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Committee of Public Accounts

Public charge points for electric vehicles

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Committee of Public Accounts

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Summary

The rollout of public charge points for electric vehicles is gathering pace, but too few charge points are being installed outside of the south–east and London. Around 73,000 charge points were installed in the UK at the start of 2025, which is on track to reach the 300,000 public charge points that the Department for Transport (the Department) estimates is the minimum needed by 2030. However, these charge points also need to be installed in the right places; 43% are in London and the South–East, with other regions and rural areas more poorly served.

The Department is funding work to improve the spread of public charge points, but its actions are facing delay. In particular, it must act faster to support ultra–rapid charging at motorway service areas. The Department's ambition was for every motorway service area to have at least 6 ultra–rapid charge points by 2023, but this was only the case for 80 of the 114 motorway service areas by the start of 2025. The Department's rapid charging fund, which aims to future proof electricity connections on the strategic road network, has not yet issued any of its £950 million of funding five years after being launched. Its work to support local authorities has been more successful, but the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure programme faces risks as it enters delivery.

The Department has introduced regulations to improve the experience for people using public charge points, but it is too early to say if these are working. The regulations include making pricing clearer and less complicated and setting minimum standards for rapid charge point reliability. The Department must monitor the effectiveness of the new regulations and identify any emerging issues. This will include addressing the big difference in costs between using public charge points and private ones, in part caused by the higher value added tax charged, typically 20% compared to 5%. This particularly affects those without access to off–street parking and often means using an electric vehicle is more expensive for people who have less means to afford it.

The needs of drivers with disabilities have not been met in the rollout to date, and many charge points are inaccessible to them. The Department helped create an accessibility standard, but charge point operators and local authorities have said that they need a better understanding of how to apply it. The Department has put in place a review of the standard, and

must act quickly to address these issues as rollout continues to accelerate to avoid a large and potentially vulnerable section of the public being disadvantaged by design.

The government committed to phasing out new petrol and diesel car sales by 2030, with all new cars and vans sold being zero–emission from 2035. The Department must now plan for what is needed to support the widespread uptake of electric vehicles and rollout of public charge points. This includes developing a more granular understanding of where further support may be needed, such as in rural areas and remote parts of the road network where installing charge points is less commercially viable. The Department should also liaise with the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero to ensure all major road schemes deliver more charging points.

Introduction

The government has committed to phasing out new petrol and diesel car sales by 2030, with all new cars and vans sold being zero–emission from 2035. The shift to electric cars requires a new network of public charge points. While many drivers have driveways or garages where they can install a charge point for their private use, those without access to off–street parking will need to rely on public charge points. Even where drivers typically charge at home, they may need public charge points to charge their car during long journeys.

Public charge points are installed and maintained by charge point operators, private businesses who need enough people to use electric vehicles in an area for it to be profitable for them to install charge points. However, to give drivers confidence in switching to electric vehicles, these charge points need to be installed in advance of need. This may not happen at the pace and in the locations needed without government intervention.

The Department for Transport (the Department) leads on the strategy to reduce carbon emissions from cars. The Office for Zero Emission Vehicles is a team working across government to support the transition to zero–emission vehicles, with staff from both the Department for Transport and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), but which ultimately reports to the former.

Conclusions and recommendations

1. **There is a clear geographical divide in the location of public charge points.** Around 73,000 public charge points were installed in the UK as of January 2025, which is on track to reach the 300,000 the Department estimates is the minimum needed by 2030. These have not been evenly spread, with 43% of public charge points being in London and the South–East. While the Department's local electric vehicle infrastructure (LEVI) programme aims to improve the regional spread of charge points across the country, some areas, such as rural ones, may continue to be less commercially viable for operators and may require further government intervention. Areas will have very different needs depending on local differences, for example in how much off–street parking is available for private charge points or whether an area attracts large numbers of seasonal tourists. However, the Department's current measure of the number of 'charge points per head' in each region does not reflect these variations and what is required in the future. The Department requires a more detailed understanding to identify where further support may be needed.

