

New car market declines for first time in more than two years



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Monthly sales of new cars have declined for the first time in more than two years, industry figures show.

Some 84,575 new cars were registered in the UK last month, down 1.3% compared with 85,657 during August 2023, the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) said.

It is the first monthly year-on-year decrease since July 2022.

Registrations of new pure battery electric vehicles rose 10.8% year on year, which the [SMMT](#) attributed to “heavy discounting by manufacturers over the summer and a raft of new models attracting buyers”.

UK sales of new cars in August



PA graphic. Source: SMMT

(PA Graphics)

PA Graphics

August is traditionally one of the quietest months of the year for the new car market ahead of the introduction of new number plates in September.

The overall new car market grew by 5.1% during the first eight months of the year compared with the same period in 2023.

SMMT chief executive Mike Hawes said: “August’s EV growth is welcome, but it’s always a very low volume month and so subject to distortions ahead of September’s number plate change.

“The introduction of the new 74 plate, together with a raft of compelling offers and discounts from manufacturers, plus growing model choice, will help increase purchase consideration and be a true barometer for market demand.

“Encouraging a mass market shift to [EVs](#) remains a challenge, however, and urgent action must be taken to help buyers overcome affordability issues and concerns about charge point provision.”

Ian Plummer, commercial director at online vehicle marketplace

[Auto Trader](#), said: “UK registrations were sluggish overall in August as buyers historically hold fire for September’s plate changes.

“Heavy discounting from manufacturers helped drive the electric share of new car leads on Auto Trader to 27%, the highest market share since the end of 2022.

“The [Government](#) must maintain financial incentives for buyers of new EVs as well as cutting [VAT](#) on public charging to help support the electric transition.”