

Written evidence submitted by FairCharge

Incentivising the EV transition is a simple and effective route to cleaner air. Transport is responsible for a total of 25% of UK greenhouse gas emissions - over half if this (52%) come from cars. A 2018 report of the European Environment Agency found that electric vehicles offer “clear benefits” for local air quality largely due to zero exhaust emissions at street level.

Barriers to achieving national targets on air quality:

Major barriers to widespread EV uptake include high price points and lack of financial incentives; limited charging points with inequitable access; and pervasive misinformation regarding EV ownership, manufacture, and investments. FairCharge is calling on the Government to tackle these barriers to uptake by:

- Reducing the public EV charging VAT rate from 20% to 5%, bringing it into line with domestic charging,
- Recognise that the ambitious targets to phase out new petrol and diesel cars will only be achievable if all in society can access zero-emission driving,
- Investing in EV charge point infrastructure which is equitably accessible to all, and,
- Supporting the UK car industry with a robust industrial strategy and ZEV mandate to deliver the EV transition.

Local Authorities and air quality:

A lack of locally accessible charging points is a key barrier to widespread EV uptake, and there is currently no duty on local authorities to provide these - it is up to each area to decide, based on local priorities. As of 2022, more than seven in 10 UK councils had not published EV transition plans, despite being encouraged to do so by the Government. To facilitate equitable, efficient charge point roll out, the FairCharge campaign want the Government to appoint a Charging Tsar to oversee proceedings.

Air quality and inequality:

People who purchase EVs are typically found to be middle aged, well-educated, affluent men who live in urban areas, with access to charging at home. This socioeconomic demographic is not predicted to change significantly in the near future, leaving less affluent rural and urban areas out of the EV transition, and condemning these communities to continued negative impacts of ICE pollution.

Coordinating the EV transition:

The Government’s 2018 Road to Zero strategy announced plans to end sale of petrol and diesel cars by 2030, in line with the Committee on Climate Change’s recommendation that the market for EVs be 100% by 2035. To support this, the Government has provided grants - such as the On-Street Residential ChargePoint Scheme - to local governments with the objective of making EV ownership more affordable. Through the Road to Zero Strategy, the Government has committed £400m to the public-private Charging Infrastructure Investment Fund, however, the continued lack of uptake from less affluent local governments across these schemes demonstrates that this laissez-faire approach to the EV transition is leaving these communities behind, and that greater engagement, financial support, and incentivisation from national government is urgently required.

About FairCharge:

FairCharge is the national campaign group committed to an improved and accelerated transition to electrified road transport to ensure the UK meets its climate goals. We aim to ensure all in society can access the benefits of zero-emission driving. We provide information to policymakers to deliver the right investment,

infrastructure, and incentives for ease of EV uptake, and to educate consumers about EVs to increase consumer confidence and help facilitate the transition.

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