INSTITUTE OF THE MOTOR INDUSTRY

The IMI's Response to the Transport Committee Inquiry: Supercharging the EV Transition

January 2026

The professional body for people working and learning in automotive since 1920

Contents

Contents

Introduction

The Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI) is the professional body for individuals working in the UK automotive sector, representing over 100,000 members across vehicle service, maintenance and repair. We set professional standards, accredit training, and promote safety, competence and lifelong learning across the automotive workforce.

The IMI welcomes the opportunity to submit evidence to the Transport Committee's inquiry into Supercharging the Electric Vehicle Transition. Our submission focuses on the readiness of the automotive service and repair workforce to support the transition to electric vehicles, and the implications this has for consumer confidence, safety and long-term adoption.

While government policy has understandably prioritised vehicle uptake and charging infrastructure, the IMI's evidence highlights the critical but often under-recognised role of workforce capability in enabling a successful EV transition. Technicians working on electric vehicles are required to handle high-voltage, safety-critical and increasingly software-defined systems. Ensuring that this workforce is appropriately skilled, qualified and supported is essential to protecting consumers, maintaining public safety, and sustaining confidence in electric vehicle ownership across both new and second-hand markets.

Our evidence draws on IMI workforce data, including the IMI TechSafe EV Technician Forecast, and reflects our role as the sector's recognised authority on automotive competence and professional standards.

How effective have Government policies been in driving EV adoption to date, and what further action is required to accelerate take-up?

Government policy has played an important role in supporting the transition to electric vehicles through regulation, incentives and clear signalling around the long-term direction of travel. However, policy focus has tended to prioritise vehicles and charging infrastructure, with comparatively limited attention given to the safety and readiness of the workforce responsible for servicing, maintaining and repairing EVs.

Ensuring that technicians can work safely with high-voltage vehicles is critical not only for their own protection, but also for the safety of consumers and the wider public. As regulatory frameworks such as Euro 7 place increasing emphasis on battery durability, real-world performance, and in-service compliance across the full vehicle lifecycle, it is essential that the workforce responsible for maintenance and repair is appropriately qualified and supported to deliver these safety and regulatory outcomes in practice.

According to the most recent IMI TechSafe EV Technician Forecast, 74,500 technicians in the UK now hold an EV qualification, equivalent to around 26% of the total technician workforce. Despite this growth, the rate of certification is not keeping pace with projected future demand, with forecasts indicating that the shortfall between qualified technicians and those needed could reach 44,000 by 2035 if current trends continue.

Consumer confidence in EVs is shaped not only by purchase and charging, but by confidence that vehicles can be safely, affordably and conveniently serviced throughout their lifetime. A visible, competent and geographically distributed service and repair workforce is therefore a critical enabler of sustained EV adoption.

Further action is required to explicitly recognise automotive servicing and repair skills as part of the EV transition infrastructure. This includes embedding workforce capability into EV policy design, supporting large-scale upskilling of the existing workforce, and ensuring clear, recognised competence and safety standards for work on safety-critical, high-risk and security-sensitive vehicle systems across the sector.

Government can accelerate progress by making greater use of existing competence standards. IMI TechSafe is already recognised as a benchmark for safe working on electric vehicles and other safety-critical, high-risk or security-sensitive technologies.

Using such standards within skills policy, funding criteria and guidance would strengthen workforce readiness by improving consistency, safety and public trust.

How robust is the current rate of EV take-up relative to the Government's targets?

This question sits largely outside the Institute of the Motor Industry's direct remit, as we do not monitor vehicle sales volumes or progress against Government adoption targets.

Recent data from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) shows that battery electric vehicles (BEVs) accounted for around 25% of new car registrations, underlining continued growth in EV uptake in the UK new car market. However, industry commentary indicates that this growth is not yet fully aligned with the trajectory required to meet mandated targets under the Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) mandate.

Achieving the rising sales quotas set out for the remainder of the 2020s and into the early 2030s will therefore require sustained and coordinated effort. Independent analysis further suggests that manufacturers are increasingly relying on significant vehicle discounting to stimulate EV registrations and ensure compliance with the mandate, raising questions about the long-term commercial sustainability of the current approach.

