



Monthly Market Intelligence

The latest insight from the UK's largest new and used car platform.

SEPTEMBER 2026

 Autotrader

EV strength supports resilience across the used car market.

New car registrations



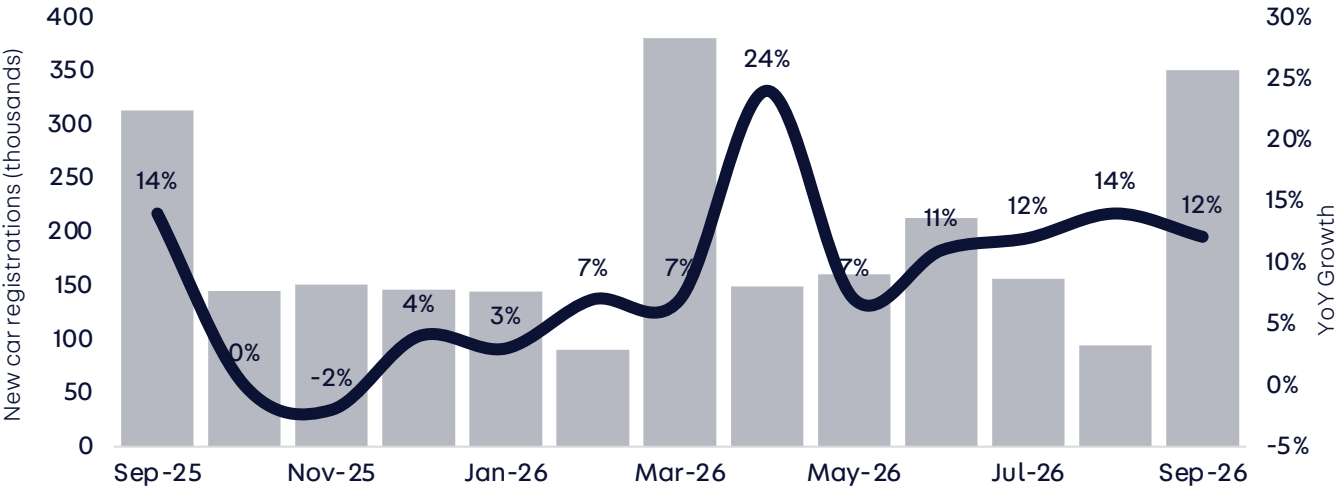
The new car market saw its tenth consecutive month of growth, up 12% in September and marking its strongest September since 2017. The month typically accounts for around one in seven annual registrations, making it a key period for the market. Plug-in cars continued to drive growth, making up just under half of registrations at a 45% combined share, with EVs up 36% and PHEVs 56%. All sale types grew, with private registrations up 14% ahead of fleet at 10%.

350,518

New car reg. (SMMT)

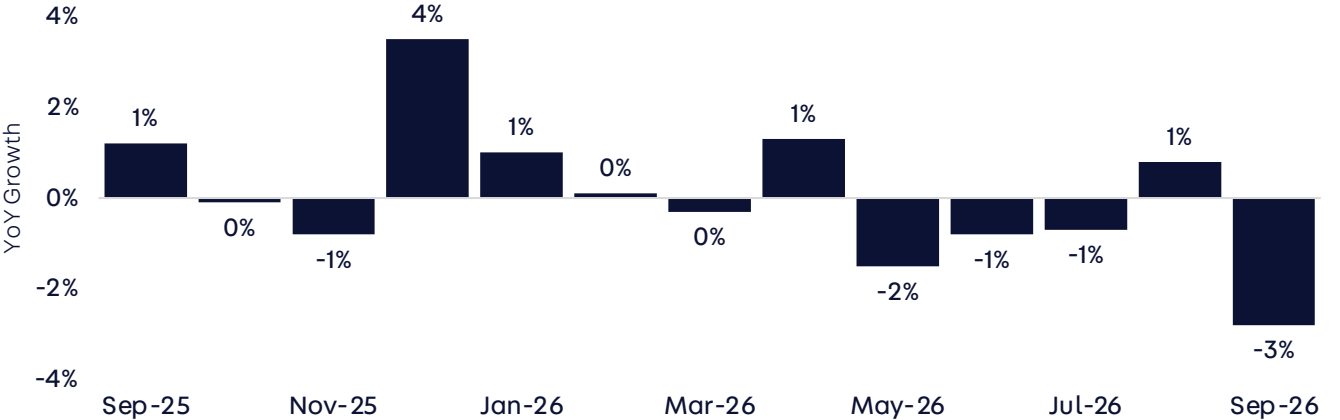
+12.1%

(vs. September 2025)



