# Safety fears and poor marketing widen gender gap in UK electric vehicle adoption



Concerns about safety at charging points and range anxiety are contributing to a significant gender gap in the transition to electric vehicles (EVs), with women lagging behind men in adoption rates. Despite women generally being more inclined towards sustainable choices, a recent survey by Auto Trader revealed that only one in five women in the UK would consider an EV, compared to one-third of men. This discrepancy raises alarm bells about the industry's responsiveness to women's specific needs and preferences, especially given that women control or influence a majority of vehicle purchases.

The underrepresentation of women in the automotive sector has been highlighted as a critical issue. This lack of gender diversity in decision-making roles has left a void in understanding the distinct perspectives and requirements of female consumers. According to Erin Baker, editorial director at Auto Trader, traditional marketing has neglected women, often presenting vehicles in a manner that prioritises performance and technology over practical concerns like safety and usability. She notes that many women feel excluded, ignored, or even patronised by the industry's messaging, contributing to feelings of alienation.

Rebecca Day, chief executive and co-founder of She’s Electric, emphasises that safety is a significant concern for women contemplating the switch to EVs. Reports indicate widespread worry about the implications of range anxiety, particularly the fear of running out of battery in unfamiliar areas. This is compounded by safety issues at charging points. Kate Tyrrell, co-founder of ChargeSafe, developed a rating system to assess charging locations across the UK due to personal safety concerns she experienced while charging her vehicle. She highlights that poorly lit or isolated stations can dangerously compromise a driver’s safety, particularly for women, who may feel vulnerable when they are “effectively trapped” at charging points where they must exit their vehicle to unplug.

Statistics reflect this unease: Auto Trader's survey indicated that just 43 per cent of female respondents felt safe using public chargers. The safety landscape at these sites is a crucial aspect that needs addressing if the industry is to encourage more women to make the transition to EVs. The UK government recently reaffirmed 2030 as the cut-off date for new petrol and diesel sales, yet Tyrrell warns that if the current issues surrounding infrastructure and safety are not resolved before this deadline, narrowing the gender gap will be an uphill battle.

There are signs of improvement, however. Melanie Shufflebotham, co-founder of Zapmap, points out that changes are underway to enhance the user experience at charging hubs. The number of charging points in the UK is set to expand dramatically, from approximately 28,460 at the end of 2021 to over 73,000 by the end of 2024. New strategies are emerging, such as the installation of high-powered "destination chargers" at locations like gyms and supermarkets, which aims to provide more accessible and secure charging options for users.

Yet, there remains a fundamental challenge in how EVs are marketed. Day observes that the industry's portrayal of electric cars as "spaceships" does not resonate with the majority of female consumers who simply seek reliable, practical vehicles. She recalls instances where women's queries about charging times were dismissed, highlighting the need for the automotive sector to have candid discussions regarding the practicalities of EV ownership.

Moving forward, Tyrrell advocates for legislative measures to enhance the safety of charging infrastructures—calling for mandatory security features such as lighting and surveillance systems at charging points. The absence of a regulatory body to govern the quality of charging sites is seen as a gap that needs addressing to ensure a safer experience for all EV drivers, especially women.

Ultimately, bridging this gender gap in EV adoption is not just a matter of vehicles; it encompasses broader societal shifts towards inclusivity and safety within the automotive landscape. The continued push for infrastructure improvements and more robust engagement with female consumers could help pave the way for a more balanced transition to electric vehicles.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
2. Paragraph 4
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4. Paragraph 2
5. Paragraph 3
6. Paragraph 2
7. Paragraph 6

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.ft.com/content/6ba817f5-ea82-4227-93aa-795aee0af282> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/6ba817f5-ea82-4227-93aa-795aee0af282> - An article discussing how safety concerns and range anxiety are causing women to lag behind men in adopting electric vehicles (EVs). It highlights findings from Auto Trader's 2023 survey, which shows that only 20% of women in the UK would consider an EV compared to 33% of men. The piece also addresses issues such as women's underrepresentation in the automotive sector, safety concerns at charging points, and the need for more inclusive marketing strategies to bridge the gender gap in EV adoption.
3. <https://www.autotrader.co.uk/content/features/why-aren-t-women-buying-electric-cars> - An article from AutoTrader exploring the reasons behind the lower adoption of electric vehicles among women. It discusses how traditional marketing strategies have often excluded women, focusing on technology and performance rather than aspects like safety and practicality that are more important to female consumers. The piece emphasizes the need for the automotive industry to engage women more effectively to close the gender gap in EV adoption.
4. <https://www.autotraderinsight-blog.co.uk/auto-trader-insight-blog/are-women-being-left-behind-in-the-electric-transition> - A blog post from Auto Trader highlighting the widening gender gap in electric vehicle adoption. It presents findings from a survey showing that a third of men consider an electric car compared to one-fifth of women. The article discusses barriers such as lack of relevant advice, concerns about running costs, and charging infrastructure, and calls for a tailored approach to engage women in the EV transition.
5. <https://evec.co.uk/news-blog/international-womens-day-the-ev-gender-gap-whats-holding-women-back-from-going-electric/> - A blog post from EVEC Ltd discussing the gender gap in electric vehicle adoption, particularly focusing on safety concerns at public charging stations. It presents survey results indicating that 46.6% of women have safety concerns about using public chargers, especially at night, and 29.8% avoid public charging altogether. The article emphasizes the need for better lighting, visible security measures, and more thoughtfully placed charge points to make EV adoption more accessible for women.
6. <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/study-reveals-safety-concerns-may-be-hindering-ev-adoption-by-women-301965146.html> - A press release from Geotab Inc. revealing research that indicates safety concerns at charging stations may be hindering electric vehicle adoption among women in Canada and the United States. The study found that 30% of Canadian women and 33% of U.S. women express concerns about the overall safety of EV charging locations, highlighting the need for improved infrastructure to support female EV drivers.
7. <https://www.transportxtra.com/publications/evolution/news/75397/keeping-women-in-the-driving-seat/> - An article discussing a UK-wide survey revealing that fewer than one in ten women say their next car will be electric, citing lack of confidence as a key barrier. The survey found that 55% of women have concerns about their personal safety due to the location of some charging points, and 60% are worried about running out of charge with their family in the car. The piece calls for government action to ensure women are not left behind in the transition to electric vehicles.