

What EV owners and buyers are really saying

A cross-platform listening study of unprompted conversation on MoneySavingExpert and Reddit

4 June – 3 August 2026



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This study reads the places British drivers go to think out loud about electric vehicles — no researcher in the room, no reason to perform. The difference between claimed behaviour and actual behaviour.

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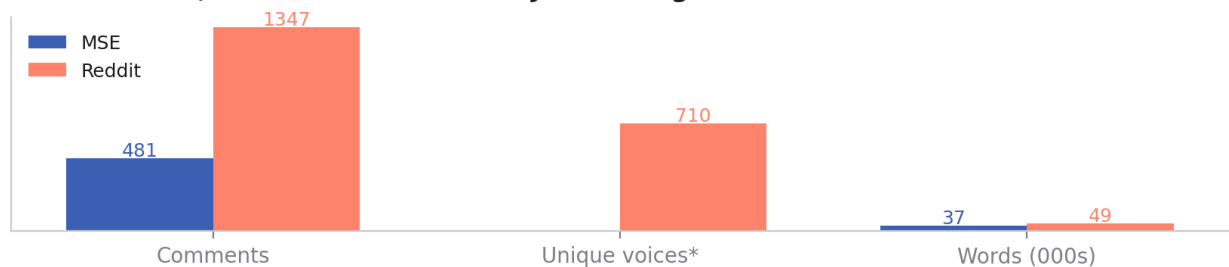
A cross-platform listening study of unprompted conversation on MoneySavingExpert and Reddit · 4 June – 3 August 2026

What if you could survey the conversation itself — the one that happens when no researcher is in the room?

This study does exactly that. It reads two of the places British drivers go to think out loud about electric vehicles: the long-running EV threads on MoneySavingExpert, and the r/ElectricVehiclesUK community on Reddit. Nobody was asked a question. Nobody was recruited, incentivised or watched. These are people working through real decisions — whether to switch, how to charge, what it costs — with each other, for their own reasons.

That is the whole point of the method. **The data reflects what people actually say and do, not how they answer a survey.** A survey captures the claim; this captures the behaviour — what someone says when they think no one's listening. Across roughly **1,800 comments and 86,000 words** from more than 700 distinct voices, the same handful of concerns surface again and again — and they are remarkably consistent across two very different platforms.

Two datasets, one conversation · 4 Jun - 3 Aug 2026



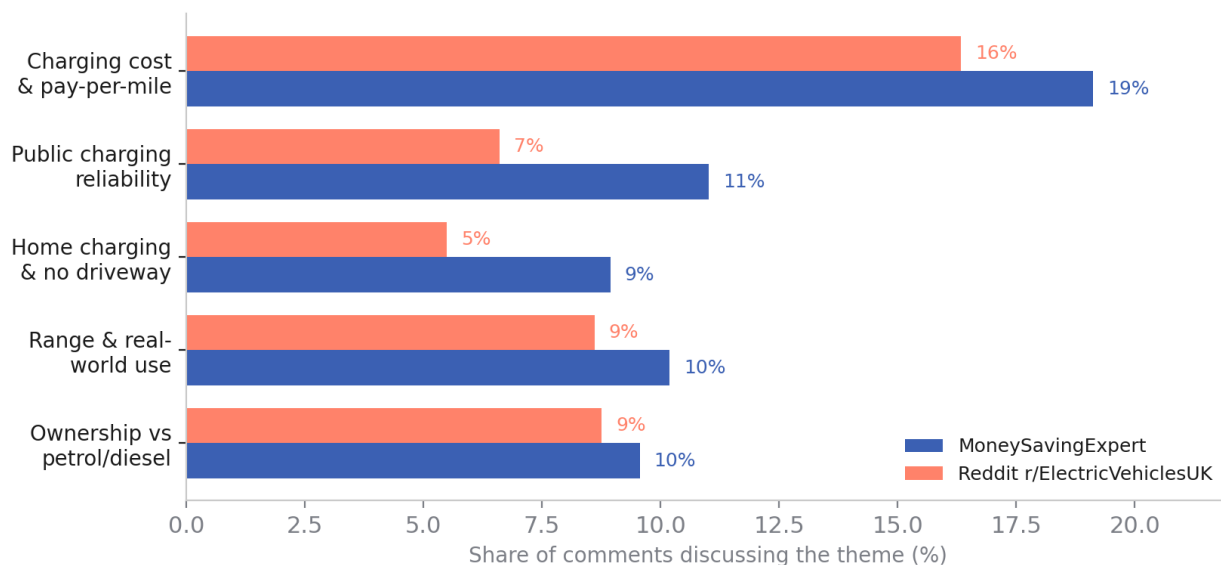
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The two datasets behind this study, captured over the same 60-day window.