Used car sales (Year-on-year)

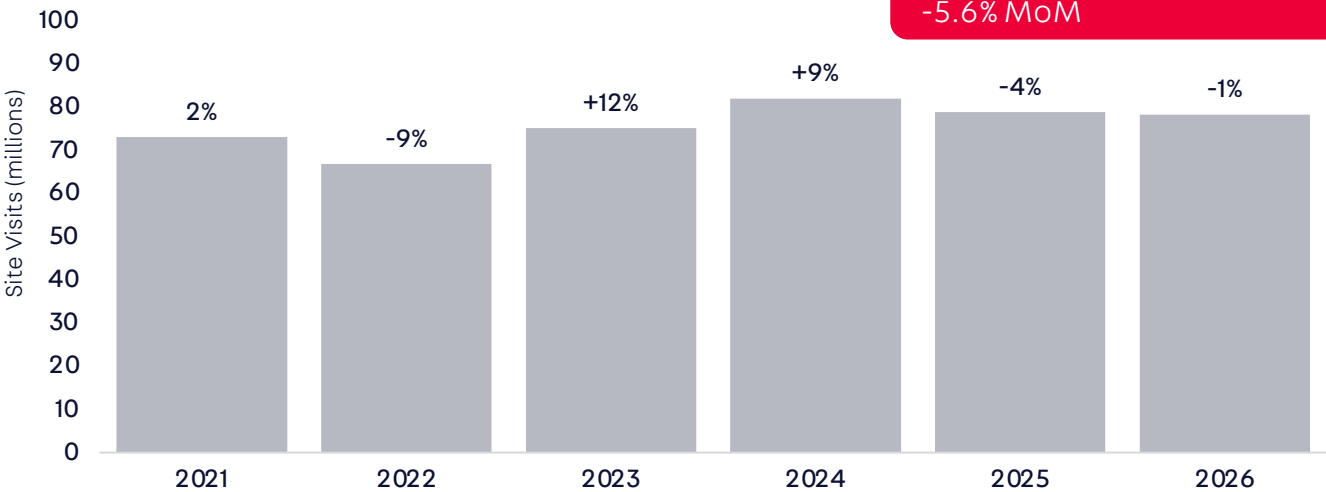
Used car transactions* dipped 3% in September and remained level YTD, as ongoing declines in ICE transactions outweighed growth across electrified cars, against a backdrop of rising fuel prices. EV and PHEVs maintained strong momentum, but softer full/mild hybrid growth saw franchise retailers end six consecutive months of growth, falling 1% YoY. Independents declined 4% with ICE transactions affected by volatile supply.



*Data based on vehicles removed from Autotrader. We assume that the vehicle is sold on the last day we saw it on our site. Strong historical correlation to official SMMT used car transactions and retailer data. Ongoing improvements to the data means historic figures may change slightly each month.

Site visits dipped 1% year-on-year in September and are down 2% year-to-date, with activity following a more typical seasonal pattern than 2024’s peak, when visits held up unusually well through September. GfK consumer confidence rose one point to -13, continuing its gradual recovery and marking a third consecutive monthly increase for the first time since summer 2024, providing some optimism for the final months of the year.

