



## Long-Term Test Drive

Report by Auto Trader





We are the UK's largest digital automotive marketplace, where you can also compare lease deals from the UK's top providers, helping millions of drivers find their next car.

With so many makes, models, and new technologies on the roads, it's no surprise that committing to just one car long term can be daunting for a lot of drivers.

The following report explores the UK's attitudes towards finding the right car and the methods that motorists are using to ensure the vehicle they have in mind is the one for them – including using short-term leasing as a way of sizing up how well different options work for them, before going all in.

Over the coming pages we will delve into the new car must-haves that are most important to British drivers and dig a little deeper into the UK's attitudes both towards going electric and the impact that a prolonged 'test drive' would have on the uptake rate of electric vehicles (EVs).

Source:

Consumer data taken from the findings of a nationally representative survey of 2,025 UK drivers, August 2020.

# Executive Summary

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The most important factors drivers look for when looking for a new car include good fuel economy (65%), low maintenance costs (56%) and how enjoyable it is to drive (55%)

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1 in 3 also say how eco-friendly the vehicle is – in terms of emissions, for example – is important to them

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66% of motorists believe leasing a car for a while would help them to decide whether or not to buy the vehicle outright

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31% of drivers worry they might discover something they don't like about the car after they've bought it

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Younger motorists (aged 17-34) were found to be those most in favour of leasing as a form of prolonged test-drive



## The Long-Term Test Drive

Buying a new car can be both exciting and daunting. With so many available options and often a sizeable amount of money at stake, drivers need to be certain that their chosen vehicle is going to meet all of their needs and will continue to meet them for many years to come.

If only it were possible to experience a prolonged test drive period to really familiarise yourself with a vehicle; to understand how it handles and performs, how comfortable it is...

The good news is you can.

Leasing (Personal Contract Hire) is becoming increasingly popular as it not only makes driving a new vehicle more achievable for many, but it provides the perfect opportunity to try out all the features of a car for as little as 24 months.

This essentially provides a prolonged test drive, meaning after that period, drivers can buy their new car with confidence, or simply switch to another lease deal for a different car.

This idea of a long-term test drive offers drivers the time they need to really get to grips with a new model and its various specs before making a full time commitment to one car – a bit like dating!

So what are the things that are most important to British drivers when they are considering a new car?







## Purchasing Considerations

At the top of the list - by quite some way - is fuel economy; almost 2 in 3 motorists (65%) say good fuel economy is an important factor when looking for a new car, which given the current economic climate is perhaps not so surprising.

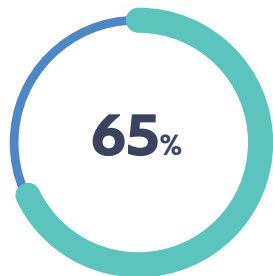
Similarly, low maintenance costs (56%) is another factor deemed crucial by drivers, which can have a knock on effect in terms of the amount of money involved in driving, beyond the initial outlay for the car. This is closely followed by how enjoyable the vehicle is to drive (55%).

**1 in 3** say how eco-friendly the vehicle is – in terms of emissions, for example – is important to them.

When we consider that the average driver spends 3 hours 22 minutes behind the wheel each week<sup>1</sup> – not to mention those of us who simply find the act of driving relaxing – it's easy to understand why enjoyment of driving is so high on the list of priorities.

Fourth on the list is comfortable seats (50%). Priorities then move onto size – ensuring the vehicle is not too small (37%) or too large (36%).

Decent storage space is also important to 35% of drivers and 1 in 3 say how eco-friendly the vehicle is – in terms of emissions, for example – is important to them.



65% of motorists say good fuel economy is an important factor when looking for a new car.