The themes, side by side

When you count how often each theme comes up, one topic leads on both platforms — money. Everything else orders slightly differently, but the shape is strikingly similar for two audiences with such different habits.

Charging cost is the No.1 theme on both platforms



Share of comments discussing each theme. Charging cost leads on both MSE and Reddit.

The cost conversation has shifted from “is it cheaper?” to “cheaper for whom?”

Money is the single biggest strand on both platforms. What's changed is the nuance: the old, simple story (“EVs are cheap to run”) has fractured into a sharper distinction — cheap *if* you can charge at home on an off-peak tariff, and expensive if you can't.

“with the cost of leccy, it's no surprise — if you want to make savings you must really charge at home on an EV tariff”

— RiceeeChrispies, r/ElectricVehiclesUK

The saving is now conditional, and drivers know it. “EVs are cheaper” has quietly become “EVs are cheaper if you have a driveway and the right tariff” — a message that plays very differently to a homeowner than to a flat-dweller.

Pay-per-mile is the flashpoint — and EV drivers are split

The proposed pay-per-mile road tax is the most emotionally charged topic in the dataset. Tellingly, the anger isn't uniform — some owners feel punished, others openly accept the logic.

“EVs are not free from road tax any more. Add on £195 a year for that.”

— MathematicianDry5142, r/ElectricVehiclesUK

“In my opinion we should scrap VED and everyone should pay per mile. Lowest rate for EVs, higher rates for ICE vehicles — should be revenue neutral overall and would not then impact EV take-up negatively.”

— smith9447, r/ElectricVehiclesUK

This is the value of unprompted data: a survey question on “pay-per-mile” would likely read as blanket opposition, but the real conversation contains a reasoned pro-reform camp among EV owners themselves. The dividing line isn't EV versus petrol — it's fairness, and how the change is framed.

Public charging is where enthusiasm meets its hard edge

If home charging is the good-news story, public charging is the complaint. Cost and reliability dominate, and the tone sharpens — on Reddit, a returning traveller's post that UK public charging is “a farce” was among the most upvoted of the period.

“Apparently the UK has the most expensive public charging across Europe.”

— Turak64, r/ElectricVehiclesUK

“Petrol/diesel costs about 15–20p/kWh, public charging sites is never that cheap — we are a long way from price parity.”

— initiali5ed, r/ElectricVehiclesUK

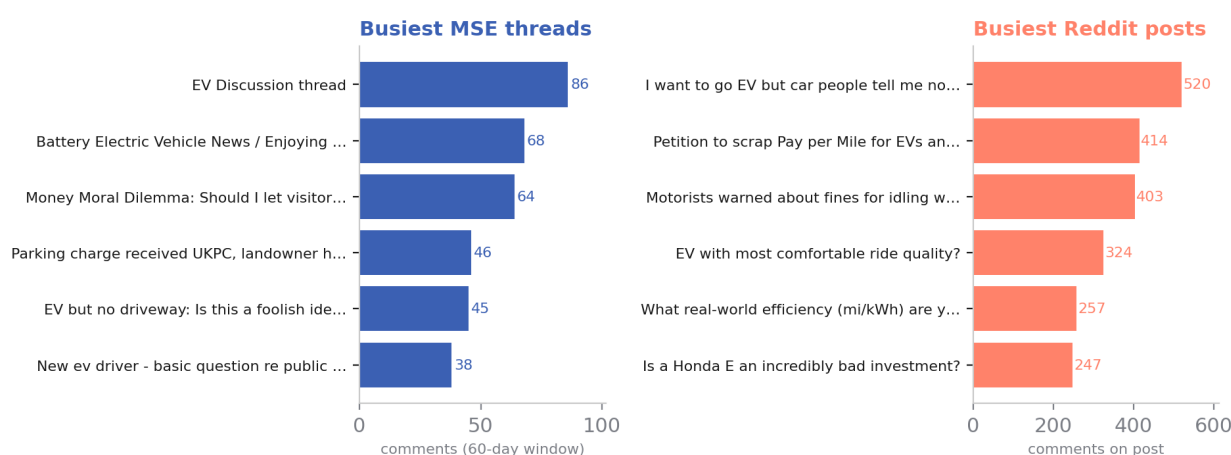
The benchmark drivers use is petrol — and against that benchmark, rapid charging is losing. This is where “cheaper for whom?” becomes a genuine barrier to switching, not just a grumble.

