**SMMT NEW CAR REGISTRATIONS**  
5 June 2024 (data for May 2024)  
**High-res charts and data available via Dropbox:** <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/t6bvpa5qe4h3gkpryyrar/AGJLUn4XTSx8kDtwZg_ilqc?rlkey=xlb8te6lftozzolfeegd488er&st=kkknpop6&dl=0>

**New car market holds steady as fleets drive growth**

* New car registrations up 1.7% in May in 22nd consecutive month of growth.
* Battery electric vehicle (BEV) market share rises to 17.6% in the month and 16.1% YTD.
* Retail BEV uptake declines less than overall private market as manufacturers subsidise ongoing transition.

**Wednesday 5 June, 2024** The UK new car market marked its 22nd consecutive month of growth as registrations rose 1.7% in May, according to the latest figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT). With 147,678 units reaching the road, it was the best May market performance since 2021, although it remains down some -19.6% on 2019.1

Fleets and businesses continued to fuel market growth, up 14.0% and 9.5% respectively, narrowly offsetting a -12.9% decline in private retail uptake. While deliveries of both petrol and diesel cars fell, demand for electrified vehicles rose, with plug-in hybrids (PHEVs) recording the highest growth of all powertrains, up 31.5% to reach an 8.0% market share, and hybrids (HEVs) rising 9.6%, maintaining their status as the third most popular fuel type after petrol and battery electric at 13.2% of the market.

Battery electric vehicle (BEV) registrations also outperformed the market, rising 6.2% to claim a 17.6% market share, up from 16.9% in the same month last year. Uptake is still driven by the fleet sector, where volumes rose 10.7%. Private retail BEV uptake, meanwhile, fell by 2.0% (just 98 registrations short of May last year). This performance, although encouraging, is still below the trajectory mandated on manufacturers by government in its Vehicle Emissions Trading Scheme, which demands 22% of new vehicles sold this year by each brand must be zero emission. With a choice of more than 100 EV models2 now available, and a raft of compelling offers3, manufacturers are dedicated to driving change, but meeting targets will require more support.

Manufacturer discounting cannot be sustained indefinitely as it undermines the ability of companies to invest in next generation technologies. The market performance underlines the need for the next government to provide private consumers with meaningful purchase incentives.

While certain private buyers can access some of the benefits enjoyed by business buyers through salary sacrifice schemes, providing universal access to incentives would dramatically increase BEV uptake and accelerate the decarbonisation of road transport. Temporarily halving VAT on new BEV purchases, combined with a cut in the VAT levied on public charging from 20% to 5% – in line with domestic use – would drive up demand, putting more than a quarter of a million EVs on the road instead of petrol or diesel cars over the next three years.4

**Mike Hawes, SMMT Chief Executive**, said, “As Britain prepares for next month’s general election, the new car market continues to hold steady as large fleets sustain growth, offsetting weakened private retail demand. Consumers enjoy a plethora of new electric models and some very attractive offers, but manufacturers can’t sustain this scale of support on their own indefinitely. Their success so far should be a signpost for the next government that a faster and fairer transition requires carrots, not just sticks.”

**Notes to editors**

1 May 2021: 156,737; May 2019: 183,724

2 [Brits enjoy best ever EV choice with more than a hundred models now available](https://www.smmt.co.uk/2024/05/brits-enjoy-best-ever-ev-choice-with-more-than-a-hundred-models-now-available/), 23 May 2024

3 In April, average prices fell for seven in 10 new EV models advertised on Auto Trader - <https://www.autotraderroadto2035.co.uk/>   
4 [Car industry urges ‘fair tax for a fair transition’ to put EVs back in the fast lane](https://www.smmt.co.uk/2024/03/car-industry-urges-fair-tax-for-a-fair-transition-to-put-evs-back-in-the-fast-lane/), 1 March 2024

**About SMMT and the UK automotive industry**

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) is one of the largest and most influential trade associations in the UK. It supports the interests of the UK automotive industry at home and abroad, promoting the industry to government, stakeholders and the media.

The automotive industry is a vital part of the UK economy and integral to supporting the delivery of the agendas for levelling up, net zero, advancing global Britain, and the plan for growth. Automotive-related manufacturing contributes £78 billion turnover and £16 billion value added to the UK economy, and typically invests around £3 billion each year in R&D. With more than 208,000 people employed in automotive manufacturing, and some 800,000 in total across the wider sector, the industry trades globally, with exports worth £94 billion accounting for 10% of all UK goods exports.

More than 25 manufacturing brands build more than 70 models of vehicles in the UK, plus an array of specialist small volume manufacturers, supported by some 2,500 supply chain businesses and some of the world's most skilled engineers. Many of these jobs are outside London and the Southeast, with wages that are around 14% higher than the UK average. The automotive sector also supports jobs in other key sectors – including advertising, finance and logistics.

More detail on UK Automotive available in SMMT's Motor Industry Facts publication at [www.smmt.co.uk/reports/smmt-motor-industry-facts/](http://www.smmt.co.uk/reports/smmt-motor-industry-facts/)

**Broadcasters:** SMMT has an ISDN studio and access to expert spokespeople, case studies and regional representatives.

**SMMT media contacts**  
Paul Mauerhoff                       07809 522181            [pmauerhoff@smmt.co.uk](mailto:pmauerhoff@smmt.co.uk)  
James Boley                           07927 668565            [jboley@smmt.co.uk](mailto:jboley@smmt.co.uk)  
Rebecca Gibbs                       07708 480889            [rgibbs@smmt.co.uk](mailto:rgibbs@smmt.co.uk)  
Scott Clarke                            07912 799959            [sclarke@smmt.co.uk](mailto:sclarke@smmt.co.uk)  
Emma Butcher                        07880 191825            [ebutcher@smmt.co.uk](mailto:ebutcher@smmt.co.uk)