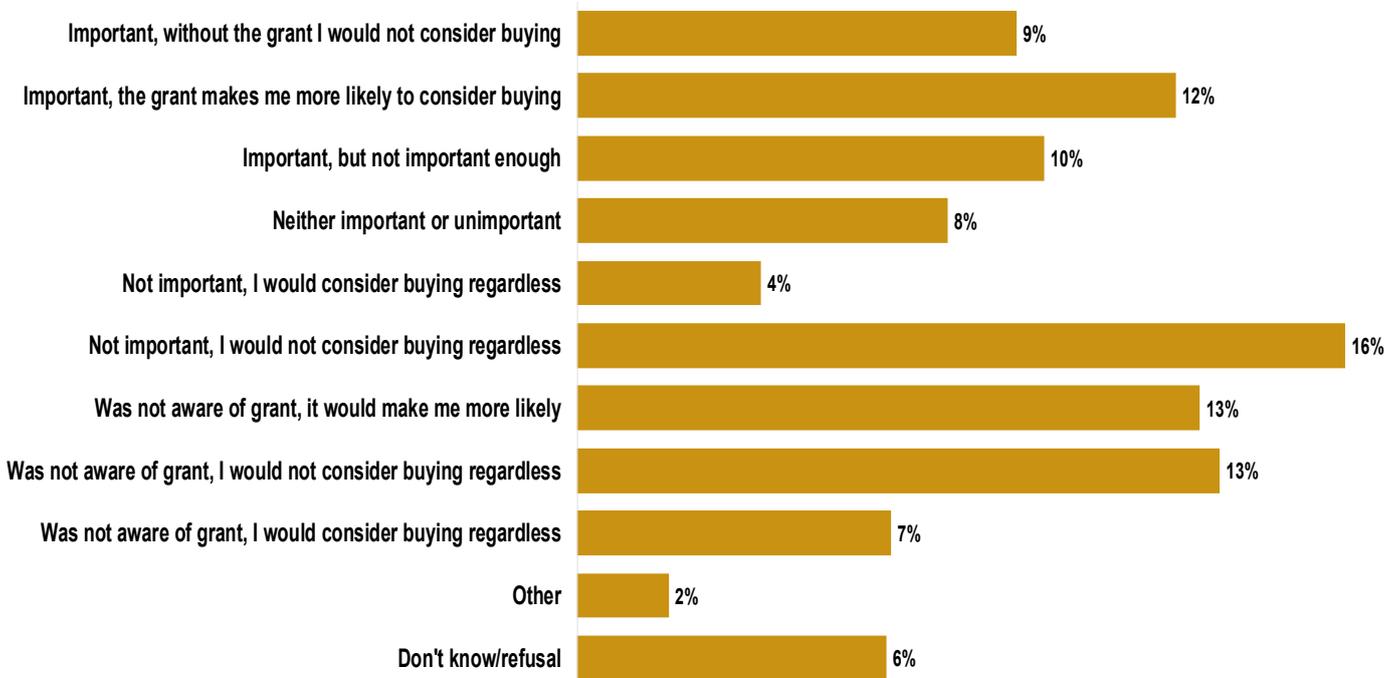
In 2016, 31% of licence holders said that the grant was important in influencing their attitude towards buying an electric car or vehicle. A third (33%) of licence holders were not aware of the government grant.



Of those who hadn't really thought about buying an electric vehicle 40% reported that they were not aware of the grant.



Whether Government Grant influenced attitude towards buying an electric vehicle: 2016 results



Source: ONS Omnibus Survey February 2016. Unweighted base: 654. This is a new question that was asked for the first time in 2016.



More people aged 65 and over reported that the grant is not important and that they would not consider buying regardless compared to people aged 16-34 and 35-44 (29%, 9% and 11% respectively).



Men were more likely to report that the grant was important and that without the grant they would not consider buying an electric car or van compared to women (13% and 6% respectively). Women were more likely to report that they were unaware of the grant than men (52% and 26% respectively).



Tables:

Whether Government Grant influenced attitude towards buying an electric vehicle:

[Table ATT0510](#)

