



Department for Transport

Public attitudes towards electric vehicles: 2015

About this release

This report summarises people's attitudes towards electric vehicles. The report is based on a survey module, which was included in the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) February 2015 Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (formerly the Omnibus Survey). The questions were commissioned and designed by the Department for Transport.

The statistics in this report relate to adults aged 16 and over living in private households in Great Britain. Where sample sizes are sufficient, differences by factors such as sex, age and region have been examined.

A similar module of questions was included in the February 2014 Opinions and Lifestyle Survey so some comparisons can be made over time.

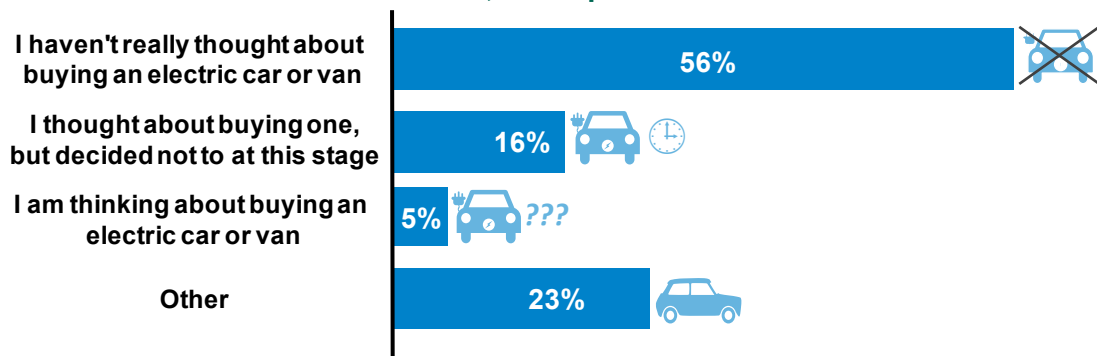
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The 2015 survey results found that 5% of respondents said that they were thinking about buying an electric car or van.

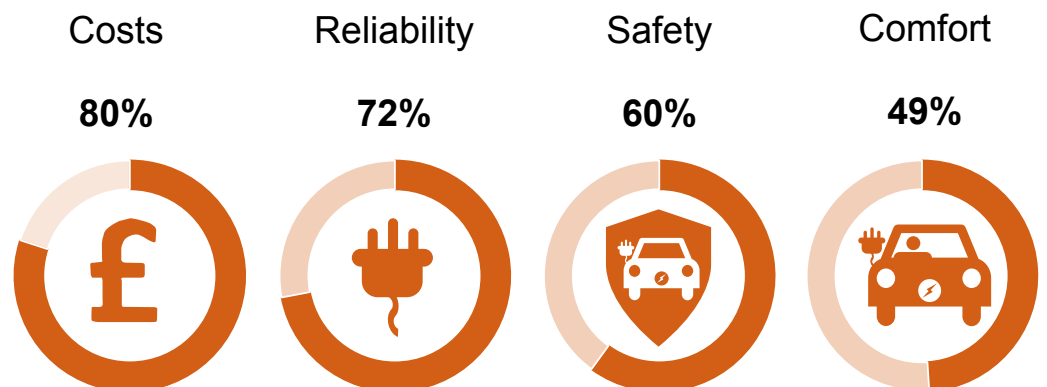
- The latest Vehicle Licensing statistics for the period Jan - March 2015 show that 2.8% of all new car registrations were accounted for by battery and hybrid electric vehicles.
- Just over half of the respondents in this survey haven't really thought about buying an electric car or van.

Attitudes to electric cars and vans, all respondents



- Driving licence holders reported that the most important factors they considered when buying a car or van were costs and reliability.

Important factors when buying a car or van, driving licence holders only



Note: more than one response allowed, total will add up to more than 100%.

The results for the 2015 survey were similar to those from the 2014 survey.