RECOMMENDATION
As part of its Treasury Minute Response, the Department should set out how identifies and assesses sub–regional variability in public charge point need, and how it might use this to see where intervention is needed in future.

2. **Delays to the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) programme mean that local authorities need further support.** The £450m LEVI programme supports local authorities in England to install charge points where they identify they are most needed. In setting up the programme the Department was able to apply lessons from its previous work, such as providing funding to build capability and providing central support, which has resulted in all eligible local authorities engaging with the LEVI programme. However, the Department expected local authorities to move at a quick pace, and acknowledged that more time than expected was needed to build local authority capacity and respond to issues that emerged. These issues have led to delays; as of October 2024 only 10 out of 78 projects had

been approved for delivery against a March 2025 deadline. These delays have meant that many local authorities will be procuring at similar times, posing the risk that the market may not have the capacity to serve them all and some procurements fail. The Department must ensure that local authorities remain supported to conduct successful procurements and secure good value through competition between operators. It's extension of the programme's capability funding beyond March 2025 is a welcome development in maintaining its central support.

RECOMMENDATION

The Department should write to the committee within six months with an update on progress with LEVI, in particular:

a. The amounts of money spent

b. The number of projects which have completed procurement

c. Whether any procurements failed

d. How the Department is continuing to support local authorities delivering their projects

e. How the Department is applying lessons from LEVI to its other programmes engaging local authorities

3. **The Department has been slow to ensure the availability of ultra-rapid charge points at motorway service areas.** Motorway service areas are vital for providing confidence to drivers that charge points are widespread and will be available on longer journeys. The Department had an ambition that operators would install 6 ultra-rapid charge points at every motorway service area by the end of 2023. By January 2025, only 80 out of 114 motorway service areas had met this target. The number of ultra-rapid charge points within one mile of the wider strategic road network has grown more quickly than the Department expected, with 2,377 of these installed in July 2024, against a target of 2,500 by 2030. However, there remain significant stretches of the network with too few charge points. In 2020, the Department announced the rapid charging fund (RCF), intended to future-proof electricity capacity on the strategic road network in the longer term by part-funding the capital costs of upgraded grid connections. But after nearly five years the Department has yet to issue any of its £950 million RCF funding, and it remains to be seen how it will support charging at motorway service areas in the longer term.

RECOMMENDATION
The Department should write to the committee within six months setting out the steps it is taking to address gaps in ultra-rapid charge point provision across the strategic road network, particularly at motorway service areas.

4. **The Department has put in place regulations to improve consumer experience, but some drivers pay significantly more than others to charge their vehicles.** In 2023, the Department introduced the Public Charge point Regulations to address early consumer concerns around price transparency, payment complexity and reliability. Public charge points also need to provide a range of live data, including whether they are available to use. It is too early to say whether these regulations are working in practice, and localised issues or non-compliance may emerge. The Department's ongoing consumer research may also find new concerns that could require intervention. Drivers who have no option but to rely on public charge points pay significantly more to charge their vehicles, in part due to higher value added tax being charged, typically 20% compared to 5% VAT, which particularly affects those without access to off-street parking. While the Department monitors the costs of different charging behaviours and has made efforts to widen access to cheaper private home charging, it was unable to describe how these differing costs fall on different groups in society. Should these differential impacts not be understood and remedied, different and sometimes disadvantaged groups will face inequalities in the cost of driving.

RECOMMENDATION
As part of its Treasury Minute Response, the Department should set out:

a. How it will monitor the impact of the Public Charge point Regulations, including at the local level.

b. How it will monitor the cost of public charge point use by different groups in society.

c. How the issue of VAT on public charging points will be considered by HMT and the Department.

