



Fleet.
Wise.

Charging Buying Guide

As the UK heads towards the 2030 ZEV deadline, the multi-faceted challenge of vehicle charging is front of mind for all EV users... and fleet managers.



EV charging

Even the most experienced fleet decision makers were novices in electric vehicle charging just a few short years ago. At breakneck speed, the need to build a charging eco-system to support the successful adoption of electric cars and vans has placed enormous reliance on EV charging suppliers.

Their role is not simply confined to the number and location of their charge points, but also the speed, reliability and data captured by those chargers.

So, while it makes a company car driver's life easier to have ready-access to thousands of chargers (without having to carry loads of RFID tags or smartphone apps), from a fleet operator's perspective what's just as important is the richness and accuracy of data from each charging event.

The public EV charging world may not yet be perfect from a fleet operator perspective, but the progress towards robust and reliable solutions has been phenomenal at a time when charging companies are investing much time and resource in expanding their networks.

Moreover, progress in helping drivers to locate vacant chargers, increasing the size of charging bays to accommodate larger electric vans, and providing a full spectrum of charging speeds – from slow, convenient kerbside chargers to ultra-rapid motorway chargers – continues its rapid progress.



What is vehicle charging?

If EV charging only happened in one type of location, this would be a very short guide, and fleet managers would have very few concerns about how to keep their EV drivers on the move. However, EV charging takes three forms, and that's before you start to dig down into the detail of recording, paying for and reimbursing charger usage!

The three types of EV charging that need to be considered by most fleet managers are:

- Workplace charging
- Home charging
- Public charging

Workplace charging

Benefits

- Workplace EV charging encourages employee adoption of electric vehicles, supporting sustainability goals and reducing carbon footprints. It provides convenience for employees, ensuring their vehicles are charged during work hours (for work/office-based employees), or out of hours (where work vehicles are stored on site overnight).

Workplace charging can improve retention and recruitment by offering a valued amenity. For businesses, workplace charging helps optimise fleet management by ensuring electric fleet vehicles are charged and ready for use.

Challenges

- Installing chargers can be costly, particularly if electrical-supply upgrades are needed.
- Managing demand for chargers, especially with limited stations, requires careful planning.
- Property managers must also consider ongoing operational costs, maintenance and peak energy usage, which can affect electricity bills.

Considerations for Procurement

- Property managers should assess electrical infrastructure capacity, choose the appropriate type and number of chargers, and evaluate software for tracking usage and energy management.

They should also factor in future scalability, employee demand and compliance with government grants and incentives, ensuring long-term cost efficiency and regulatory adherence.



Home charging

Benefits

- Home EV charging for company vehicles provides significant convenience and flexibility, allowing employees to charge their vehicles overnight, ensuring they are fully charged for the next workday. It eliminates the need for frequent stops at public charging stations, improving efficiency and saving time. For businesses, home charging supports more widespread EV adoption in fleets, reducing fuel costs and environmental impact. Additionally, home charging reduces reliance on workplace infrastructure, alleviating congestion at company charging stations.

Challenges

- Home EV charging can present logistical and financial challenges for both employers and employees. The upfront cost of installing home chargers, including potential electrical upgrades, can be substantial. Companies may also need to establish fair reimbursement processes for electricity usage, as EV charging increases household energy bills. Tracking and managing charging costs across multiple locations can be complex.

Additionally, employees may face constraints based on property types – those living in flats or rented accommodation may not have access to dedicated parking, or permission to install chargers.

Considerations for Procurement

- Homeowners must assess their electrical capacity, ensuring the home can handle the increased energy demand. Choosing a smart charger with capabilities to monitor and schedule charging to off-peak hours can reduce costs. Compatibility with the company's vehicle fleet and compliance with government grants or incentives for charger installations are also crucial. Homeowners should also plan for future-proofing to accommodate longer-range or faster-charging EVs.



