



Policy Position - Electric Vehicles Charging points

Background

The rapid growth in the number of electric vehicles has seen a parallel rise in the number of electric vehicle (EV) charging points on our streets. While we welcome measures to reduce our carbon footprint, EV charging points can prove a hazardous obstruction for people with sight loss if they are not installed with care.

As part of their Greener Transport Future strategy, the UK Government has set an ambition to phase out the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles by 2030. The sale of electric vehicles has increased significantly in the last five years. This has in turn seen an increase in the installation of electric vehicle charging points into the public realm, including on-street and car park locations.

In response to the Government's strategy, local authorities are introducing EV charge point plans and policies. Currently, developers have 'permitted development rights' which means that there could be less oversight and scrutiny over the charging points. This underlines the importance of having consistent guidance and standards, produced by the Department for Transport or devolved governments to ensure that they do not pose as barriers to road users.

People with sight loss will often use the building line as their shoreline for orientation and navigation. Most long cane users use the building line and therefore any obstacles placed along this route could pose a hazard or make them move away from their line of travel.

Guide dog users tend to walk along the centre of the footway as the guide dog is trained to walk in a straight line. However, if there are obstacles along this route, the dog would guide their owner to the left or right to avoid any obstacles.

Locating charging points in the middle of the pavement or placed indiscriminately on the footway are likely to be an obstacle to someone with sight loss. Cables trailing across a footway, between a

charging point and vehicle will result in pavements being hazardous for blind and partially sighted pedestrians. This can also be the case if charging points are poorly located in other locations, such as car parks.

Key stats:

- **Charging points that are located on the footway are likely to be a hazard for people who are visually impaired. This sort of street furniture can cause an issue, with 1 in 5 people saying they have hurt themselves, and 74% saying they have either hurt themselves or walked into street furniture in the past.**
- **60% say that street clutter is a significant obstacle to them going out independently. (Ref: Guide Dogs - Mobily in the Built Environment survey April 2021)**

Our position

We strongly recommend a hierarchy of locations for EV charging infrastructure. Pavements should be the last resort and only if all other options have been exhausted. Guide Dogs is asking for the following:

1. Statutory guidance should be introduced to impose requirements on accessibility standards which should include (but not be limited to) the following:
2. The design of EV charging points, hubs or pods should be consistent to assist people with sight loss identify when they encounter them in the public realm.
3. Ideally, charging points should be placed on the carriageway or at fast charging locations such as public/retail car parks and petrol stations.
4. Charging points are installed on the pavement, there should be a clear width of 2m on the pavement for pedestrians to get around, and they should be located by the kerb edge. Cables should not be a trip hazard. This could particularly be a risk for people with sight loss. Incorporating charging points with current street furniture such as lampposts and bollards located close to the kerb would also reduce street clutter.
5. Charging points/pods/hubs should have contrasting features to enhance their visibility for people with sight loss. This should include good tonal contrast, and reflectors/lighting to ensure they are visible during dull weather conditions or at night.

6. If cables from charging points in residential dwellings have to cross a pavement, the cable must be recessed or sunk into the pavement in a way that will prevent a trip hazard.

References

Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment. External environment. Code of practice. BS 8300:1:2018

Energy Saving Trust - Research report

[Local Authority Guidance - Positioning chargepoints.pdf](#)
(energysavingtrust.org.uk)

London's electric vehicle charge point installation guidance December 2019

[TfL London electric vehicle charge point installation guidance - December 2019](#)

The National Design Guide (Policy M3)

[National design guide - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Contact

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