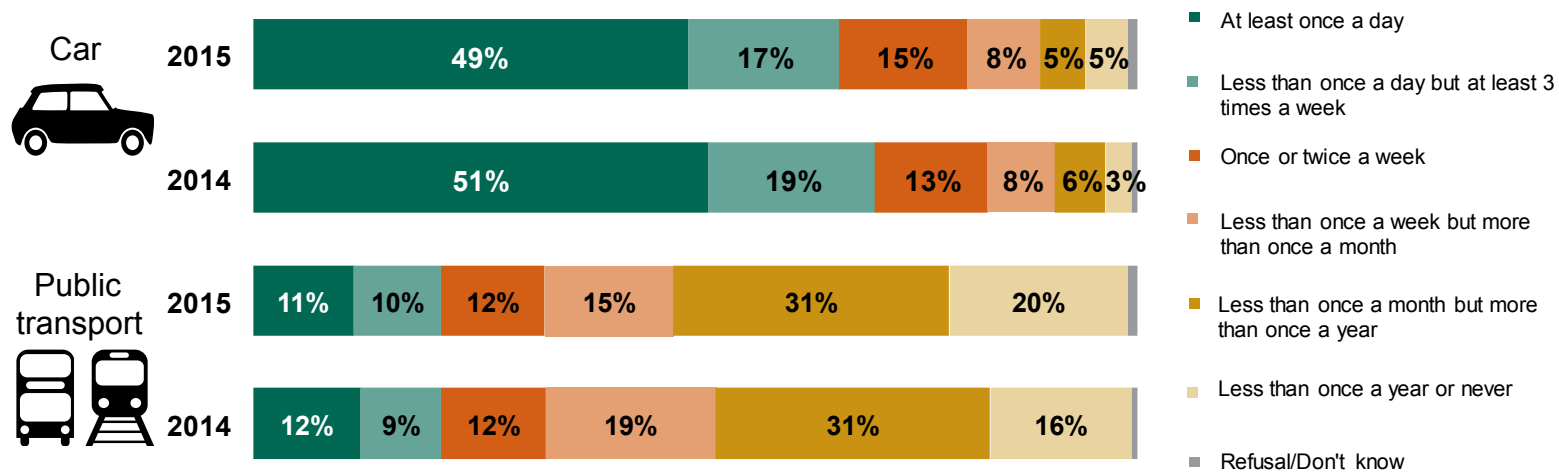
Background information

This section gives results on respondents travel behaviours to give context to their attitudes towards electric vehicles.

Four out of five (81%) respondents in 2015 reported travelling by car as a driver or passenger at least once or twice a week. Of these, 49% reported travelling by car at least once a day, 17% at least 3 times a week and 15% once or twice a week. The results for 2015 were not significantly different to those in 2014.

A third of respondents (33%) in 2015 reported travelling by public transport at least once or twice a week, of which 11% said they travelled by public transport at least once a day, 10% at least 3 times a week and 12% once or twice a week. In addition, 20% reported that they travelled by public transport less than once a year or never.

Frequency of car and public transport use: 2014 and 2015 results



Sources: ONS Omnibus Survey February 2014 & 2015: Unweighted bases, all respondents: 962 (2014) and 1034 (2015). Note: Refusals are those who did not answer the question.



Between 2014 and 2015, infrequent public transport users travelled less often.

In 2015, significantly fewer people reported travelling by public transport less than once a week but more than once a month (14.6% in 2015 and 19.2% in 2014) and significantly more people reported travelling less than once a year (20.2% in 2015 and 16.0% in 2014).



Different travel behaviours might be expected given other characteristics of respondents.

In 2015, those aged 65 and over reported travelling by car and public transport at least once a day significantly less than all younger age groups for cars and those under 44 for public transport.



Tables:

Frequency of car and van travel: [Table ATT0501](#)

Frequency of public transport travel: [Table ATT0502](#)

Findings for all respondents:



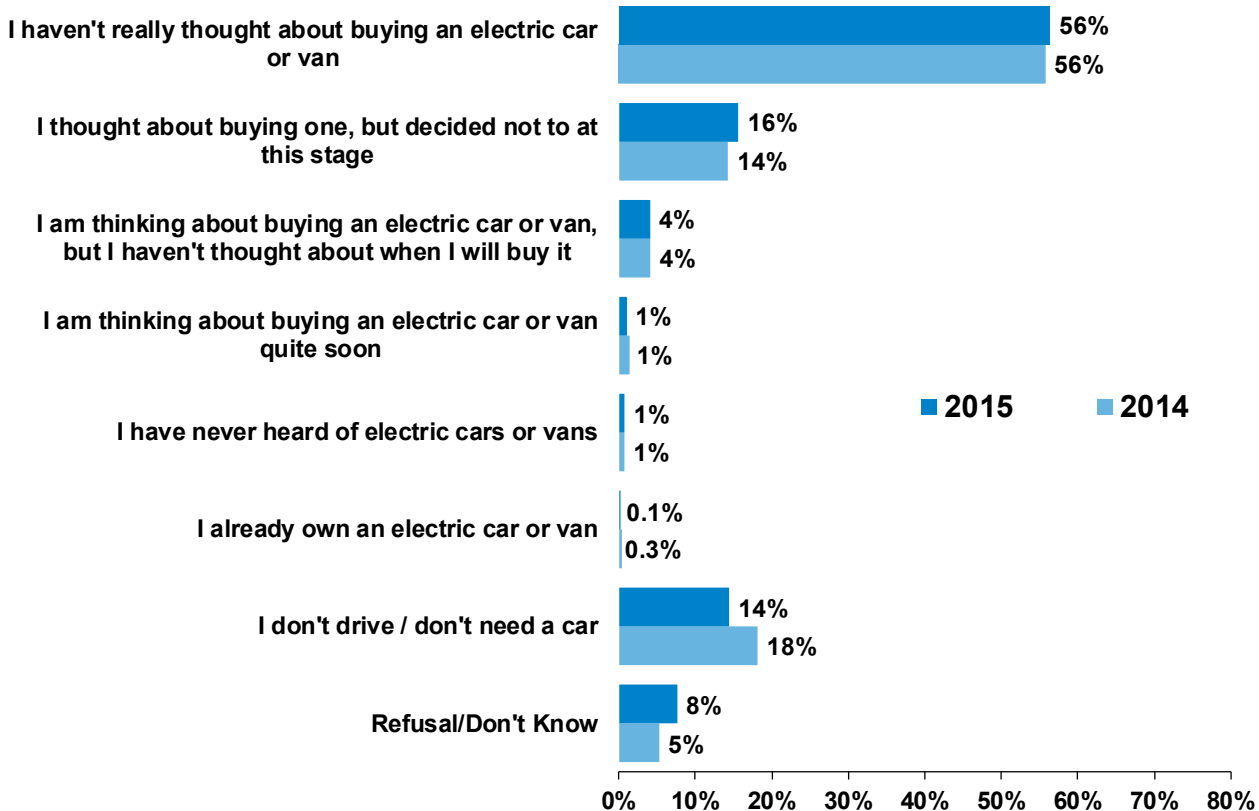
In 2015, one person in the survey reported owning an electric car. There were 5% of respondents in 2015 that said they were thinking about buying an electric car or van, 56% said that they had not thought about buying one, with an additional 16% saying that they had thought about buying one but decided not to at this stage. These result were not significantly different to those in 2014.



Tables:

Attitudes to electric cars and vans [Table ATT0503](#)

Current attitudes towards buying an electric car or van, all respondents: 2014 and 2015 results*



Sources: ONS Omnibus Survey February 2014 & 2015: Unweighted base, all respondents: 962 (2014) and 1034 (2015).

*There were some minor changes in the wording of two of the categories between 2014 and 2015 (see Survey Design below).



Men were more likely to report having considered buying an electric car or van but deciding not to at this stage than women (20% and 13% respectively).



Women were more likely to report not driving or needing a car than men (17% and 13% respectively).



Those with a degree were more likely to report that they had thought about buying an electric vehicle and decided not to at this stage than those without a degree (22% and 14% respectively). They were also more likely to report that they were thinking about buying an electric vehicle but haven't thought about when they would buy it (8% and 3% respectively).



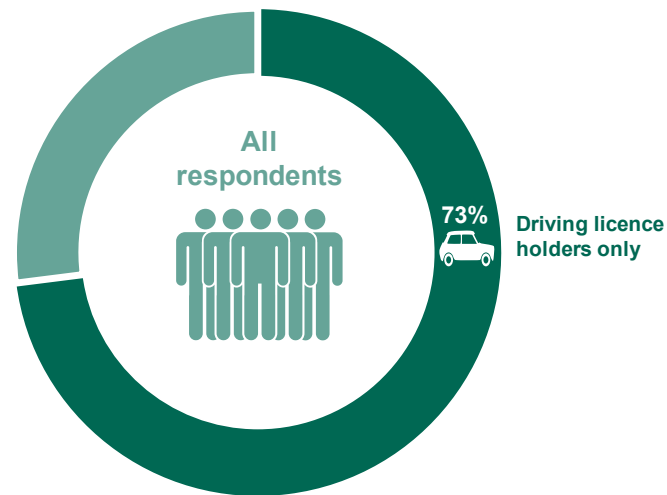
Those without a degree were more likely to report not owning or needing a car than those with a degree (17% and 8% respectively).