Public charging

Benefits

- Using public EV charging networks for company vehicles offers flexibility and accessibility for employees, particularly when traveling long distances or lacking access to home or workplace charging. It allows drivers to recharge vehicles while on the road, ensuring business continuity without the need for costly infrastructure at every employee's home. Public charging can also support fleet electrification by filling gaps in areas with no dedicated charging facilities, providing an immediate solution as fleets transition from ICE to EVs.

Challenges

- Public charging introduces uncertainties, such as availability, inconsistent charging speeds and varying costs across different networks. Employees may face delays if charging stations are occupied or out of service. Additionally, fleet managers must contend with higher costs, as public chargers often have premium pricing, especially for fast charging.

Considerations for Fleet Managers

- Fleet managers should assess the availability of public chargers in regions where employees operate and choose networks that offer consistent service and widespread coverage. They may need to implement fleet cards or apps that centralise charging expenses and usage data for easier tracking and billing. Monitoring charging behaviour and optimising public charging locations for efficiency are critical for managing costs and ensuring the fleet operates smoothly.

“Provide drivers with charging cards that automatically record the location, time and cost of each charging session. This eliminates the need for manual reporting.”



What do fleet managers need to consider about vehicle charging?

Fleet managers can effectively oversee and record EV charging usage, costs and data using several key strategies and tools. Here are the best ways to manage these aspects:

Telematics and fleet management software

Integrated EV-specific platforms – Use fleet management software with built-in EV capabilities to monitor vehicle charging status, battery health and energy consumption in real-time.

Telematics systems – Track driver routes, charging stops and vehicle performance data to analyse charging behaviour and optimise operations.

Charging network partnerships

Fleet-specific accounts – Establish partnerships with charging networks that offer fleet management solutions, providing detailed usage reports, costs and charging station locations.

Centralised billing – Many public charging networks offer centralised billing, simplifying expense tracking by consolidating costs into one system.

Smart chargers

Smart charging systems – Install smart chargers at company facilities and employee homes. These provide detailed data on charging times, energy usage and costs.

Remote monitoring – Smart chargers can often be managed remotely, allowing fleet managers to schedule off-peak charging and reduce electricity costs.



Fuel and charging cards

EV-specific fleet cards – Provide drivers with charging cards that automatically record the location, time and cost of each charging session. This eliminates the need for manual reporting.

Expense control – Some cards integrate directly into fleet management software, enabling real-time tracking and limiting unauthorised spending.

Usage-data analysis

Comprehensive reporting – Use data analysis tools within fleet management platforms to generate reports on overall fleet energy consumption, charging patterns and cost comparisons.

Benchmarking – Compare data to industry benchmarks or historical fleet performance to assess efficiency improvements and identify cost-saving opportunities.

Reimbursement systems for home charging

Automated reimbursement – For employees charging at home, implement systems that calculate and reimburse electricity costs based on actual energy usage. Software can automate this based on logged charging sessions.

Government incentives and grants

Tracking compliance – Monitor and record data for government incentives or tax relief on EV charging infrastructure and energy usage to maximise financial benefits.

By leveraging a selection of these tools, fleet managers can efficiently track charging data, control costs and optimise fleet performance, ensuring a smooth and cost-effective transition to electric vehicles.

Reimbursing driver charging costs

Reimbursing electric business miles can be fiendishly complicated, with a mix of home, workplace and public chargers being used. This can result in a plethora of charging invoices, in multiple formats, some of which may be missing vital information, such as VAT.

Looking to the future, businesses need the same control of EV charging spend as they have enjoyed with petrol and diesel fuel cards. Several suppliers are making solid progress in working towards these goals, across the three types of charging.



Charging summary

Work, home, and public EV charging offer flexibility and convenience for company fleets.

Workplace charging allows employees to charge vehicles during work hours, ensuring availability while supporting sustainability goals.

Home charging provides flexibility, allowing overnight charging and reducing reliance on public infrastructure. It offers convenience for employees with access to personal chargers, and can save significant charging costs.

Public charging extends reach beyond home and work, enabling long-distance travel and covering areas without private charging facilities.

Together, these options optimise fleet operation, reduce downtime and promote the adoption of electric vehicles by providing multiple charging solutions across locations.

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