Factors considered important when people buying a car or van

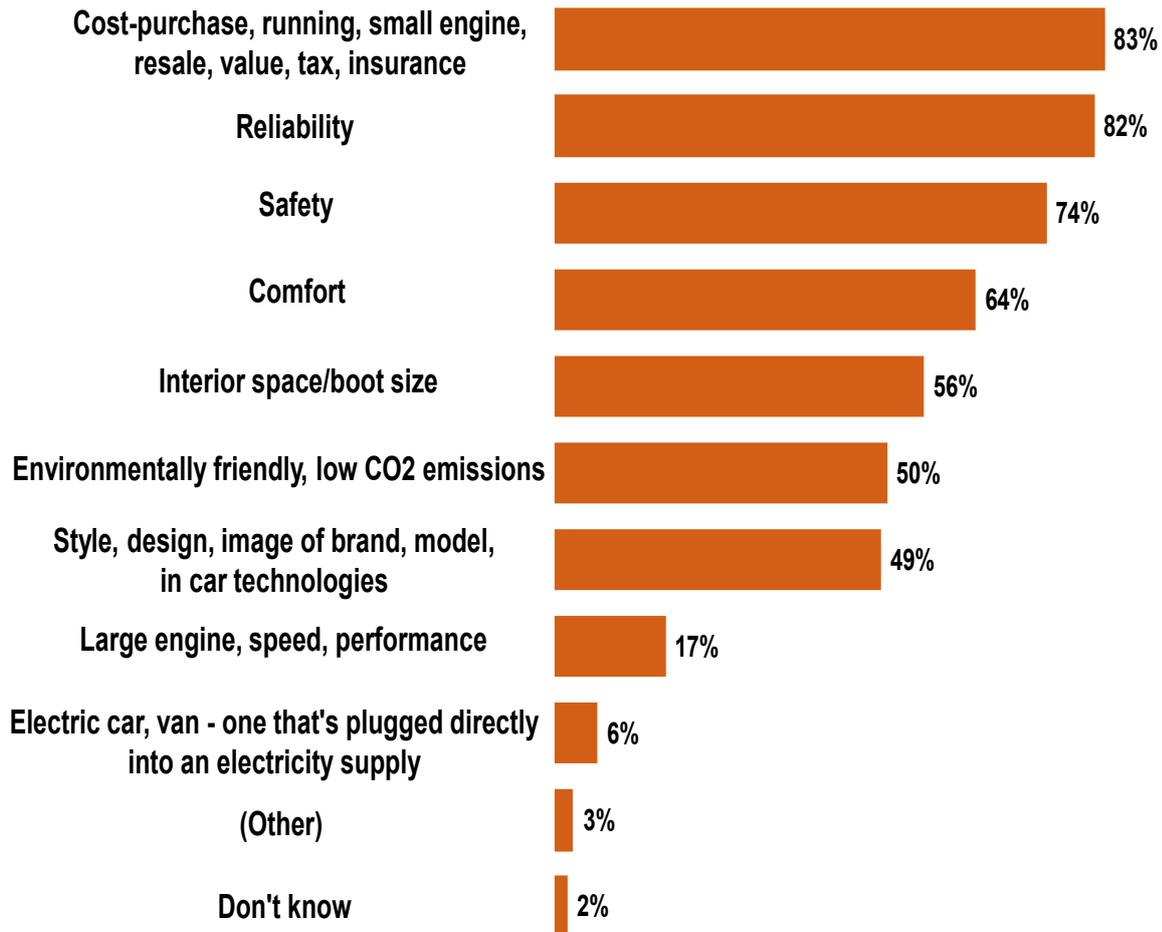


In 2016, those with a driving licence reported that the most important factors they considered when buying a car or van were **costs** (83%), **reliability** (82%), **safety** (74%) and **comfort** (64%). Only 6% of respondents said they considered whether the vehicle was electric to be an important factor.



Of those reporting **costs** as a important factor to be considered, the most important costs included purchase, fuel/recharging, insurance and maintenance.

Factors considered important when buying a car or van, driving licence holders: 2016 results



Source: ONS Omnibus Survey February 2016. Unweighted base: 650 (full licence holders only). Up to 3 responses coded from each respondent hence total will add up to more than 100%.



Tables:

Important factors when buying a car or van, driving licence holders only: [Table ATT0504](#)

Cost factors when buying a car or van, driving licence holders only: [Table ATT0505](#)

Factors deterring people from buying an electric car or van



Driving licence holders reported that the most important factors putting them off buying an electric car or van were **recharging** (45%), and the **distance travelled on a battery** (39%) followed by **cost** (28%) and **lack of knowledge** (13%).