5. **The interests of drivers with disabilities have been left behind in the rollout of public charge points.** By 2035, 1.35 million drivers with disabilities are expected to be partially or wholly dependent on public charge points, but many charge points, or their surrounding environment, have features which make them inaccessible. The Department co-sponsored the creation of a standard for charge point accessibility. However, the Department has not mandated its use and the Motability Foundation report that two years

on from its launch, there are still no charge points in the UK which are fully compliant with the standard. Charge point operators and local authorities have reported that they need to better understand what compliance with the standard means in practice. In response, the Department put in place a review of the standard to identify practical issues with it, and to understand what actions may be needed to improve charge point accessibility. This could include working with other countries to align accessibility standards, which would help build international supply chains for components. Failure to address problems with uptake of the standard quickly will mean that the network will continue to develop without meeting the needs of drivers with disabilities.

RECOMMENDATION

As part of its Treasury Minute Response, the Department should set out:

a. The outcome of the review of the charge point accessibility standard and what actions it is taking to ensure that charge point accessibility is improved.

b. What it is doing to encourage alignment of accessibility standards for charge points internationally.

6. **The Department has more to do in planning ahead for the widespread adoption of electric vehicles.** The uptake of electric vehicles and rollout of public charge points is expected to increase over the coming years, as new petrol and diesel vehicle sales are phased out. The Department must now determine what actions are needed for the next phase of the rollout in ensuring that the public charging network can meet the needs of all drivers, and not just enthusiastic early adopters of electric vehicles. This includes understanding what challenges might remain in getting to the harder to reach locations and users. The Government recognises that the processes to receive electricity grid connections are unfit for purpose and take too long. Government is working with others to speed this up, but the queue is growing, with competing demands from other activities which may not all be satisfied if grid connections do not accelerate. The Department has made changes to simplify planning processes, but there remain bottlenecks, such as changes to traffic regulation orders, which will take longer to address. Wider aspects to support the transition such as considering the charge point demand created by new roads investment and ensuring the fire safety of vehicles will also need addressing. Not all major road schemes deliver more charging points and more co–ordinated approach between the Department of Transport and Department for Energy Security and Net Zero could improve this.

RECOMMENDATION

As part of its Treasury Minute Response, the Department should set out:

a. How it is developing its vision for a well–functioning public charging network, and the steps it will need to take next to ensure the network develops in the way intended. This should include how traffic regulation orders about dedicated parking bays for electric vehicles could be simplified.

b. How it will improve coordination with the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero to ensure all major road schemes deliver more charging points.

1 Expanding the rollout of public charge points

Introduction

1. On the basis of a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, we took evidence from the Department for Transport (the Department) about public charge points for electric vehicles.[1] The government has committed to phasing out new petrol and diesel car sales by 2030, with all new cars and vans sold being zero–emission from 2035. This shift to electric cars requires a new network of public charge points. While most drivers have driveways or garages where they can install a charge point for their private use, those without access to off–street parking will need to rely on public charge points. Even where drivers typically charge at home, they may need public charge points to charge their car during long journeys.[2]

2. Public charge points are installed and maintained by charge point operators, private businesses who need enough people to use electric vehicles in an area for it to be profitable for them to install charge points. However, to give drivers confidence in switching to electric vehicles, these charge points need to be installed in advance of need. This may not happen at the pace and in the locations needed without government intervention.[3]

3. The Department for Transport (the Department) leads on the strategy to reduce carbon emissions from cars. The Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) is a team working across government to support the transition to zero–emission vehicles, with staff from both the Department and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), but which ultimately reports to the former.[4]

4. In 2022, DfT published Taking charge: the electric vehicle infrastructure strategy (the strategy), which set out its vision to remove charging infrastructure as a barrier to the adoption of electric vehicles, estimating that a minimum of 300,000 public charge points by 2030 would be needed to meet this. DfT identified that its role was to accelerate a nationwide rollout of public charge points and remove barriers to uptake.