Findings for driving licence holders:

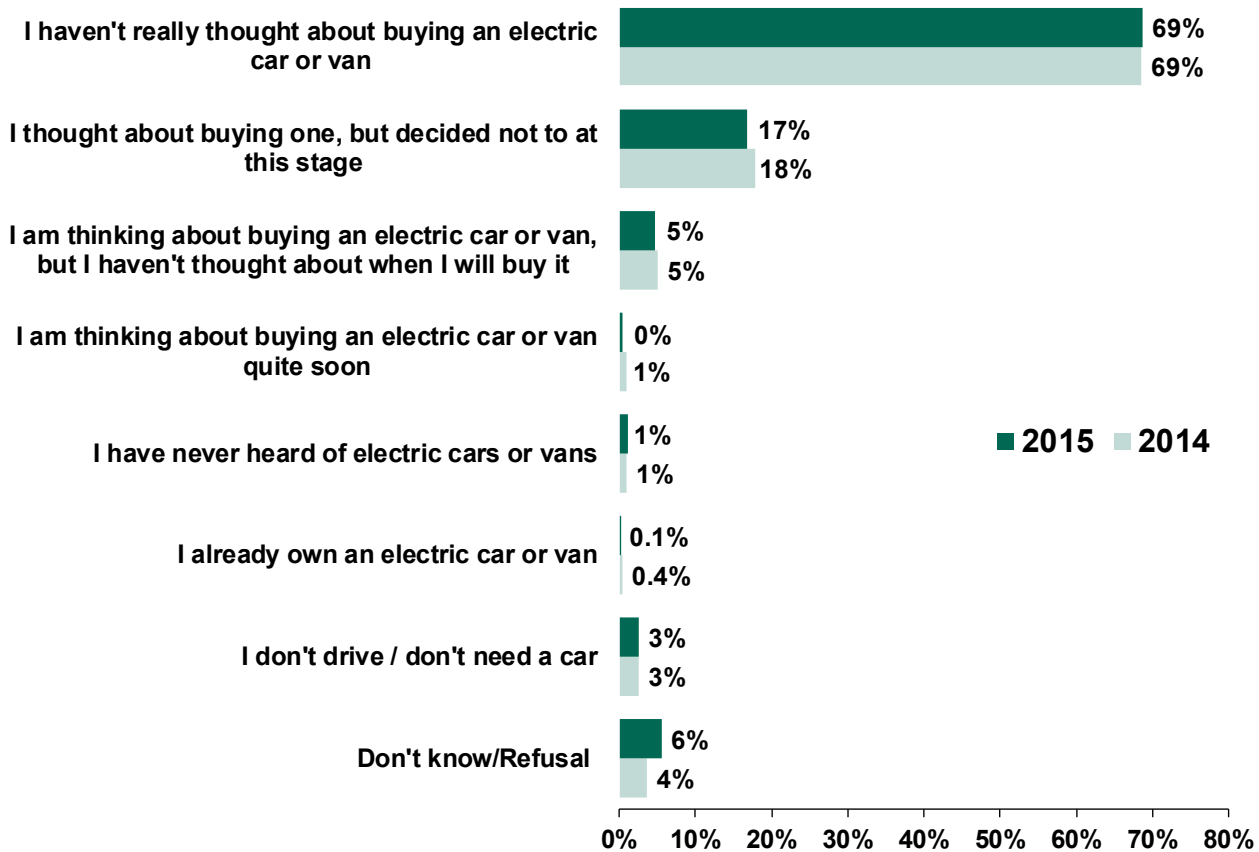
When just considering those respondents who have a full driving licence, the percentages who hadn't really thought about buying an electric car or van rose from the 56% reported by all respondents to 69%.

The percentage of respondents who reported that they didn't drive or need a car dropped from 17% of all respondents to 3% of those who hold a driving licence.