“I love my EV, but personally I wouldn't do it without home charging. The inconvenience of having to sit and wait 30+ minutes every few days wouldn't make it worth it for me.”

— Jimi-K-101, r/ElectricVehiclesUK

Even committed advocates draw a line at relying on the public network — the infrastructure gap is limiting who existing enthusiasts will recommend an EV to.

Where the conversation concentrates



The most active conversations in each community. Reddit threads run far larger, but the subjects rhyme: switching, cost, pay-per-mile, real-world use.

“No driveway” is the question the market hasn’t answered

On MSE, “EV but no driveway: is this a foolish idea?” was one of the busiest threads of the window; on Reddit the same worry recurs constantly. People without off-street parking are actively trying to make the sums work — and reaching for workarounds.

“If I couldn't charge at home I would get a Tesla and make use of the Supercharger network — it's considerably cheaper than the other rapid chargers. It would still work out cheaper than petrol even without destination chargers.”

— ididgetwhereiamtoday, MoneySavingExpert

The community's own answer to the driveway problem is brand-specific and improvised — a sign the mainstream offer still assumes a home charger. That's a positioning gap for anyone who can credibly serve the no-driveway driver.

"The government should create a scheme where people without a driveway can use public chargers for the cost of home chargers. This coupled with BYD-style ultra-fast charging would go a long way to solving the issue."

— ProtoplanetaryNebula, r/ElectricVehiclesUK

Notice the instinct: the fix people want is one that closes the home-versus-public price gap. Almost every thread eventually returns to that same fault line.

The old fears have faded — but a new literacy has replaced them

Range anxiety, in its original form, is largely gone. The reassurance in these communities is confident, specific and offered freely to newcomers. What's replaced blanket worry is a practical literacy about winter range and real-world figures.

"You will be fine. It's just not an issue now. Choose an EV with longer range for the holiday trips."

— Electronic-War1077, r/ElectricVehiclesUK

"I'd say put 200/250+ miles into the search if you want actual 150-mile range in winter."

— LocaliserEstablished, r/ElectricVehiclesUK

Buyers are being taught to discount the official figure — a sign of a maturing market that trusts lived experience over the brochure. Messaging that quotes headline range now risks sounding naive.

"Really impressed that a 5-year-old, 82,000-mile car has a battery health of >95% — and I've actually got the 300-mile range out of it."

— ed110220, MoneySavingExpert

Second-hand battery health — once a major unknown — is now reported as reassurance rather than raised as a fear. The used-EV conversation has crossed a confidence threshold.

Underneath the grievances, satisfaction is high

It would be easy to read the cost and charging complaints as a market in trouble. The unprompted data says otherwise. The most upvoted comment across the entire Reddit set was not a complaint but a quiet endorsement.

"I don't know anyone who went EV and wants to go back."

— jacobp100, r/ElectricVehiclesUK — the single most upvoted comment in the study

This is the through-line: people are frustrated with policy and infrastructure, not with the cars. The grievances are the friction of a product people have already decided they like.

"I was paid to fill my EV up today. You can't do that with a diesel."

— Netexporter, MoneySavingExpert

"The preheating in the morning is fantastic. Not had to de-ice a car in years."

— KaiserDamz, r/ElectricVehiclesUK

The advocacy that lands hardest isn't about saving the planet or even saving money — it's about small, daily, tangible pleasures. That's the register in which these owners persuade each other.

Closing thought

Across two platforms, two audiences and 86,000 words of unprompted talk, the conversation keeps circling one fault line: **the gap between charging at home and charging in public**. It shapes the cost story, drives the pay-per-mile argument, defines the no-driveway problem and even sets the limit on how far today's advocates will recommend the switch. The cars have largely won the argument. The system around them hasn't.

A survey would have told you people worry about cost and charging. Listening tells you *which* people, in *whose* words, and where the genuine dividing lines sit — including the ones, like EV drivers backing pay-per-mile, that a questionnaire would never surface. That's the difference between claimed behaviour and actual behaviour, and it's where the useful insight lives.

About this study

Digital Conversation Analysis (DCA) is a method for studying real, unprompted conversation — what people say when there's no researcher in the room and no reason to perform. This study analysed 22 EV threads on MoneySavingExpert (481 comments) and the 45 most-discussed posts in r/ElectricVehiclesUK (1,347 comments from 710 authors), covering 4 June to 3 August 2026. Quotes are reproduced as written, lightly trimmed for length. Findings are qualitative: they describe what is being discussed and how strongly, not what share of all drivers hold a view.

Worth a short call to see if this fits what you're working on?