Autotrader site visits: September
Site visits, year-on-year

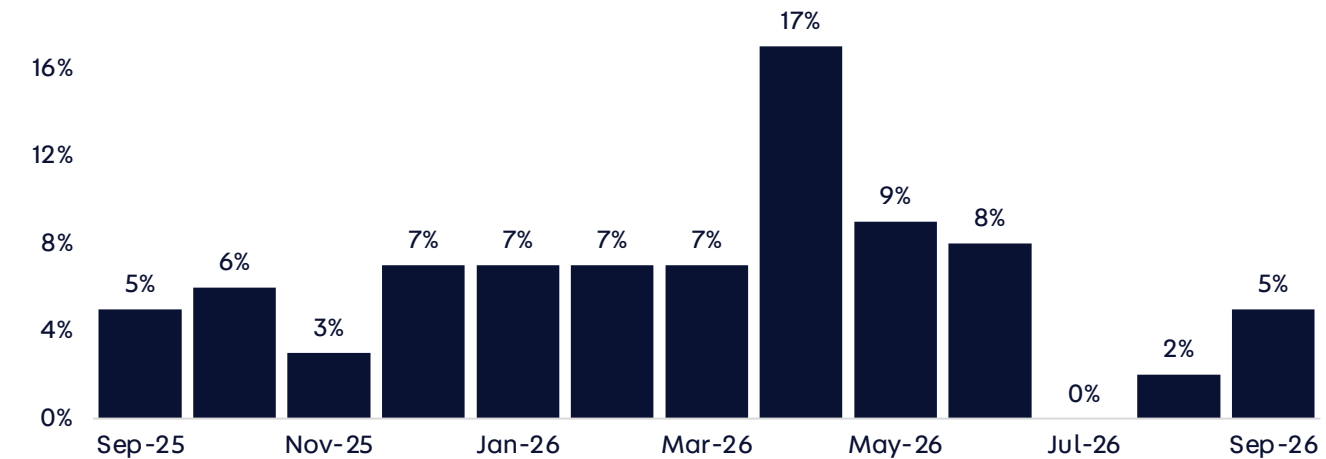


78.1m
Site visits
-5.6% MoM

New car activity

New car visits rose 5% in September as the plate change increased buyer activity. Average discounts reached a record 10.9%, amid competition for sales in this key registration month. EV enquiry share held at 30%, while discounts eased marginally to 10.6%, making EVs the only fuel type to see discounts soften. Petrol and full/mild hybrid discounts exceeded EVs, with petrol reaching a record 12.3% helping petrol enquiries strengthen to their highest levels since March.

Autotrader new car visits*
Year-on-year
20%



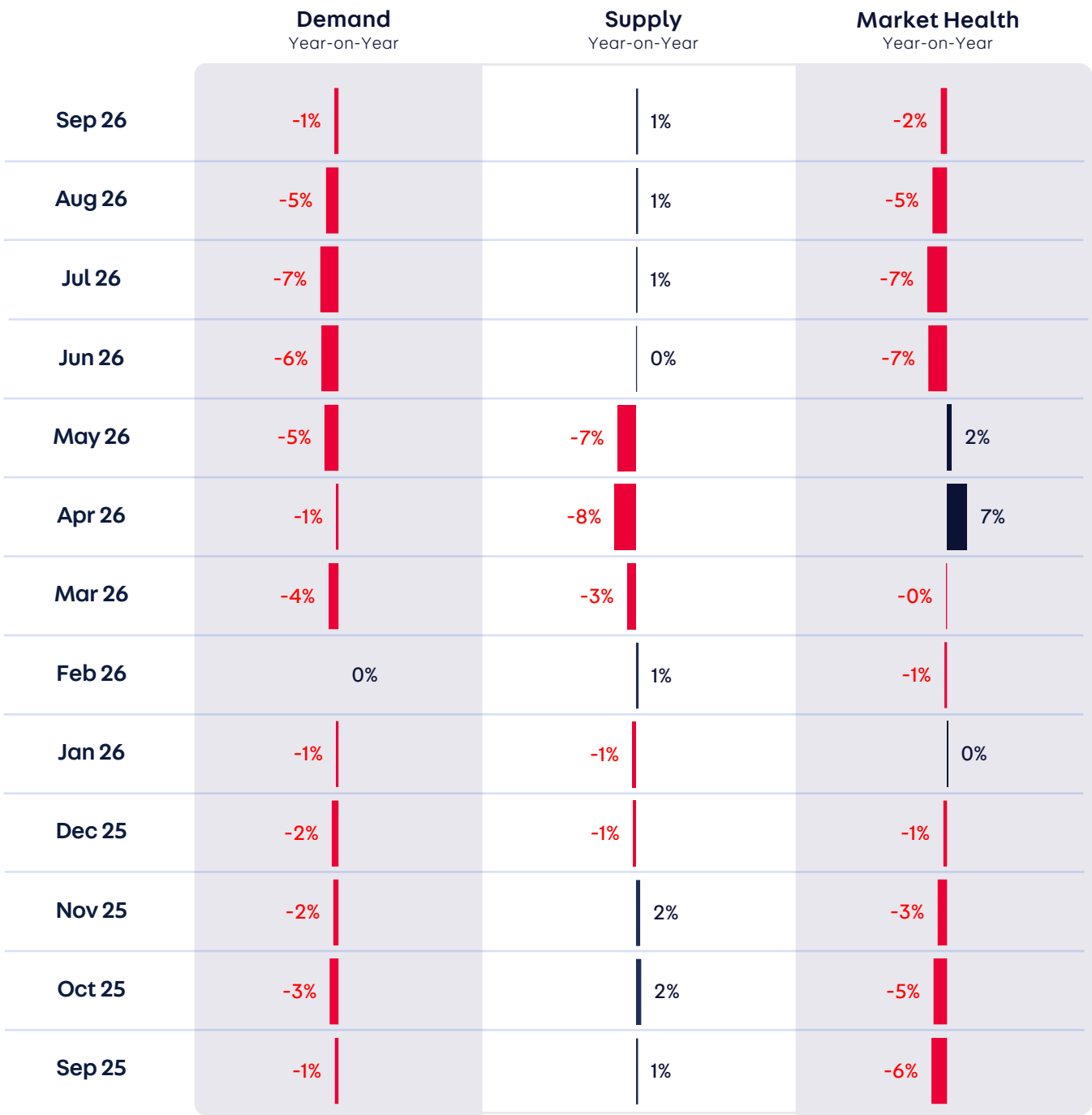
+5%
New car visits (vs. Sept 2025)
+1.5% MoM