### The most important factors British drivers look for when purchasing a new car:

Good fuel economy	65%
Low maintenance costs	56%
Enjoyable to drive	55%
Comfortable seats	50%
The size (ensuring it's not too small)	37%
The size (ensuring it's not too big)	36%
Good storage space	35%
Eco-friendliness	33%
Good legroom	32%
Good rear-view visibility	30%
Good braking distance	25%
A quiet engine	25%
New in-car technologies	23%
Good headroom	20%
Good BHP (brake horsepower)	14%
A large, powerful engine	9%
Fast transition from 0-60mph	9%

<sup>1</sup> Auto Trader, Good Carma report, July 2020.

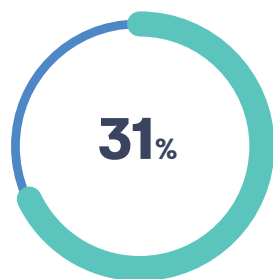
Our research also reveals that more than 1 in 3 drivers in the UK (38%) have been nervous to buy a new car outright, and so may prefer to lease it.

Of those, almost half (49%) worry about spending so much money in one go and almost 1 in 3 (31%) worry they might discover something they don't like about the car after they've bought it.

This is particularly true amongst a younger generation of drivers (those aged 17-24), 61% of whom have been nervous to buy a car outright.

60% of this group say that having to pay so much money in one go is a big concern and more than 1 in 2 (54%) are nervous to commit in case they later discover something about the car that they dislike.

For this group of drivers a prolonged test drive period could dispel any potential concerns with a vehicle and offer the peace of mind required to help convert their concerns into confidence.



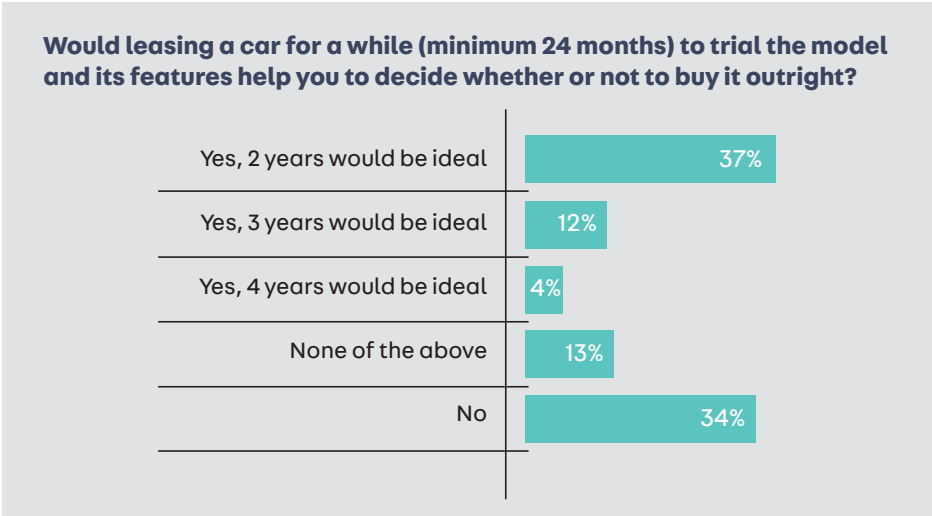
31% worry they might discover something they don't like about the car after they've bought it.



## Attitudes Towards Leasing

Leasing provides an opportunity for drivers to familiarise themselves with a new make and model of car and it seems that, for the majority of drivers, it's a concept they can get behind.

According to the research findings, two thirds of drivers (66%) believe leasing a car for a while would help them to decide whether or not to buy the vehicle outright later on down the line, providing the opportunity to test out the model and its features.



66% of drivers believe leasing a car for a while would help them to decide whether or not to buy the vehicle outright.

The younger motorists surveyed were found to be those most in favour of leasing as a form of prolonged test-drive, with 83% of drivers aged 17-34 saying this would be helpful, compared to just 54% of more seasoned drivers aged 55+.

According to the findings, UK drivers feel the ideal amount of time to lease a car for the purposes of testing it out is 24-36 months.