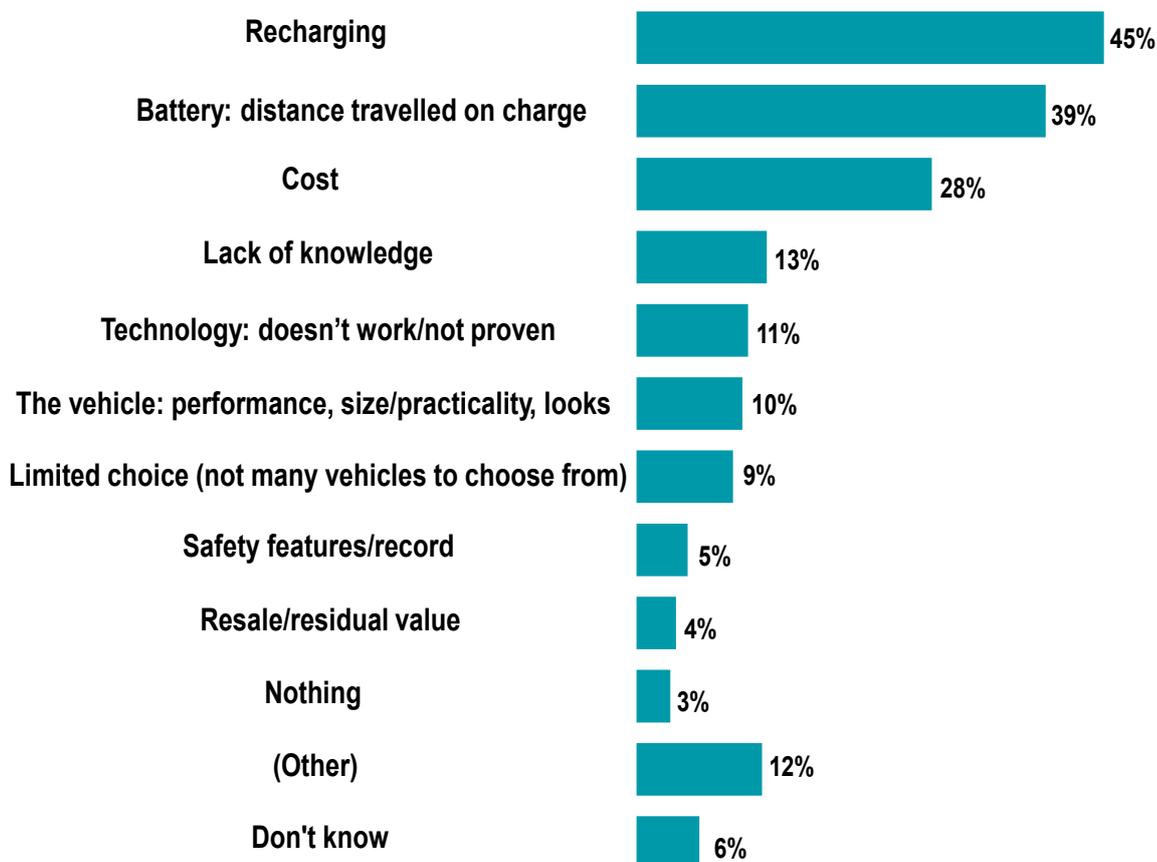


Of those reporting **cost** as a deterrent, the most important costs were purchase, maintenance and fuel/recharging costs followed by resale value and insurance.



Of those reporting **recharging** as a deterring factor, the most important recharging factors were around the availability of charging points, including lack of charging points in their area and lack of knowledge of where charging points are.

Factors deterring people from buying an electric car or van, driving licence holders: 2016 results



Sources ONS Omnibus Survey February 2016. Unweighted base: 649 (full licence holders only). Up to 3 responses coded from each respondent hence total will add up to more than 100%.



An increased number and awareness of electric vehicle models may have resulted in the fall of the “Lack of Knowledge” category as a deterrent between 2016 and 2014 (13% and 16% respectively).



Tables:

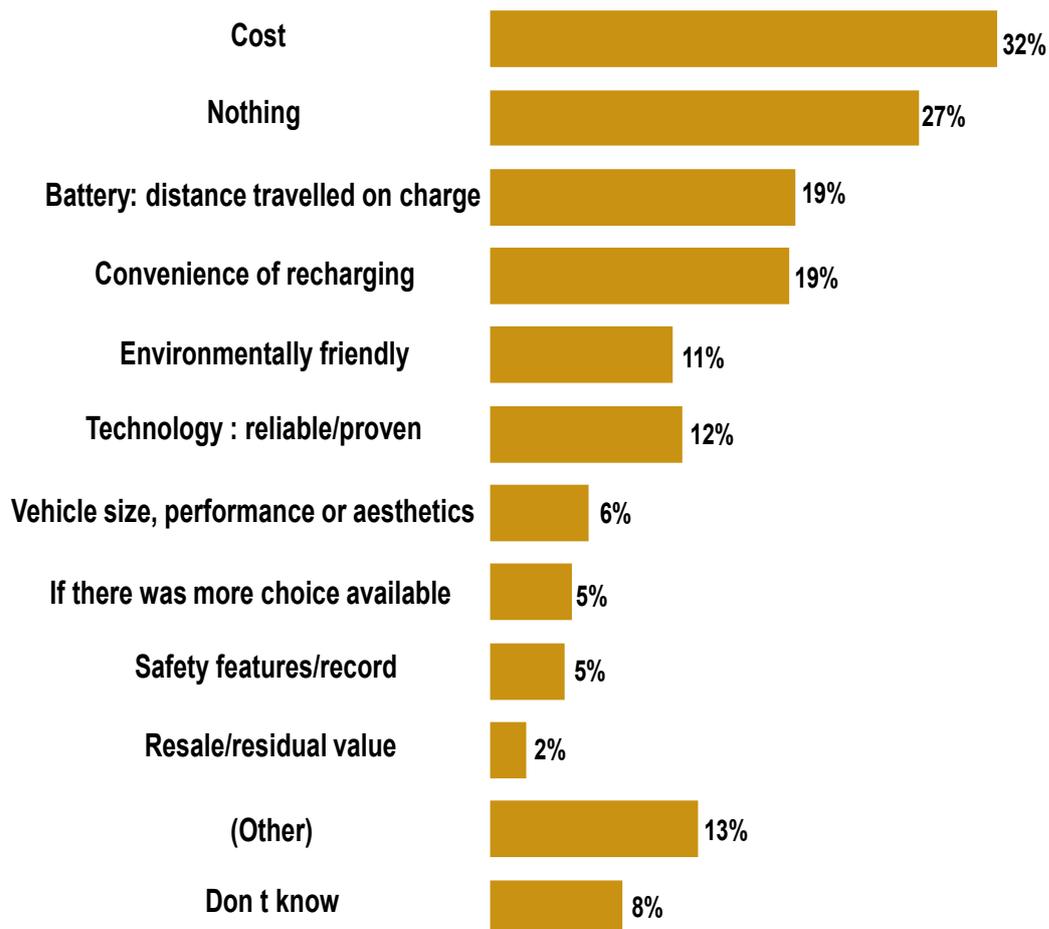
Factors deterring people from buying an electric car or van: [Table ATT0506](#). Cost factors putting people off buying an electric car or van: [Table ATT0507](#)