30%
EV lead share
-0.5ppts MoM

The used car market demonstrated underlying resilience as steady supply balanced a slight softening in demand. ICE supply continued to contract, with petrol demand falling alongside reduced supply, while diesel faced greater pressure as demand fell faster than stock. In contrast, EV demand strengthened as stock levels rebuilt following limited supply. Cars continued to sell quickly at 29 days, with only diesel taking longer to sell YoY.

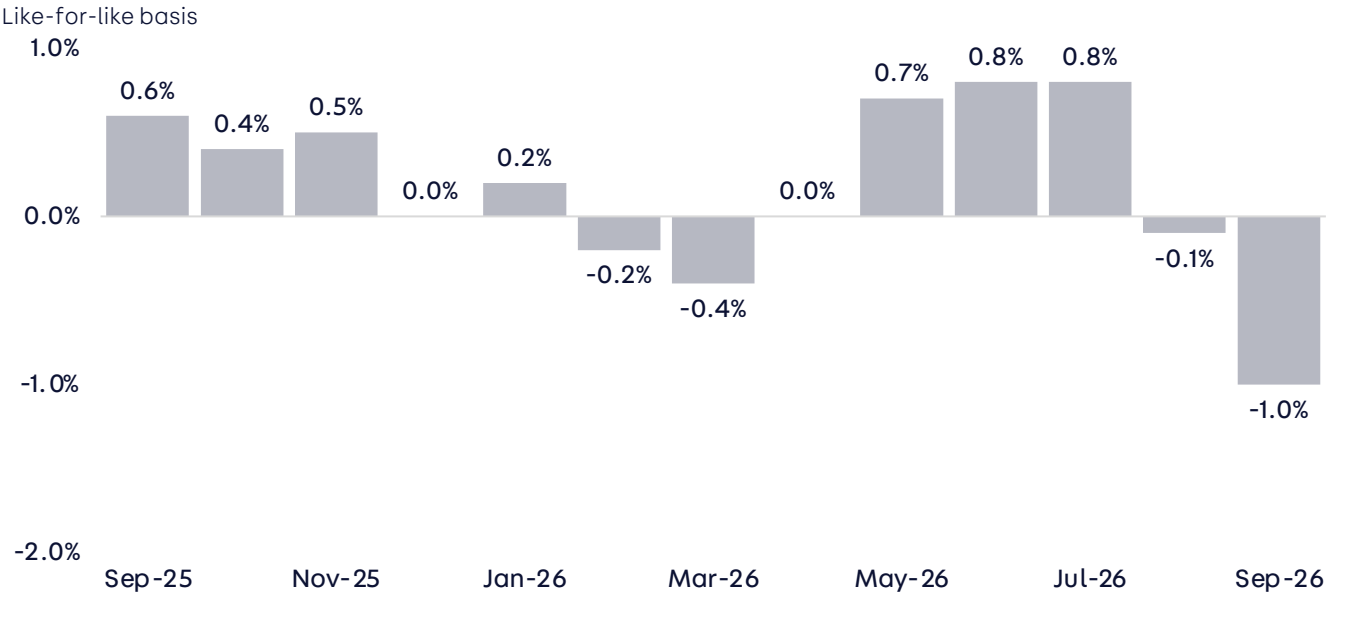


The Market Health metric shows the ratio of supply vs. demand compared to the previous year*