A sizeable proportion of motorists say a short term lease would also give them the opportunity to trial new technologies for the first time, such as blind-spot monitoring technology (41%), which warns the driver when a vehicle is in their blind spot.

The same number would also be interested to try out parking assist technology where the car is able to parallel park with minimal input from the driver.

31% of respondents would also be keen to lease a car that has in-car Wi-Fi capabilities and 28% would be interested in testing a vehicle with automatic emergency braking systems, in order to trial the technology.

In addition to trialling new features, we also asked our respondents about the other benefits of leasing which may appeal to them.

Younger motorists surveyed were found to be those most in favour of leasing as a form of prolonged test-drive.





**Thinking about automotive technologies which may or may not already exist, which of the following would you be interested to test out during a period of leasing?**

Not having to put it through its MOT every year	38%
The car always being inside the manufacturer's warranty	37%
Not worrying about the maintenance costs of maintaining a car which has been owned for several years or more	37%
Not worrying about the mechanics showing wear and tear over time – e.g. stiff gear box, unreliable engine, etc.	31%
Having a new model of car every few years	27%
Getting the newest in-car technology available with each new vehicle	24%
Not worrying about the car showing cosmetic wear and tear over time – e.g. scuffed seats, scratches on the body work, rusty windscreen wipers, etc.	20%



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## Is Leasing the Way to Encourage Mass Take-Up of EVs?

Despite the Government's 2035 deadline to ban all petrol and diesel vehicles from the roads, when it comes to electric vehicles (EVs) there is still some hesitation to invest in the technology from certain demographics.

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The vast majority - 70% - say they feel this would be helpful and on average, UK drivers say they would like to lease an EV for 2-3 years to get to grips with the technology and decide if it's right for them.

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We asked respondents if the opportunity to lease an electric car for a short while would help with the decision making process by providing an opportunity to try out the technology and dispel any lingering concerns.

The vast majority - 70% - say they feel this would be helpful and on average, UK drivers say they would like to lease an EV for 2-3 years to get to grips with the technology and decide if it's right for them.





## EV Executive Summary

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79% of drivers say they would consider purchasing an EV (or already are)

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40% of those who would consider an EV admit they have reservations about the capabilities and technology of electric vehicles despite vast improvements in the sector

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42% are encouraged by the low cost of running the vehicle and 38% would enjoy being able to fuel their car overnight if they had an at-home charging point

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Those who are open to the idea of an EV say they would consider purchasing an electric model in the next 3-4 years, on average

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UK drivers would like to lease an EV for 2-3 years to get to grips with the technology and decide if it's right for them

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Half of UK drivers (51%) feel nervous about how far they could travel on a single charge and 49% are concerned about the availability of charging points across the UK

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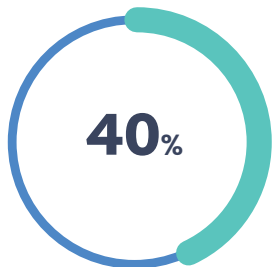
Drivers in London and Manchester are the most likely to adopt electric technology, where 84% say they would consider an EV



Of our sample of 2,025 drivers, just two percent claim to already own an electric vehicle and whilst a solid 79% say they would consider purchasing an EV (or already are), misconceptions and uncertainty around the technology still very much exist.

Indeed, even 40% of those who would consider an EV admit they have reservations about the capabilities and technology of electric vehicles.

A solid **79%** say they would consider purchasing an EV



40% of those who would consider an EV admit they have reservations about the capabilities and technology of electric vehicles.

### Would you ever consider purchasing an electric vehicle?

Yes, but I have reservations about the technology / capabilities of an EV	40%
Yes, but I would like to be able to test drive one first	37%
Yes, but I would like to lease one for a while first to be sure I like it	24%
Yes, I am already considering one	18%
N/A - I already have an EV	2%

A further 37% of those who would consider purchasing an EV would like to be able to test drive one first and almost 1 in 4 (24%) would like to lease one first, to be sure they like the vehicle before committing to the purchase.

