

EV DRIVERS' MANIFESTO 2024



EVA England is a dedicated members' association focused on providing an independent voice for current and prospective electric vehicle (EV) drivers.

This Manifesto has been shaped with the support of EV drivers themselves, and outlines the following set of policy proposals based on two key principles: fairness in pricing and cost of ownership; and equality in access to charging and EVs themselves.

The number of EVs on UK roads has risen sharply and consistently over the last decade. In April 2024, EVs constituted over 16% of total new car sales in the UK, compared to just 0.4% in 2016. The UK Government has played a central role in motivating this growth, providing key incentives whilst also setting ambitious targets towards Net Zero, spearheaded by the Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Mandate requiring all new car sales to be zero emission at the tailpipe by 2035, and 22% all sales by the end of this year.

Yet the current trajectory, as EVs begin to enter the mainstream market, brings with it new sets of challenges: ensuring that EVs are affordable to buy and run for most, and that the UK's charging infrastructure is fairly distributed, accessible to all, and continues to develop at pace.

The policy proposals outlined in this document aim to ensure that the transition towards emissions-free transport is fair and accessible to the majority of UK drivers.

FAIRER CHARGING COSTS AND PROVISION

Greater EV uptake means a growing number of EV drivers solely reliant on the public charging network. VAT, applied in full on public charging only, should be addressed to reduce costs, whilst diverting green levies towards gas or general taxation would ensure EV drivers with higher electricity consumption are not unfairly penalised. Planning regulations for new charging points must also be simplified to stimulate their development. Charge Point Operators (CPOs) should be given greater statutory powers, in line with major electricity telecoms providers, to unlock a new wave of infrastructure at lower costs.

RIGHT TO CHARGE

We need to make it easier for people to charge at home and at their place of work. There are three distinct areas where there are unnecessary blockages. Businesses need more encouragement to install chargers, renters should have the right to use install chargers, and those who don't have a driveway but could install a gully in their pavement should be allowed to do so.

LOWER INSURANCE PREMIUMS

Sharply rising insurance costs, particularly acute for EVs, point to a market that is currently failing and poorly understood. Left unchallenged, current insurance premiums for EVs risk derailing the recent progress made in take-up. Insurers should be mandated to have a share of EV offerings that is reflective of current uptake.

ENFORCE ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS

By 2035, 1.35 million disabled drivers will be reliant on the public charging network. The current infrastructure does not, in the vast majority of cases, meet their needs. The release of a new accessibility standard in 2022 is viewed as constructive but very poorly adhered to: the implementation of PAS 1899 accessibility standards should be mandated.

DEMOCRATISE EV UPTAKE AND DRIVE DEMAND

Despite encouraging trends in take-up, including in the second-hand market, EV sales remain concentrated amongst higher-income households. Moving towards mass-uptake, the market would greatly benefit from targeted schemes aimed at middle- to lower-income households. Mandating salary sacrifice schemes would help spread this currently hugely cost-effective means of purchasing new and used EVs, whilst targeted social leasing schemes and 0% loans, used popularly in other countries, would greatly incentivise uptake in sections of the population that have so far been reluctant, or unable to, take part in the transition.

EV DRIVERS' MANIFESTO 2024

The uptake of EVs has been remarkable over the past few years, and there are now more than a million EV drivers in the UK. Satisfaction is remarkably high, with 92% of EV drivers happy with their car, and only 4% looking to return to a petrol or diesel car.

Yet for current EV drivers, certain lingering issues are hindering a seamless EV experience. And for future EV drivers, both real and perceived hurdles need addressing for the momentum in uptake to maintain its pace.

FAIRER CHARGING COSTS

There are ways to make charging cheaper for those without driveways:

- **Reduce the price people pay for their electricity**
- **Reduce the regulatory planning burdens on installing chargepoints**
- **Guarantee drivers' access to charging in their home or business**

REDUCE THE PRICE OF ELECTRICITY

Move subsidy costs off electricity

Social and green levies have historically been put on electricity bills, yet this pre-dated the move to greater electrification in areas such as transport and heating. Moving these costs on to gas, or even on general taxation, would help incentivise the move to EVs, as well as other technologies such as heatpumps.

If these were moved onto gas bills, the vast majority of UK households would notice very little difference, simply moving the costs from one bill to another. Yet it could mean up to a 10% price reduction to EV users.

Reduce VAT on Electricity

VAT is currently 20% on public charging, compared to 5% on domestic usage. This is an obvious anomaly, as well as being deeply unfair. If we reduced VAT, we could save drivers who rely on public charging and close the cost gap of public vs private charging.

REDUCE THE REGULATORY PLANNING BURDENS ON INSTALLING CHARGEPOINTS

Planning in the UK is well recognised as a barrier to developing infrastructure, and nowhere is that more the case than in the installation of chargers.

The regulations and planning processes for chargers are both complex, not applied uniformly across local authorities, and in many cases overly burdensome.

This has two knock-on impacts for consumers – firstly, the roll-out of chargers is slower and less comprehensive, and secondly, the additional costs of installation are passed on in their tariffs.

The process could be made much simpler and more streamlined. The Government is already consulting on CPOs' rights to access highways, which would reduce maintenance and installation costs, yet CPOs will still need to seek planning permission, adding on months of delays and extra costs.

We recommend that chargepoints become part of Permitted Development rights, with CPOs given Statutory Undertaker status, in a similar way to telecoms and internet providers. If there were strong national guidelines and standards set, we could unlock a new wave of infrastructure at lower costs.