1 C&AG's Report, Public Chargepoints for electric vehicles, Session 2024–25, HC 379, 13 December 2024
2 C&AG's Report, paras 1–2, 1.2
3 C&AG's Report, para 1.3
4 C&AG's Report, para 3

Distribution of public charge points

5. Around 73,000 public charge points had been installed by the start of 2025, which is on track to reach the 300,000 the Department estimates is the minimum needed by 2030.[5] Since 2020, the number of charge points has increased at an average of 35% every year and will need to continue increasing by around a third every year to meet the ambition for 2030. However, public charge point installations have not been evenly spread, with 43% of public charge points being in London and the South–East, and only 15% in England being installed in rural areas.[6]

6. The Department recognises that there is not an even spread of public charge points across the country.[7] It told us that its Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) programme, which it estimates will add more than 100,000 new charge points across England alone, will help address this problem. It explained that LEVI funding was allocated to support a broader regional spread and target areas that needed it most, using factors such as population, amount of off–street parking, and present charge point numbers, with uplifts for rurality and deprivation. The Department chose to work through local authorities to make use of their local knowledge in determining the right approach for their communities in where they should be located.[8]

7. Different areas have different requirements for where public charge points should be located and how many are needed. The Department explained that the proportion of public charge points in rural areas broadly aligns with their population and in general 86% of houses in these areas have off–street parking, compared to 45% for urban ones. However, at a more local level you could have a village with a lot of terraced housing which would require more public charge points than a suburban community in a city which has a lot of off–street parking.[9] Similarly, tourist areas might have seasonal changes in charging demand when their populations significantly increase at certain points of the year. The Department stated that it has seen local authorities considering these kinds of aspects in their plans for charging in their areas, though some places, such as national parks, may struggle due to their distance from the electricity grid.[10]

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5 C&AG's Report, para 6; HM Government, Electric vehicle public charging infrastructure statistics: January 2025, February 2025, Headline Figures

6 C&AG's Report para 7; HM Government, Electric vehicle public charging infrastructure statistics: January 2025

7 Q 6

8 Qq 6, 19, 21

9 Qq 19 21

10 Qq 26 58

8. However, the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority reported to us that while the LEVI programme is attempting to mitigate broader regional inequalities, operators bidding for these contracts are still likely to focus on more commercially viable areas within regions. It explained that rural areas tend to be less financially viable, with individuals having to travel further to reach public charge points. As a result, further public intervention may be needed to support adequate charging in these areas.[11]

9. The Department's current measure of the number of 'charge points per head' in each region does not reflect the variations within regions, or what is required in the future.[12] We challenged the Department as to what it would do if the distribution of charge points did not improve ahead of the 2030 target. The Department responded that whilst these would be matters for a future spending review, it does regularly monitor the situation to ensure they have an overview of the situation and can see if issues of concern emerge.[13]

The Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) programme

10. The £450m LEVI programme supports local authorities in England to install charge points where they identify they are most needed.[14] The Department has learned important lessons from previous schemes such as its On-Street Residential Charge point scheme. Many central government grants to local authorities are demand-led, requiring local authorities to submit applications for funding, meaning that funding goes to local authorities with the capability to make good applications, rather than necessarily to where it may be most needed.[15] With LEVI, the Department allocated all local authorities with both capital funding and a share of £50 million of capability funding to hire staff so that local authorities could then plan projects to use with their capital funding. It also provided technical and commercial expertise through a support body. This has meant that all eligible local authorities have engaged with LEVI.[16]

11. However, the Department expected local authorities to move at a quick pace, and build their capability to plan for charge point for rollout at the same time as developing projects to deliver. As a result, it took local authorities longer to develop plans to the Department's standards than expected.[17] The Department acknowledged that capability funding needed

11 EVS0018
12 Q20, 26
13 Qq 27, 48, 50
14 Q 19; C&AG's Report para 4
15 Q21, 51; C&AG's Report para 2.6
16 Qq 7, 51, 53; C&AG's Report paras 2.6–2.7
17 C&AG's Report para 10

to be provided at the earliest opportunity, and prior to the capital funding.[18] Many local authorities had also planned to use commercial frameworks to procure their charge points, however, it was determined late on in the programme that doing so in this way was not in line with procurement regulations, meaning many had to change their approach. The Department stated that they had provided advice and support to authorities to ensure that all projects had a route to market, as well as providing template documents to replicate some of the benefits of using a framework.[19]