Half of UK drivers **(51%)** feel nervous about how far they could travel on a single charge

Consumer nervousness around electric vehicles has been widely reported for some time now and despite concerted efforts to encourage the UK toward greener technology - including vast improvements in the technology and ever-increasing availability of charging points across the nation - there is still work to do to reinforce the ease and accessibility of this corner of the market.

Despite the average electric vehicle being able to cover approximately 100 miles on a single charge, range anxiety tops the list of worries drivers have about these vehicles, with more than half of UK drivers (51%) feeling nervous about how far they could travel on a single charge.



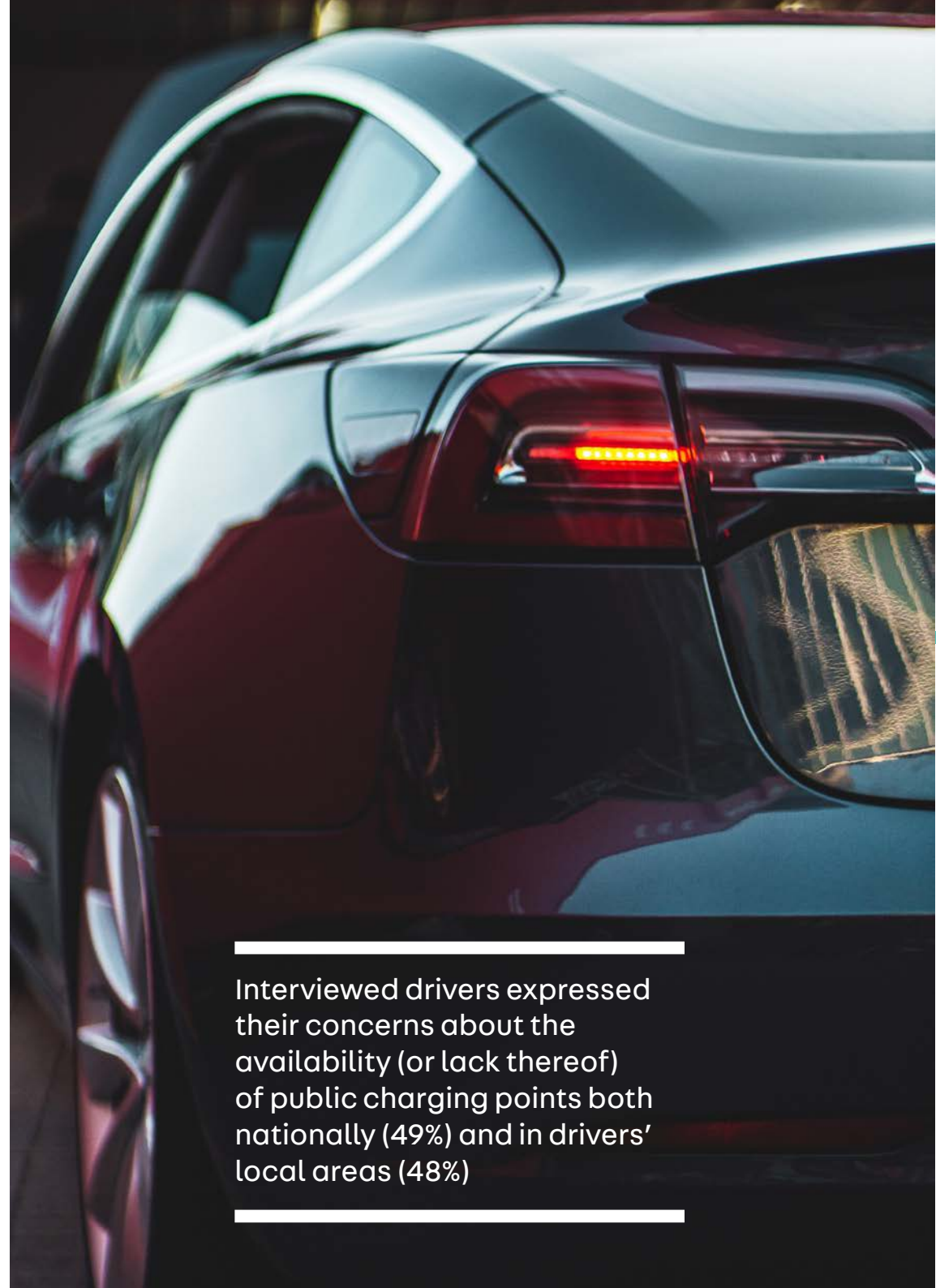
This is closely followed by concerns about the availability (or lack thereof) of public charging points both nationally (49%) and in drivers' local areas (48%) – yet sources confirm there are currently more than 19,000 charging points across the UK<sup>2</sup>.

