Northern Transport Voices

Attitudes to electric vehicles and charging options

May 2026

Introduction

Transport for the North supports the region's combined authorities by providing data and evidence to strengthen their transport plans and make the case for investment.

Many combined authorities across the North have set ambitious decarbonisation targets. Road transport remains the largest source of surface transport emissions in the region. The North's highway network accounts for around 23% of UK road emissions and 6% of total UK emissions.

Alongside wider transport measures, the shift to electric vehicles is critical. Investment in charging infrastructure is essential to build confidence, remove barriers and speed up adoption.

In 2023, we published research on consumer attitudes to electric vehicles. This report builds on that work and shows how views have changed over time, with a stronger focus on charging options.

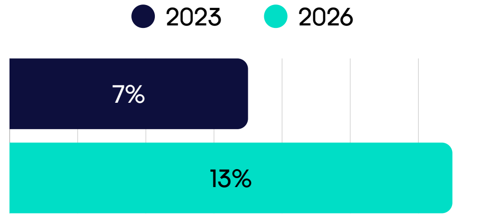
About the research

The research was delivered through Northern Transport Voices, our online research community. It brings together residents from across the North with a wide range of backgrounds and travel needs.

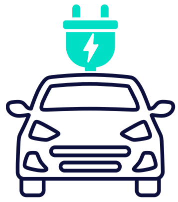
NTV members who own or lease a car or van took part in a survey between 13 January and 4 March 2026. We received 942 responses. The findings provide robust insight, supporting local decision making.

Key insights on the transition to electric vehicles

Confidence in electric vehicles is increasing, with more petrol and diesel drivers now considering electric vehicles. Over 13% of respondents said a battery electric vehicle is likely to be their next main vehicle. This compares to 7% in our 2023 research.



Satisfaction among current battery electric vehicle users is very high, **92% want to continue using an electric vehicle** next time they replace their car.



There is also movement among plug-in hybrid drivers, **43% said they expect their next vehicle to be fully electric.**

73%

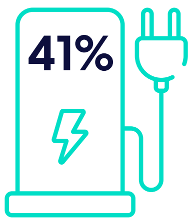
Timing is important. Around **73% of non-electric vehicle drivers expect to replace their car within four years** (55% within two years and a further 18% within four years). This creates a clear window to support the next wave of electric vehicle uptake.

"Fuel costs keep rising, charging feels more practical now and I want something quieter, cleaner and cheaper to run long term."

The second-hand market is becoming more dynamic. **More than 18% of people considering an electric or plug-in hybrid for their next vehicle said they would look to buy second-hand.** A healthy used market is vital to reduce costs and widen access.

Barriers to adoption persist. These include upfront and ongoing costs, access to charging, lack of clear information and, for some, a general dislike of electric vehicles. Some respondents also raised concerns about the introduction of pay-per-mile electric vehicle road tax.

Reducing the cost of public charging could make a difference. A total of 41% of those who do not use plug-in vehicles supported lower tariffs and 39% supported reducing VAT on public charging as ways to encourage switching.



The findings suggest that **no single incentive will work for everyone.** A suite of measures is likely to be most effective. These include financial incentives, lower charging costs and visible improvements to public charging infrastructure.

Views on electric vehicle charging

- Electric vehicle owners with a home charger **typically do most of their charging at home.** However, 29% also charge at work and 26% use chargers while travelling.
- **Access to off-street parking remains a key factor.** 60% of those who do not currently use plug-in vehicles said that availability of private off-street charging options would influence their choice of future home. This matters because 38% of households in the North do not have off-street parking. A growing number of vehicle owners would also explore cross pavement solutions.
- Electric vehicle owners **without access to a home charger rely on a mix of public charging options.** These include on-street charging, local charging hubs, en-route chargers and destination chargers. People considering an electric vehicle show similar patterns.
- **Most electric vehicle owners wait under 30 minutes to charge.** This includes 71% using rapid chargers and 83% using non-rapid chargers.
- **There is clear appetite for community-based charging.** Around two thirds of electric vehicle owners (68%) said they would potentially consider sharing their charger with others, such as a neighbour. A similar proportion (66%) said they would potentially consider using someone else's private charger.

> "I think it would be better value for money and probably a lot more convenient than commercial public charging points"

Key implications going forward

The evidence shows **growing confidence in electric vehicles**, particularly among existing users. However, many potential switchers still face **practical and financial barriers**.

The **next few years are critical**. A large proportion of drivers will replace their vehicles soon. Well-timed interventions could have a significant impact on uptake.

Charging provision needs to reflect different living situations. Authorities will need a **mix of on-street, hub-based, workplace and destination charging**, alongside support for innovative solutions.

Cost matters. Measures that reduce the price of vehicles and public charging are likely to be influential, particularly for those considering switching but not yet committed.

[Electric vehicle charging infrastructure visualiser]

[Electric vehicle charging infrastructure framework]

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