12. These issues have led to delays; by October 2024 only 10 out of 78 projects had been approved for delivery against a March 2025 deadline. These delays have meant that many local authorities are going to market at similar times, posing the risk that the market may not have the capacity to serve them all and some procurements fail.[20] The Department must ensure that local authorities remain supported to conduct successful procurements and secure good value through competition between operators. The Department stated that the market overall is 'fiercely competitive', and did not want to shuffle individual procurements around as this would just artificially delay some local authorities. The Department told us, however, that it does monitor the situation and let local authorities know what is in the procurement pipeline so they can make choices about when is best to approach the market.[21] It has also extended the programme's capability funding beyond March 2025 to continue supporting local authorities.[22]

Ultra rapid charging on the strategic road network

13. Public ultra–rapid charge points across along motorways and major A–roads (collectively known as the strategic road network) are necessary to address "range anxiety" amongst motorists. Motorway service areas in particular act like the "shop window" for providing confidence to drivers that charge points are widespread.[23]

14. The Department had an ambition that operators would install six ultra rapid charge points at every motorway service area by the end of 2023. However, only around half installed that many charge points by that time, and by January 2025 only 80 out of 114 met this target. The Department acknowledged that there was probably a degree of naivete about how

18 Q 51
19 Q 5; C&AG's Report para 10
20 Q44–45, C&AG's Report para 10
21 Qq 9, 45
22 Qq 51–52
23 Q 61

long it would take when setting its ambition of six by 2023, particularly in how difficult it would be to secure electricity grid connections in locations that are tough to get enough power to at a cost that is not prohibitive.[24] It anticipated that 100 would meet this target by summer, with all but four having at least six ultra–rapid charge points by the end of 2026.[25]

15. The Department stated that there was not necessarily a very scientific underpinning for using six ultra–rapid charge points as its benchmark today, however, meeting charge point demand in the longer term might require much more than this, and in July 2024 only around 10% of motorway service areas in England had the power capacity needed to meet demand to at least 2035.[26]

16. The number of ultra rapid charge points installed within one mile of the wider strategic road network has exceeded the Department's expectations, with 2,377 installed by July 2024, against a target of 2,500 by 2030.[27] However, distribution remains a problem; for example, there are stretches of major A–roads in the South West, West and the North where there are not enough of these charge points. The Department stated that on major A–roads, where there is a some flexibility in where operators may choose to install charge points, it sees these gaps reducing each quarter. While it anticipates that the commercial attractiveness of these locations will mean the private sector addresses these gaps, if concerns around particular areas emerged, it would look at these.[28] We expect that this will prove particularly true for more remote A roads.

17. In 2020 the Department announced the rapid charging fund, intended to future proof electricity capacity on the strategic road network in the longer term, by part–funding the capital costs of upgraded grid connections. However, nearly five years after its announcement, the Department has yet to issue any of its £950 million of funding.[29] ChargeUK, which represents many of the companies installing charge points, stated that several months have passed with limited updates, creating unhelpful uncertainty, and clear direction on the status of the fund is needed for industry to plan investments with confidence.[30] The Department stated that when this programme was first conceived, the world was very different and much more appetite for private investment has emerged since, and there have also been changes in how electricity upgrades are funded. The programme has also had to navigate competition concerns in the sector as well as the risk of legal

24 Q 63; C&AG's Report para 12
25 Qq 63, 73
26 Q 76; C&AG's Report para 13
27 C&AG's Report para 11
28 Qq 29, 58–59; C&AG's Report 2.17
29 C&AG's Report Figure 7
30 EVS0015

challenge. These aspects mean that the programme's original concept is probably not how it will work in the future, and the Department hopes to be able to provide more information shortly.[31]

Next steps in developing the public charge point network

18. The uptake of electric vehicles and rollout of public charge points is expected to increase over the coming years, as new petrol and diesel vehicle sales are phased out. The Department's 2022 electric vehicle infrastructure strategy contained a series of commitments intended to accelerate the pace of charge point installation, address barriers and improve public confidence to enable this period of rapid growth. The Department has carried out the majority of these commitments, with its two major programmes, LEVI and the RCF, ongoing.[32] The Department must now determine what actions are needed for the next phase of the rollout in ensuring that the public charging network can meet the needs of all drivers, and not just enthusiastic early adopters of electric vehicles.[33] This includes understanding what challenges might remain in getting to the harder to reach locations and users.