It seems 44% of motorists also have concerns regarding the expense of these more technologically advanced models, whilst 42% say they have concerns around how long it would take to charge the vehicle.

Interestingly, only a small minority of drivers claim they would miss some of the more traditional elements of driving - with 7% confessing they would miss the purr of a traditionally fuelled engine.



<sup>2</sup>[zap-map.com/statistics/](https://zap-map.com/statistics/), August 2020



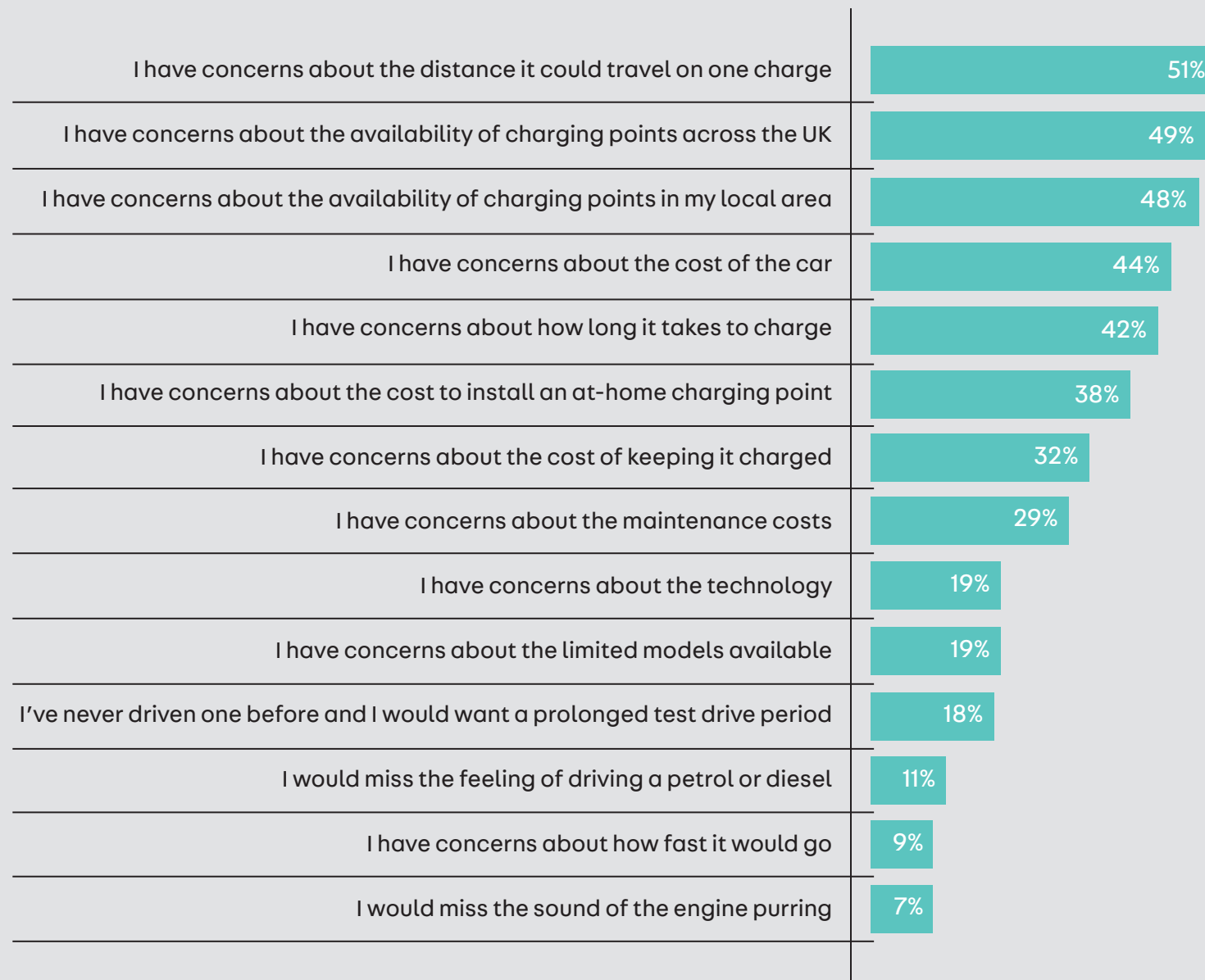
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Interviewed drivers expressed their concerns about the availability (or lack thereof) of public charging points both nationally (49%) and in drivers' local areas (48%)