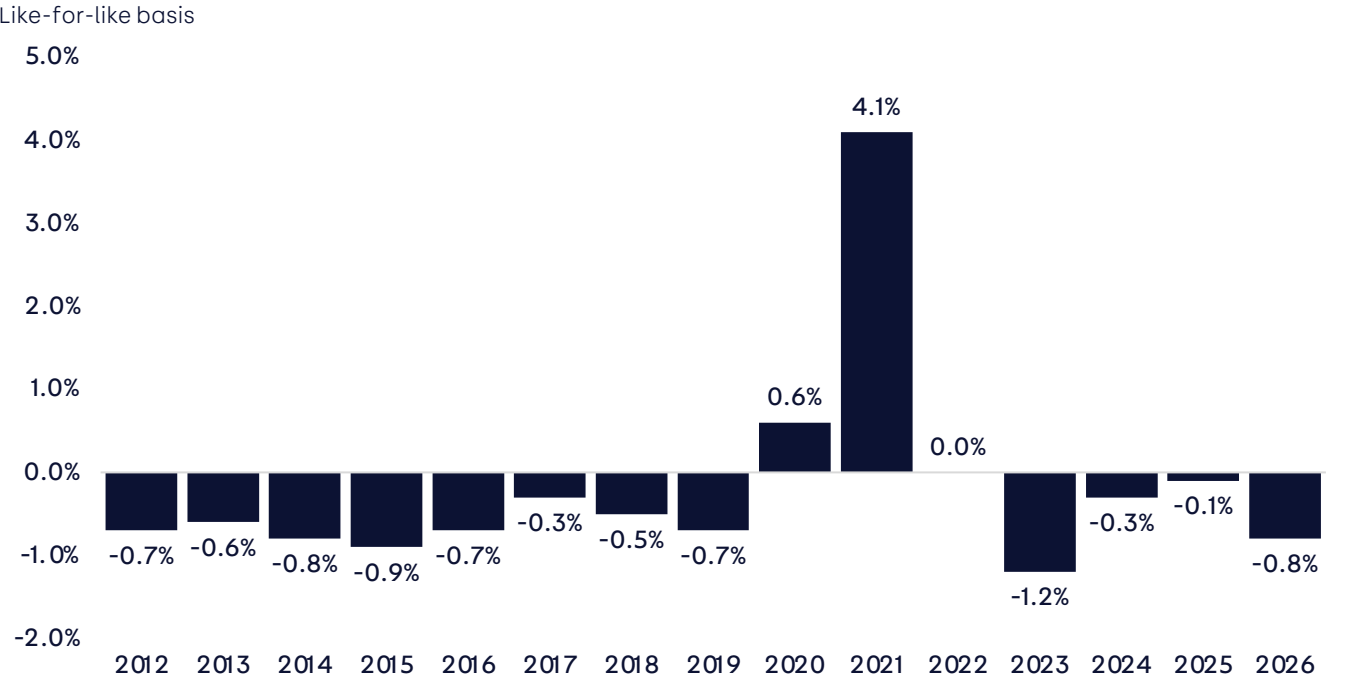
Used car retail prices fell 1% year-on-year in September, marking the sharpest rate of decline since February 2025. With trade prices also trending downwards, maintaining retail pricing will be increasingly important. While prices softened across all age cohorts, 10-15-year-old cars continued to record price growth. EVs also showed resilience, recording their fifth consecutive month of growth and the only price growth among fuel types.