An additional 5% said that they were thinking about buying an electric vehicle. These results were not significantly different to the 2014 survey.



Current attitudes towards buying an electric car or van, driving licence holders only, 2014 and 2015 results*



*There were some minor changes in the wording of two of the categories between 2014 and 2015 (see Survey Design below).
Sources: ONS Omnibus Survey February 2014 & 2015. Unweighted base: 679 and 754 respectively (full licence holders only)



Those that hold a driving licence and have a degree were more likely to report that they had thought about buying an electric car or van but don't know when they will buy one, whereas those that hold a driving licence and have no degree were more likely to report that they haven't really thought about buying an electric car or van.



Tables:

Attitudes to electric cars and vans.

[Table ATT0503](#)

Important factors when buying a car or van

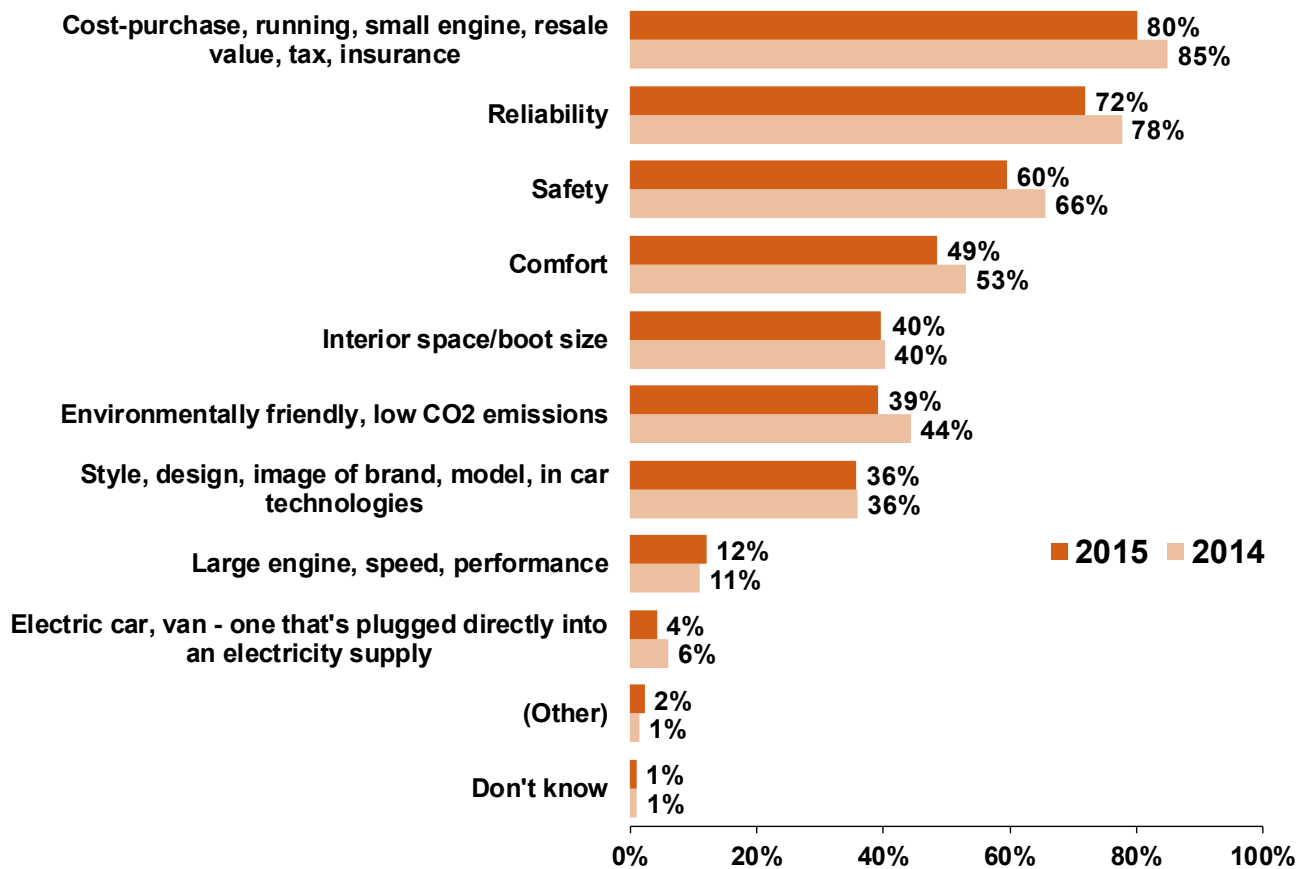


In 2015, those with a driving licence reported that the most important factors they considered when buying a car or van were costs (80%), reliability (72%), safety (60%) and comfort (49%). Only 4% of respondents said they considered whether the vehicle was electric to be an important factor.