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## What would put you off acquiring an electric vehicle currently?





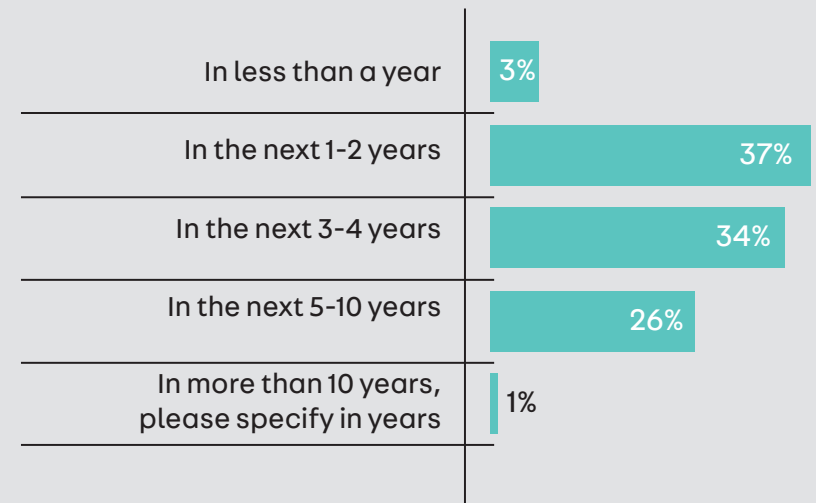
Those least likely to consider an EV are those aged 55 or above, 1 in 3 of whom were not interested in this type of vehicle.

Women were more likely than men to be opposed to the idea, with 27% saying they would never consider an EV, compared to just 16% of men. Drivers in Norwich are those least inclined to purchase an Electric Vehicle.

The data found that as more than 1 in 3 (36%) of Norwich-based motorists were opposed to the idea of purchasing an EVs, meanwhile drivers from London and Manchester were the most likely to, where 84% say they would consider an EV.

Our data suggests there could be an impending surge in demand for electric vehicles, as UK drivers who are open to the idea of an EV say they would consider purchasing an electric model in the next **3-4 years' time**, on average.