From a workforce perspective, the current rate of EV uptake must be matched by workforce capability growth to ensure post-sales support is in place. The latest IMI TechSafe data shows that 74,500 technicians are now EV-qualified.

Despite this growth, future forecasts suggest a widening gap. By 2032, the supply of EV-qualified technicians is projected at approximately 137,000, while demand could require similar or greater capacity, with shortages growing to 13,300 by 2033 and 44,200 by 2035 under current trends.

This underscores that while adoption metrics are important, long-term robustness also depends on whether the UK builds and sustains a sufficiently capable EV workforce as the vehicle parc increases.

How effective are existing incentives (such as the Electric Car Grant), and to what extent might further or different forms of support be required?

Purchase incentives can support EV adoption by reducing the upfront affordability barrier. However, incentives focused solely on vehicle purchase do not address wider concerns about ownership costs, including routine maintenance, accident repair, and long-term affordability. One way Government could strengthen this confidence is by supporting the development of a new specialist role, such as a Battery State of Health Technician, responsible for assessing, certifying and communicating battery health in a consistent and trusted way. This would help improve transparency for buyers, support safe ongoing vehicle use, and create a new entry-level route into skilled EV work, helping to grow the future technician workforce alongside market demand.

From an IMI perspective, further support is required to strengthen the skills and competence of the automotive maintenance and repair workforce. Without this, there is a risk that incentives accelerate sales faster than the sector's ability to support EVs safely and affordably in use.

Government support should therefore extend beyond consumer purchase incentives to include targeted investment in training, upskilling and professional standards, particularly for independent garages and SMEs, which make up a large proportion of the UK's service network.

Flexible skills funding that supports apprenticeships alongside modular training and continuous professional development would help employers respond to rapid technological change while maintaining safety and quality. The latest data shows that only around 26% of technicians hold EV qualifications, indicating significant headroom for further workforce development.

What are the likely implications of the introduction of Electric Vehicle Excise Duty (eVED) for the wider EV transition, and what factors should guide the Government's approach?

Changes to vehicle taxation can materially influence perceptions of the total cost of EV ownership across the market. From a consumer confidence perspective, policy stability, clarity and predictability are critical, particularly for fleet, rental and leasing providers, where business models depend on long-term cost certainty and residual values.

The rental and leasing sector is already facing challenges linked to EV depreciation and uncertainty around residual values. The introduction of additional taxation risks placing further financial pressure on a part of the industry that plays a central role in making EVs accessible to consumers and businesses at scale.

If EV running costs are perceived to increase as a result of new taxation, this may increase hesitation among buyers, particularly in the second-hand market where concerns already exist around battery longevity, repair costs and service accessibility.

To mitigate this, any changes to EV taxation should be accompanied by measures that strengthen consumer trust in EV ownership. This includes ensuring access to competent, safety-focused servicing and repair, and confidence that faults can be diagnosed and resolved affordably nationwide.

How should the Government support further development of the second-hand EV market?

A strong second-hand EV market is essential to mass adoption and depends on trust, transparency and affordability. Consumers need confidence not only in battery condition, but in their ability to access safe, affordable servicing and repair throughout ownership.

Government can support the second-hand market by ensuring the automotive service and repair workforce is equipped to work on EVs beyond franchised networks. Independent and mainstream garages must be capable of servicing EVs safely to avoid restricted consumer choice and higher costs, which can deter second-hand buyers.

Clear, recognised competence requirements for technicians working on EVs can provide reassurance to second-hand buyers and reduce perceived risk. The IMI TechSafe Professional Register, for example, offers a trusted means of demonstrating that technicians have been assessed as competent to work safely on high-voltage systems. This kind of recognised workforce assurance supports affordability, consumer choice and confidence in the used EV market.

What are the most significant factors affecting consumer confidence in EVs, and what steps Government and the sector could take to address them?

Consumer confidence in EVs is influenced not only by purchase price and charging availability, but also by confidence in servicing, maintenance, repair cost and quality.