Of those reporting costs as a important factor to be considered, the most important costs included purchase, fuel/recharging, maintenance and insurance.

Factors considered important when buying a car or van, driving licence holders, 2014 and 2015 results



Sources: ONS Omnibus Survey February 2014 & 2015. Unweighted base: 670 and 749 respectively (full licence holders only) Up to 3 responses coded from each respondent hence total will add up to more than 100%.



Tables:

Important factors when buying a car or van, driving licence holders only: [Table ATT0504](#)

Cost factors when buying a car or van, driving licence holders only: [Table ATT0505](#)

Factors deterring people from buying an electric car or van



Driving licence holders reported that the most important factors putting them off buying an electric car or van were recharging (39%), and the distance travelled on a battery (36%) followed by cost (27%) and lack of knowledge (13%).

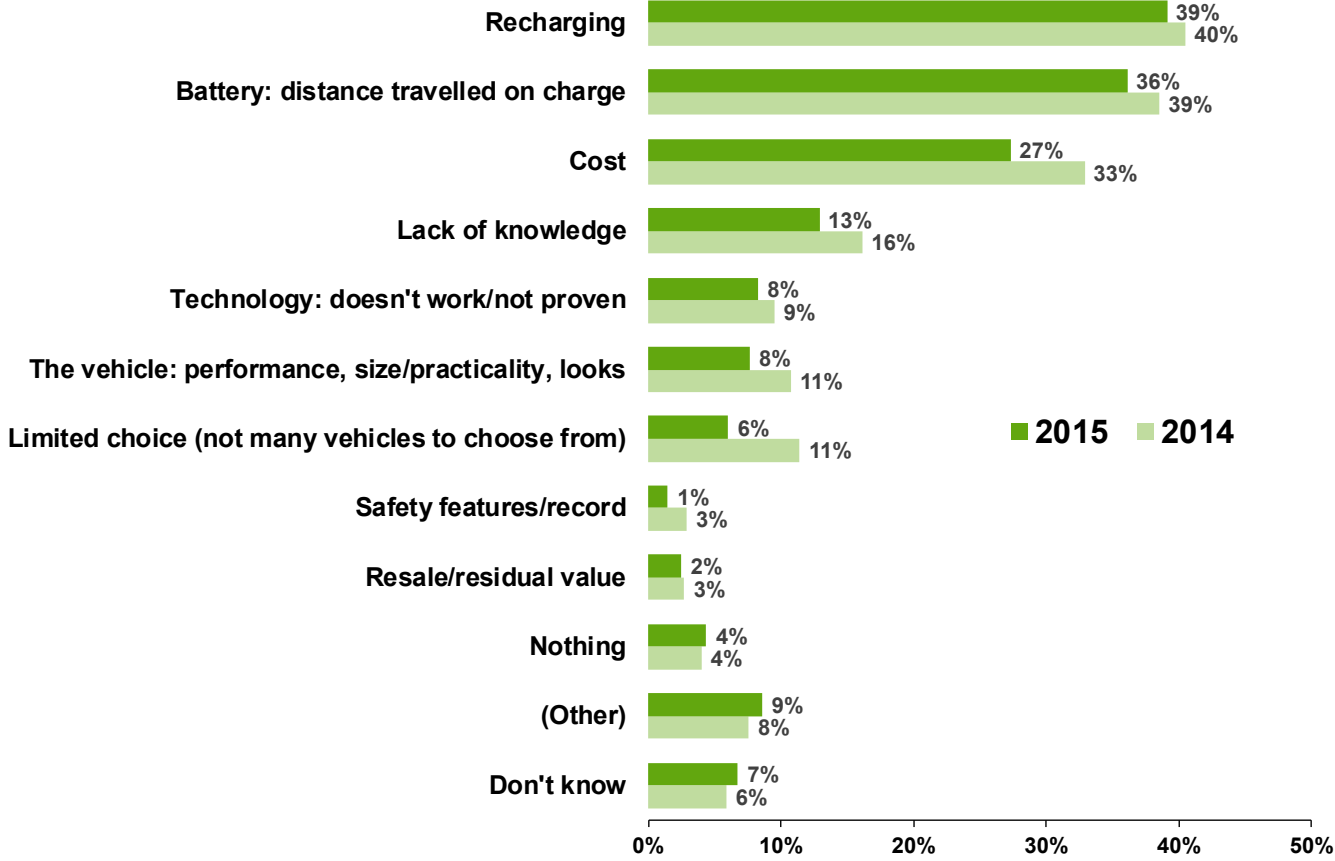


Of those reporting cost as a deterrent, the most important costs were purchase, maintenance and fuel/recharging costs followed by resale value and insurance.



Of those reporting recharging as a deterring factor, the most important recharging factors were around the availability of charging points, including lack of charging points in their area and lack of knowledge of where charging points are. The other factor was time, including time taken to charge the battery.

Factors deterring people from buying an electric car or van, driving licence holders, 2014 and 2015 results



Sources: ONS Omnibus Survey February 2014 & 2015. Unweighted base: 664 and 735 respectively (full licence holders only) Up to 3 responses coded from each respondent hence total will add up to more than 100%.



An increased number and awareness of electric vehicle models may have resulted in the fall of the “limited choice” category as a deterrent between 2014 and 2015.



Tables:

Factors deterring people from buying an electric car or van: [Table ATT0506](#)

Cost factors putting people off buying an electric car or van: [Table ATT0507](#)