19. As with motorway service areas, many of these locations are limited by the strength of the local electricity network and the ability to enhance and connect to it. The Government recognises that the processes to receive electricity grid connections are increasingly unfit for purpose and take too long, and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and Ofgem have put in place a Connections Action Plan to seek to remedy this. However, the connections queue is still growing, with competing demands from other activity such as housing developments and new housing and internet cloud storage, which may not all be satisfied if grid connections do not accelerate. [34] When asked how the Department is working with grid operators to enable charge point installation specifically, the Department explained that there remain challenges with inconsistent process between network operators, and with people being aware of the standing charges they would pay when they request an enhanced connection. The Department stated that it did a piece of work with charge point companies and the Energy Networks Association on the specific grid connection challenges they face, to get them to work together more efficiently and smooth out processes. [35]

31 Qq71–72; C&AG's Report para 13
32 C&AG's Report para 8
33 Q 84
34 Qq 81, 98; C&AG's Report 14
35 Q 81

20. Similarly, many planning processes were not designed with charge point operators in mind, causing unnecessary additional cost and time. The Department explained that it had recently announced a series of changes to ease planning barriers and make it easier to install a charge point, such as greater permitted development rights, and streamlining the consents needed to install charge points on public highways.[36] However, there remain bottlenecks; for example, dedicating parking bays for electric vehicles requires a Traffic Regulation Order which can take a number of weeks to carry out. The Department replied that it is currently testing a digital system to speed up the application time to a couple weeks. When challenged on why it could take until 2026 to implement changes from a review to assess whether Traffic Regulation Orders were needed at all, the Department stated that removing these orders might take choices away from local authorities to decide on the mix of parking they need. However, the same argument could have been made in advance of changes to permitted development in the planning system. The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero is also intending to consult on process changes for securing access to third party land for energy infrastructure upgrades.[37]

21. In addition to removing barriers to charge point rollout, enabling the transition to electric vehicles requires addressing wider aspects such as ensuring that charge point demand is considered when new major road schemes are created, and fire safety techniques are updated.[38] In written correspondence provided after our evidence session the Department stated that, while electric vehicles have not been found to be more at risk of fire than internal combustion engines, it is a different kind of fire which requires different techniques to put out. The Department stated that it has been working with fire brigades to develop a handbook on what the best techniques are for particular kinds of electric vehicle fire, and that in July 2023 it had published guidance for fire safety for covered car parks.[39] The National Fire Chiefs Council stated that aspects such as ensuring charge points do not block fire hydrants or impede access to buildings, and providing better information to the public about the warning signs of an electric vehicle fire must also be addressed.[40]

36 Qq 8, 102
37 Qq 100–102, C&AG's Report Figure 9
38 Q 60
39 Qq 3–4; Letter from Department for Transport to PAC, 31 January 2025
40 EVS0006

2 Improving drivers' experience of using public charge points

Consumer experience

22. In 2021, the Department consulted on drivers' experience of using public charge points, identifying that the use of public charge points was becoming too complex. In particular, there were too many different payment methods required between different operators, pricing was often unclear and charge points were often unreliable.[41]

23. In 2023, the Department introduced the Public Charge point Regulations to address these concerns. These are being introduced over two years to November 2025, but most are already in force. Regulations that are in force include:

- Making prices clearer and easier to compare by requiring the maximum price for a charging session to be displayed in a consistent format across charge points
- Making it easier to pay, by requiring all rapid charge points and new charge points of 8Kw and above to have contactless payments, and all charge points must have free 24/7 helplines
- Improving the reliability of charging, by introducing a requirement that all rapid charge points must meet a 99% reliability standard.
- Charge points must provide a range of live data to motorists including where they are located and whether they are available to use, which the Department stated can be aggregated by third party companies to help drivers locate charge points.[42]