RIGHT TO CHARGE

We need to make it easier for people to charge at home and at their place of work. There are three distinct areas where there are unnecessary blockages.

Businesses

We need to see quicker uptake for businesses with dedicated parking spaces. While there is still a 'carrot' in the form of the Workplace Charging scheme, this is planned to close next year, and has not provided the sea-change in behaviour we need. We call on a mandate for all businesses with more than 10 dedicated parking spaces to have at least one charger installed.

Rented sector

For the 8.5m people who rent in the UK, there is no guarantee of being given permission to install a charger. This can lead to long waits, as well as both private and social landlords refusing permission. We can see no reason why a tenant cannot install a charger at their own cost, and call for a change to ensure a presumptive agreement.

Gullies

For the roughly 30-40% of people who don't own a driveway, gullies present the easiest solution for many EV drivers to access their own electricity. Gullies have already had successful trials around the country, yet it is still a small minority of local councils who allow this. We call for a change of planning guidance to allow homes near pavement parking to install a gully. These are safe, easy for professionals to install, and reduce the use of dangerous and unauthorised pavement crossing solutions.

INSURANCE

Premiums for car insurance have gone up across the board, and have risen by over 20% in the last year alone. For EVs, we are seeing an additional cost on top of this which, if left unchallenged, will lead to a significant hurdle for EV uptake.

The reasons for increased EV costs range from a lack of skills for mechanics, supply chain issues and lack of data. All of these are understandable, but are also fixable. Yet we do not see the root causes being addressed at pace. We cannot afford to wait for these issues to resolve themselves. Insurers themselves have the power through their extensive networks of garages to remedy these costs.

There lacks a competitive pressure to reduce these costs, and we call for an intervention **requiring all vehicle insurers to have a market reflective share of their books covering EVs.**

ACCESSIBILITY

Research by the Motability Foundation shows that by 2035, there will be 1.35 million disabled drivers who will be reliant on public EV charging points. It is simply not acceptable for the infrastructure not to be fit for use by everyone.

In October 2022, a new standard for accessible charging (PAS 1899) was released, yet uptake of this standard has been woefully slow, with a negligible number of compliant chargers being installed.

There is currently a review into the implementation of PAS 1899 due to report early next year, and unless there is a significant improvement in the charging industry's, landowners' and operators' record of deployment, it will be clear that **a voluntary standard is not sufficient and a mandated requirement is needed.**

INCREASING DEMAND & FAIRNESS

Sales of EVs continue to rise, and the second-hand car market is beginning to grow, allowing even more people to access EVs. Yet, despite these encouraging trends, electric vehicle adoption remains concentrated in higher-income households and many drivers won't have access to the lower running costs and wider benefits of EVs for many years. This presents a fairness and access issue that could cause resentment and a feeling of 'them and us'.

The EVA support these three simple, pragmatic and cost-effective ways of getting a broader segment of society into EVs, which also offers wider benefits to the UK:

SALARY SACRIFICE

Salary sacrifice schemes for EVs can save employees 30-60% of the cost of personally leasing the same car.

The government should mandate that all medium and large companies (over 50 employees) must offer an EV salary sacrifice scheme for their employees. This could include both new and used cars, and vans.

This would be available to all employees subject to existing limitations on salary sacrifice. Implementing this policy would have the dual advantage of boosting the number of people driving clean cars and feeding the second-hand car market over time.

0% LOANS

Scotland and France have set a precedent for state provision of interest free loans for the purchase of electric vehicles.

The government could make a limited number of zero interest loans available to below-average income households who live in or near clean air zones. Loans would be available to purchase new or used electric cars, and would be paid back without interest over a 5 year period.

This can be delivered either solely by the government through an agency to administer the loans, or in partnership with private finance providers.

SOCIAL LEASING

Modelled on France's new social leasing scheme, the government should contract with UK based manufacturers to produce a certain number of 'no frills' electric cars per year which will be guaranteed for purchase by the state-backed scheme. Households below a certain income would then be eligible for a discounted lease.

The Government should target subsidies for EVs by introducing a subsidised EV leasing programme for lower income households. This measure could also be geographically targeted to areas impacted by clean air zones.

EV DRIVERS' MANIFESTO 2024 POLICY ASKS

1. Move subsidy costs off electricity
2. Reduce VAT on electricity
3. Reduce the planning regulation burdens on installing chargepoints
4. Grant CPOs 'Statutory Undertaker' status
5. Mandate for all businesses with more than 10 dedicated parking spaces to have at least one charger installed
6. Ensure a presumptive agreement for renters to install chargers
7. Allow homes near pavement parking to install a gully
8. Require all vehicle insurers to have a market reflective share of their books covering EVs
9. Mandate PAS 1899 if uptake has not increased significantly
10. Require all medium and large companies (over 50 employees) to offer an EV salary sacrifice scheme for their employees
11. Introduce zero interest loans for second-hand EVs
12. Introduce a subsidised EV leasing programme for lower income households.



The Electric Vehicle Association (EVA) England was established in June 2020 to offer a voice, services and representation to current and prospective electric vehicle drivers in England. EVA England is a non-profit community interest company founded by passionate EV drivers inspired by the benefits of electric driving and concerned by the health and climate impacts of the use of petrol and diesel cars and vans.

EVA England is an independent group and represent our members and the wider EV driver community.

Community Interest Company in England, number 12649115.