Factors encouraging people to buy an electric car or van

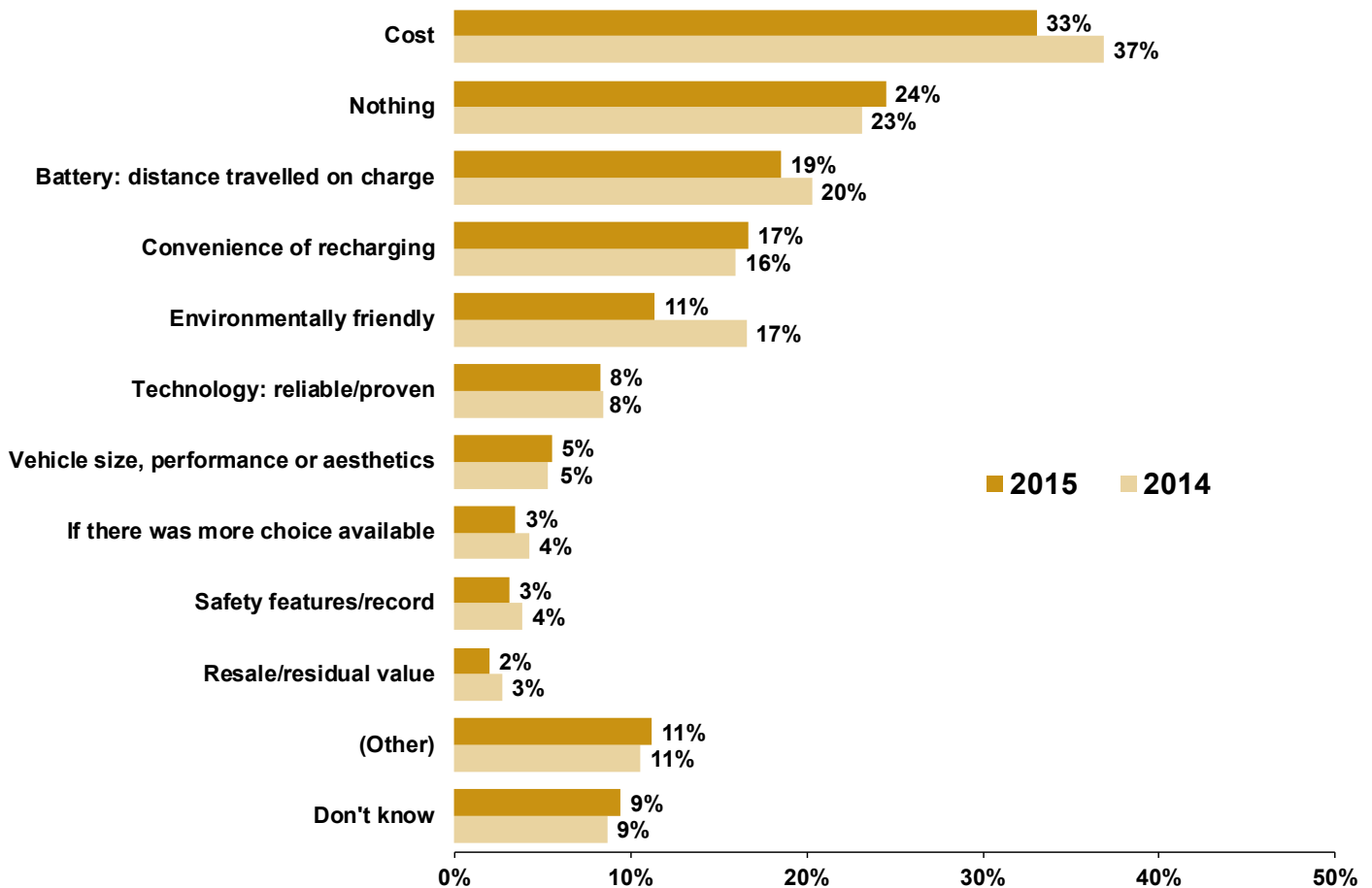


Driving licence holders reported that the most important factor that would encourage them to buy an electric car or van were cost (33%). Other factors included battery, distance travelled on charge (19%), convenience of recharging (17%) and environmentally friendly (11%). There were 24% of respondents who reported that “nothing” would encourage them to buy an electric car or van.



On costs, the most important cost factors included current purchase cost, followed by current fuel/recharging costs, maintenance, insurance and vehicle excise duty.

Factors encouraging people to buy an electric car or van, driving licence holders, 2014 and 2015



Sources: ONS Omnibus Survey February 2014 & 2015. Unweighted base: 670 and 736 respectively (full licence holders only). Up to 3 responses coded from each respondent hence total will add up to more than 100%.



Tables:

Factors that would encourage people to buy an electric car or van: [Table ATT0508](#)

Cost factors encouraging people to buy an electric car or van: [Table ATT0509](#)

Survey design:

The Office for National Statistics' Opinions and Lifestyle Survey is a random probability survey of adults aged 16 and over living in private households in Great Britain. The sampling frame used here is the Royal Mail Postcode Address File (PAF). The February 2015 Opinions and Lifestyle Survey successfully interviewed 1,034 adults face-to-face in their own homes during the month of February. This was a response rate of 56%. The February 2014 Opinion and Lifestyle Survey successfully interviewed 962 adults; this was a response rate of 53%.