24. When asked how it will monitor whether the regulations are working as intended the Department stated that it is only just starting to see the impact of these regulations and will keep them under review, in part

41 C&AG's Report para 15

42 Q 82; C&AG's Report paras 15, 3.3 and Figure 10

through the public attitudes work that the Department does to monitor consumer sentiment about electric vehicles. It anticipates that this research will also alert it to new concerns, such as perceived barriers to adoption by drivers who do not use an electric vehicle, as well as the likelihood of existing electric vehicle owners to switch back to petrol or diesel vehicles.[43] In looking at whether areas of poor reliability could emerge within the 99% reliability standard for rapid chargers, the Department responded that the 99% standard applied to each charge point operator and that they thought it was exacting enough to ensure there was not much variability across an operator's network. It stated that it will be monitoring the data on reliability and anticipates that the wider electric vehicle community are also likely to be paying attention to which operators meet the standard or otherwise.[44]

The cost of charging

25. The Department expects that most people will charge their vehicles at home using private charge points, however, those reliant solely on public charging, such as those without access to off–street parking, pay significantly more to charge their vehicles. This is because the cost of public charging reflects aspects such as the wholesale price of electricity, charge point operator margins, and the difference between the value added tax charged on electricity from private (5%) and public charge points (20%). This means drivers using public charge points can pay around two to three times more to charge their vehicle than someone charging at home, depending on the type of charge point used.[45]

26. The Department stated that it monitors the different prices charged by different networks, and models the costs of different charging behaviours, such as whether someone does all their charging overnight on a driveway or entirely on more expensive rapid charging on the public network.[46] The Department has also made efforts to widen access to home charging rates for those that park on–street through issuing guidance around using gullies and other means to safely house cables across pavements.[47] As the market is maturing, it is starting to see cheaper tariffs appear for consumers if they do things like cede control over when their vehicle charges.[48]

43 Qq 82, 84
44 Q 83
45 C&AG's Report para 3.8
46 Qq 89–91
47 Q 97
48 Q 36

27. The Department acknowledged that there are certain demographic groups who are less likely to have off street parking, meaning that people may pay more to drive electric vehicles due to the type of home they live in.[49] For example, the Motability Foundation stated that disabled people are less likely to own their own home and have access to off–street parking with private charging, which impacts them financially.[50] The Department stated that the cost disparity in charging, depending on whether one has access to off–street parking or not, is probably the single biggest challenge to the electric vehicle transition in the UK.[51] However, while monitoring that cost disparity, it was not monitoring specifically how different groups of people were impacted by it. It told us that it could do so in future.[52]

Charge point accessibility

28. By 2035, 1.35 million drivers with disabilities are expected to be partially or wholly dependent on public charge points, but many charge points, or their surrounding environment, have features which make them inaccessible. These include features such as charge points being placed on kerbs or with obstructions which present difficulties for wheelchair users, and the weight of the cable or force required to attach the connector being too great. In 2022, the Department co–sponsored the creation of a standard with the Motability Foundation to set minimum standards for charge point accessibility, covering areas such as the physical aspects of their placement and surroundings, their design and specification, and the information and indicators provided.[53]

29. However, the Department has not mandated use of the standard. The Motability Foundation told us that two years on from its launch, there are still no charge points in the UK which are fully compliant with the standard. Charge point operators and local authorities have reported that they need to better understand what compliance with the standard means in practice.[54] The Department stated that it believes the standard to be the first in the world. It told us that it has put in place a review of the standard with the British Standards Institution and wider stakeholders to learn about whether the standard works and address practical issues, such as how people will know they have complied. The Department also said the review would identify what further actions may be needed to improve charge

