

Driver indifference to new 'green' number plates for electric vehicles

Published: October 6, 2020

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Online version: <https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/driver-indifference-to-new-green-number-plates-for-electric-vehicles/>



Picture credit: Nissan GB.

Motor Ombudsman poll shows new green EV number plates are not registering with drivers...



- A YouGov poll commissioned by The Motor Ombudsman revealed that 88% of UK drivers are not aware of the introduction of green number plates for electric vehicles (EVs) this autumn.
- However, the majority (72%) of the respondents polled said that they would be happy to have them fitted as standard if they were thinking of buying an EV.
- The study equally found that only around a quarter (29%) of individuals thought that having dedicated green parking spaces for EVs would make them much more or a little more inclined to look at buying one, with 57% being indifferent to the idea.



London, 06 October 2020... With the government's ambition to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, green number plates are being introduced for electric vehicles (EVs) this autumn to allow zero emission models to be more easily identified, and to help local authorities encourage people to own and drive them. However, a YouGov poll commissioned by The Motor Ombudsman has found that 88% of UK drivers are currently unaware about the arrival of these new-style registration plates, leaving around one in ten (12%) knowing that they are due to make an imminent appearance on the UK's roads.

A green flash will feature on the left-hand side of the white and yellow front and rear plates to distinguish EVs from hybrids or vehicles featuring a petrol or diesel engine. However, according to the study of 1,688 UK driving licence holders, those living in London, and individuals aged over 35 were revealed as being the least conversant with the change (92% and 88% of these groups respectively). In contrast, those residing in the South and the East, and respondents in the 18 to 34 age group were the most up to speed in terms of the arrival of the dedicated EV plates, with around 15% of people in these groups knowing about the green flash.

When questioned about whether drivers would be happy to have the new green plates fitted as standard if they were to buy a battery electric vehicle, encouragingly, nearly three-quarters of respondents (72%) said that they would be content with their vehicle sporting them. In fact, survey participants of 18 to 24 years of age (80%), as well as those residing in the East (76%), were the most keen to display the green flash on their plates. In contrast, only 14% of people stated that they would prefer to retain the current registration layout, with a further 14% unsure as to how their plates should look.

In addition, Transport Secretary Grant Shapps recently announced that parking spaces could be painted green to promote the uptake of electric vehicles. The Motor Ombudsman study revealed that, if parking areas that prioritised EVs were to become a reality, a combined total of 29% of respondents said that they would be more or a little more inclined to purchase a battery-powered vehicle. Nevertheless, 57% of drivers stated that the prospect of being able to enjoy this added benefit would make no difference in terms of increasing their desire to buy a pure electric vehicle, with only 6% explaining that it would actually put them off from making such a purchase.



Commenting on the poll, Bill Fennell, Chief Ombudsman and Managing Director of The Motor Ombudsman, said: “Electric vehicles are continuing to grow in popularity in the UK, and our study has offered a unique insight into how drivers view the latest initiatives introduced by government to encourage them to embrace pure zero emission motoring. Despite the results showing that consumer awareness of the arrival of the new green plates remains low, the findings nevertheless show a positive picture overall that drivers are happy to embrace them. However, when it comes to parking spaces being reserved solely for the use of EVs, it’s clear that the jury’s still out as to whether this will have any bearing on an individual’s decision to buy an electric vehicle.”

To view The Motor Ombudsman’s Knowledge Base category on electric vehicles (EVs), visit www.TheMotorOmbudsman.org/kb-cats/electric-vehicles.

About the poll:

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2,105 UK adults, of which 1,688 hold a UK driving licence. Fieldwork was undertaken between 23rd – 24th September 2020. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults (aged 18+).

Highlights of research results:

1. Before taking this survey, did you know that, following a recent government announcement, green number plates are due to be introduced in the UK for new electric vehicles this autumn (i.e. 2020)?

No, I didn’t know 87.76%

Yes, I did know 12.24%

2. Please imagine that you are thinking of buying a new electric vehicle. Would you be happy to have green number plates as standard, or would you want to opt-out from having



them?

I would be happy to have green number plates fitted as standard 71.52%

I would opt-out and choose regular number plates without the green panel 14.36%

Don't know 14.11%

3. How much more or less inclined would you be to buy an electric vehicle if green parking spaces were to be made available in the UK, or would it make no difference?

It would make no difference 56.70%

A little more inclined to buy an electric vehicle 20.36%

Much more inclined to buy an electric vehicle 8.17%

Don't know 7.29%

Much less inclined to buy an electric vehicle 4.59%

A little less inclined to buy an electric vehicle 1.51%

Not applicable - I already own an electric vehicle 1.38%

About The Motor Ombudsman

The Motor Ombudsman is the fully impartial Ombudsman dedicated solely to the automotive sector, and self-regulates the UK's motor industry through its comprehensive Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI)-approved Codes of Practice. Thousands of businesses, including vehicle manufacturers, warranty product providers, franchised dealers and independent garages, are accredited to one or more of the Codes, which drive even higher



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standards of work and service, and give consumers added protection, peace of mind and trust during the vehicle purchase and ownership experience.

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