For both the 2014 and 2015 modules, only one response was expected from individuals for some of the questions (car and public transport usage, attitudes to electric vehicles). For the questions asking about factors that were important when buying a car, deterring respondents from purchasing an electric vehicle and encouraging them to buy an electric vehicle up to 3 responses were coded. There were also some text based questions on costs and recharging.

Question wording:

There were some minor changes in the wording of two of the categories of knowledge of electric vehicles between 2014 and 2015 (Table ATT0503). The words "at this stage" was added to 2nd response category, formerly "I thought about buying one but decided not to". In addition the words "I will buy it" was added to the end of the 3rd response category, formerly "I am thinking about buying one but I don't know when". There were also some minor changes to the wording of the final question about the costs that would encourage you to buy an electric vehicle. The word "current" was added to the beginning of the first two response categories and "expected" to the beginning of the third and fourth response categories.

Weighting:

The results presented in this report are weighted. The weighting ensures the distribution across regions and age-sex groups match the Great Britain population. The survey results are subject to sampling error. That is, the results obtained may differ from those that would be obtained if the entire population had been interviewed, or another sample selected. Statistical theory enables us to calculate the degree of sampling error for any estimate.

Significant differences:

Significant differences over time or between groups which are referred to in the text are statistically significant at the 5% level (i.e. it is 95 per cent certain that the difference exists in the population).

Rounding:

Most of the figures quoted in the text, tables and charts have been rounded to the nearest final digit so, in some cases, there may be an apparent discrepancy between the sum of the constituent items and the totals shown.