49 Qq 95–97
50 EVS0007
51 Q 92
52 Qq 94–95
53 C&AG's Report paras 16, 3.10–3.11
54 EVS0007; C&AG's Report para 16

point accessibility, and will make recommendations in early 2025.[55] In the meantime, it stated that it has asked local authorities to consider how they are taking accessibility into account through their LEVI projects.[56]

30. One of the barriers identified by charge point operators is the availability of components for an accessible charge point. Both the Association for Renewable Energy and Clean Technology (REA) and the Motability Foundation report that most operators do not produce their own hardware, and so must source components from international supply chains which create components for charging infrastructure across the globe. Surmounting this barrier may require alignment and agreement internationally on what is an accessible charge point, to improve the availability of components which could construct compliant charge points.[57]

31. Many disabled people are reliant on their cars as existing public transport does not adequately cater for their needs.[58] Failure to address problems with the uptake of the standard will mean that the public charge point network will continue to develop without meeting the needs of drivers with disabilities.[59]

55 Qq 79, 87; C&AG's Report para 3.13
56 Q 87
57 EVS0008, EVS0007
58 EVS0007
59 C&AG's Report para 16

Formal minutes

Monday 3 March 2025

Members present

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, in the Chair

Mr Clive Betts

Peter Fortune

Sarah Green

Sarah Hall

Lloyd Hatton

Rebecca Paul

Declaration of interests

The following declarations of interest relating to the inquiry were made:

20 January 2025

The Chair declared the following interest: Chartered surveyor.

Clive Betts declared the following interest: owner and driver of electric vehicles.

Public charge points for electric vehicles

Draft Report (*Public charge points for electric vehicles*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 31 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Introduction agreed to.

Conclusions and recommendations agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Fourteenth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available (Standing Order No. 134).

Adjournment

Adjourned till Thursday 6 March at 9.30 a.m.

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the inquiry publications page of the Committee's website.

Monday 20 January 2025

Jo Shanmugalingam, Second Permanent Secretary, Department for Transport; **Nick Shaw**, Deputy Director, Joint Head, Office for Zero Emission Vehicles; **Richard Bruce CBE**, Director, Office for Zero Emission Vehicles Directorate	Q1-102

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the inquiry publications page of the Committee's website.

EVS numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

1	Cruden, Proffessor Andrew (Associate Dean Infrastructure, University of Southampton); and FEVER team	EVS0011
2	British Rental and Leasing Association	EVS0001
3	ChargeUK	EVS0015
4	Energy UK	EVS0005
5	He, Dr Yinglong (Lecturer, University of Surrey)	EVS0002
6	Healthy Air Coalition	EVS0004
7	Macquarie Asset Management	EVS0013
8	Motability Foundation	EVS0007
9	National Fire Chiefs Council	EVS0006
10	REA - Association for Renewable Energy and Clean Technology	EVS0008
11	Roadchef	EVS0003
12	Stobart, Mr Richard (Founder at char.gy Limited)	EVS0009
13	The West of England Mayoral Combined Authority	EVS0018
14	Transport for London with London Councils and the Greater London Authority (GLA),	EVS0016
15	Transport for the North	EVS0012
16	Trojan Energy Limited	EVS0010
17	Zemo Partnership	EVS0014

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the publications page of the Committee's website.

Session 2024–25

Number	Title	Reference
13th	Improving educational outcomes for disadvantaged children	HC 365
12th	Crown Court backlogs	HC 348
11th	Excess votes 2023-24	HC 719
10th	HS2: Update following the Northern leg cancellation	HC 357
9th	Tax evasion in the retail sector	HC 355
8th	Carbon Capture, Usage and Storage	HC 351
7th	Asylum accommodation: Home Office acquisition of former HMP Northeye	HC 361
6th	DWP Customer Service and Accounts 2023-24	HC 354
5th	NHS financial sustainability	HC 350
4th	Tackling homelessness	HC 352
3rd	HMRC Customer Service and Accounts	HC 347
2nd	Condition and maintenance of Local Roads in England	HC 349
1st	Support for children and young people with special educational needs	HC 353