#### When might you consider purchasing an EV?

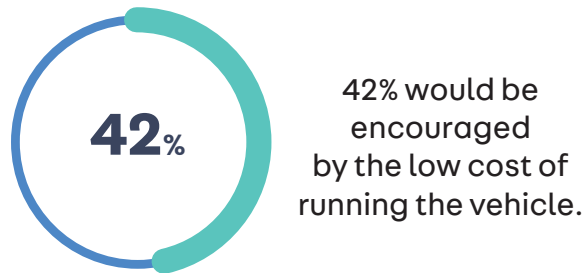


**84%** of drivers from London and Manchester were the most likely to consider an EV

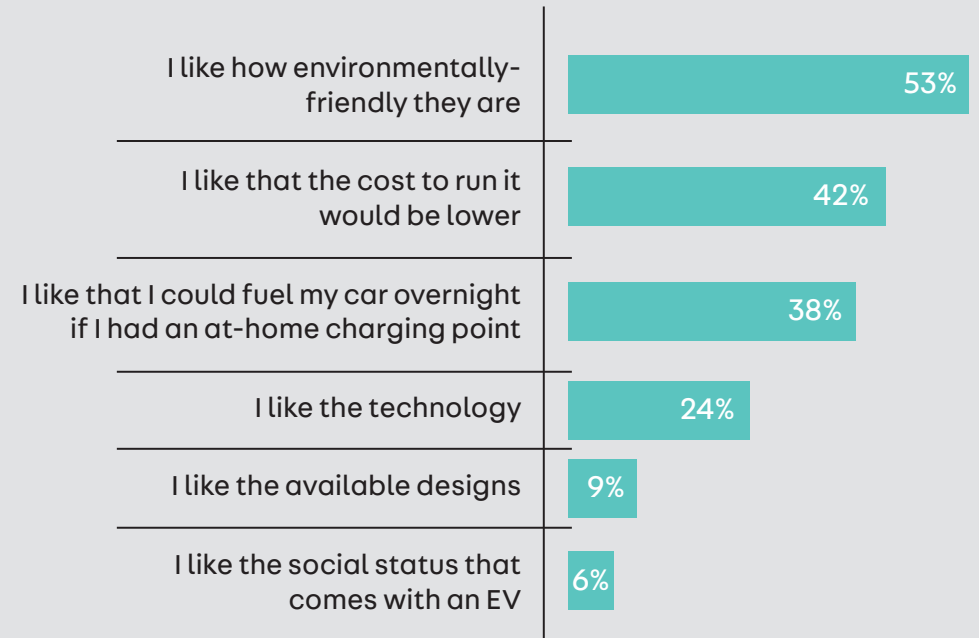
The data goes on to reveal it is the younger generation of drivers who are leading the charge for the earlier uptake of EVs, with 42% of motorists aged 17-34 saying they'd look to go electric in the next 1-2 years.

This group is also the least concerned about the functionality of EVs, as 3 in 4 claim they don't have concerns regarding the capabilities of electric vehicles.

When polled on the things about electric vehicles that appeal to them, more than half of drivers (53%) say they like how environmentally-friendly they are, 42% would be encouraged by the low cost of running the vehicle and 38% would enjoy being able to fuel their car overnight if they had an at-home charging point, instead of having to fill-up at petrol stations. Six percent even believe there's a certain social status that comes with owning an EV that they would enjoy.



### Which aspects of acquiring an electric vehicle appeal to you?



**38%** of drivers would enjoy being able to fuel their car overnight







## Conclusion

Finding the perfect car is not always easy.

The constant turnover of new models and technologies being introduced to the car industry every year, combined with the financial outlay and the approaching Government ban on traditionally fuelled vehicles, can make finding a new car overwhelming.

A prolonged test drive period in the form of a lease provides a good solution for those who are nervous to commit to just one car for the foreseeable future and is helping motorists across the UK to feel more confident in their new car purchasing decisions.



Interested in leasing? Find a car that meets all your needs on a lease term that suits you at [autotrader.co.uk/cars/leasing](https://www.autotrader.co.uk/cars/leasing).

Looking to find a great deal on your next new car? Check out Auto Trader's [brand new car deals](#) which features many listed at pre-haggled prices.