Factors encouraging people to buy an electric car or van

 Driving licence holders reported that the most important factor that would encourage them to buy an electric car or van were **cost** (32%). Other factors included **battery, distance travelled on charge** (19%), **convenience of recharging** (19%) and **environmentally friendly** (12%). There were 27% of respondents who reported that “nothing” would encourage them to buy an electric car or van.

 On costs, the most important **cost factors** included current purchase cost, followed by current fuel/recharging costs, insurance, maintenance and vehicle excise duty.

Factors encouraging people to buy an electric car or van, driving licence holders: 2016 results



Source: ONS Omnibus Survey February 2016. Unweighted base: 648 respectively (full licence holders only). Up to 3 responses coded from each respondent hence total will add up to more than 100%.



Tables:

Factors that would encourage people to buy an electric car or van: [Table ATT0508](#)

Cost factors encouraging people to buy an electric car or van: [Table ATT0509](#)

Survey design:

The Office for National Statistics' Opinions and Lifestyle Survey is a random probability survey of adults aged 16 and over living in private households in Great Britain. The sampling frame used here is the Royal Mail Postcode Address File (PAF). The February 2016 Opinions and Lifestyle Survey successfully interviewed 908 adults face-to-face in their own homes during the month of February. This was a response rate of 49%. The February 2015 Opinions and Lifestyle Survey successfully interviewed 1,034 adults face-to-face in their own homes during the month of February. This was a response rate of 56%. The February 2014 Opinion and Lifestyle Survey successfully interviewed 962 adults; this was a response rate of 53%.

For both the 2014, 2015 and 2016 modules, only one response was expected from individuals for some of the questions (car and public transport usage, attitudes to electric vehicles). For the questions asking about factors that were important when buying a car, deterring respondents from purchasing an electric vehicle and encouraging them to buy an electric vehicle up to 3 responses were coded. There were also some text based questions on costs and recharging.

Question wording:

In 2016 a new question on the government grant was added to the survey.

There were some minor changes in the wording of two of the categories of knowledge of electric vehicles between 2014 and 2015 (Table ATT0503). The words "at this stage" was added to 2nd response category, formerly "I thought about buying one but decided not to". In addition the words "I will buy it" was added to the end of the 3rd response category, formerly "I am thinking about buying one but I don't know when". There were also some minor changes to the wording of the final question about the costs that would encourage you to buy an electric vehicle. The word "current" was added to the beginning of the first two response categories and "expected" to the beginning of the third and fourth response categories.

Weighting:

The results presented in this report are weighted. The weighting ensures the distribution across regions and age-sex groups match the Great Britain population. The survey results are subject to sampling error. That is, the results obtained may differ from those that would be obtained if the entire population had been interviewed, or another sample selected. Statistical theory enables us to calculate the degree of sampling error for any estimate.

Significant differences:

Significant differences over time or between groups which are referred to in the text are statistically significant at the 5% level (i.e. it is 95 per cent certain that the difference exists in the population).

Rounding:

Most of the figures quoted in the text, tables and charts have been rounded to the nearest final digit so, in some cases, there may be an apparent discrepancy between the sum of the constituent items and the totals shown.