Key concerns include:

- Availability of qualified technicians
- Cost of servicing and repairs
- Safety of high-voltage systems
- Consistency and quality of repair work
- The treatment of accident-damaged EVs, including instances where vehicles are written off due to battery damage even where damage may be limited or potentially repairable

There is growing concern that some accident-damaged electric vehicles are being written off on the basis of battery involvement alone. This can increase insurance costs, reduce the supply of vehicles entering the second-hand market, and reinforce consumer perceptions that EVs are inherently expensive or difficult to repair.

One practical way to strengthen consumer confidence is through visible, recognised benchmarks for technician competence and safety. The IMI TechSafe Professional Register provides an established mechanism for demonstrating verified capability in electric vehicles and other safety-critical, high-risk or security-sensitive technologies. It helps consumers, employers and policymakers distinguish between general awareness and the assessed level of competence required to carry out safe work on high-voltage systems.

The IMI could work with industry, insurers and regulators to define a specific battery repair competence pathway within the IMI TechSafe Professional Register. Rather than duplicating existing qualifications, this would provide an employer- and regulator-recognised form of assurance that technicians undertaking battery repair have the verified competence required for this high-risk activity. Clear recognition through a professional register would help establish when battery repair is safe and appropriate, supporting consistent decision-making and avoiding unnecessary replacement or vehicle write-off.

By providing a clear and trusted reference point, the IMI TechSafe Professional Register supports safer practices, reduces the risk of poor-quality or unsafe repairs, and enhances confidence that vehicles are maintained by appropriately skilled professionals. Importantly, it also helps technicians and employers demonstrate fulfilment of current regulatory expectations while future-proofing the workforce for emerging technologies where regulation is still developing, including connected and automated vehicles. This provides a clearer pathway for workforce transition as automotive technology evolves at pace, alongside electrification and alternative fuels.

Alongside this, Government should work with industry bodies such as the IMI to scale high-voltage and emerging technology training provision, ensuring that pathways are affordable and accessible for SMEs and independent garages, not only large franchised networks. This could include building on existing skills and apprenticeship funding routes to support short, modular upskilling aligned with real-world servicing and repair needs, helping the workforce adapt as vehicle technologies evolve.

What further action is required to ensure that the rollout of EV charging infrastructure facilitates transition at the necessary rate?

While the Institute of the Motor Industry does not comment on the overall rollout or deployment pace of charging infrastructure, there are important workforce and safety considerations linked to its use and maintenance. As charging systems become more widespread, it is essential that technicians and installers working with high-voltage vehicles and associated equipment have the recognised competence required to operate safely. Ensuring workforce capability keeps pace with these developments will be critical to protecting consumers, maintaining trust, and supporting the wider EV transition. As vehicles and charging systems become more digitally integrated, competence frameworks will also need to evolve to reflect emerging safety and technical requirements.

How effectively is the Department for Transport addressing issues in the rollout of charging infrastructure such as affordability, geographic equity, accessibility, administration of funding, and grid connections?

The IMI is not directly involved in the administration or delivery of charging infrastructure programmes. However, from a workforce perspective, greater attention is needed to ensure that skills and competence planning keeps pace with infrastructure rollout. Charging expansion will only facilitate the transition effectively if there is sufficient capability across the UK to install, maintain and safely service associated high-voltage systems, including within independent and regional markets.

What lessons should be learned from other countries' successes or setbacks?

From a workforce perspective, successful EV markets tend to reduce consumer uncertainty across the entire ownership journey, not only at the point of purchase. In leading EV countries such as Norway and the Netherlands, consistent policy signals, strong consumer protections, and widespread availability of trusted servicing and repair have helped normalise EV ownership and build long-term confidence.

A key lesson for the UK is that workforce readiness and professional assurance frameworks should be treated as integral components of EV transition policy, rather than secondary considerations. The IMI TechSafe Professional Register provides one such mechanism, helping to demonstrate that technicians have the competence required to work safely on electric vehicles and other safety-critical, high-risk or security-sensitive technologies.

Embedding recognised competence and safety assurance early helps reduce the risk of later skills bottlenecks, supports consumer confidence, and enables sustained adoption as EV markets mature.

January 2026

Institute of the Motor Industry
Fanshaws, Brickendon, Hertford, SG13 8PQ
+44(0) 1992 519 025
hello@theimi.org.uk
www.theimi.org.uk

INSTITUTE OF THE MOTOR INDUSTRY

Company Number 00225180