Year-on-year used car retail price growth



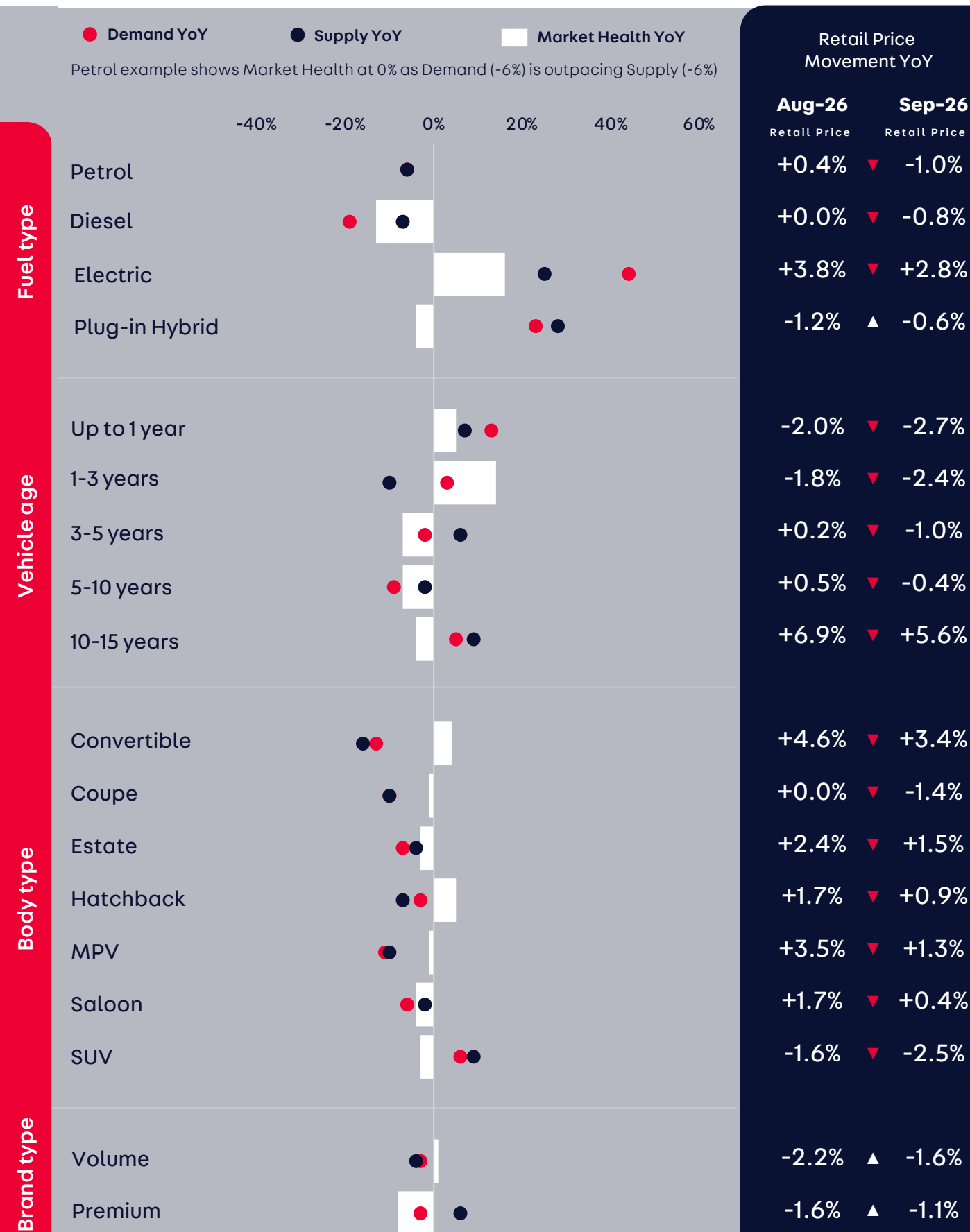
On a month-on-month basis, used car prices dipped -0.8% in September, in line with pre-pandemic seasonal trends. All age cohorts followed a similar pattern, although 1-3-year-old cars fell slightly more at -1.3%, consistent with their seasonal pattern. Fuel types similarly tracked the wider market, with EVs showing greater stability, down just -0.3% month-on-month.

Month-on-month used car retail price growth: September



Retail price observations. Year on year like-for-like pricing. Removes the impact of stock mix shift to reflect true value adjustments

Charts show Market Health (blue bar), Demand (red) and Supply (white), with pricing movements. The monthly movement of retail prices is illustrated by blue/red arrows.



New car market recovery as plug-in cars gain ground.

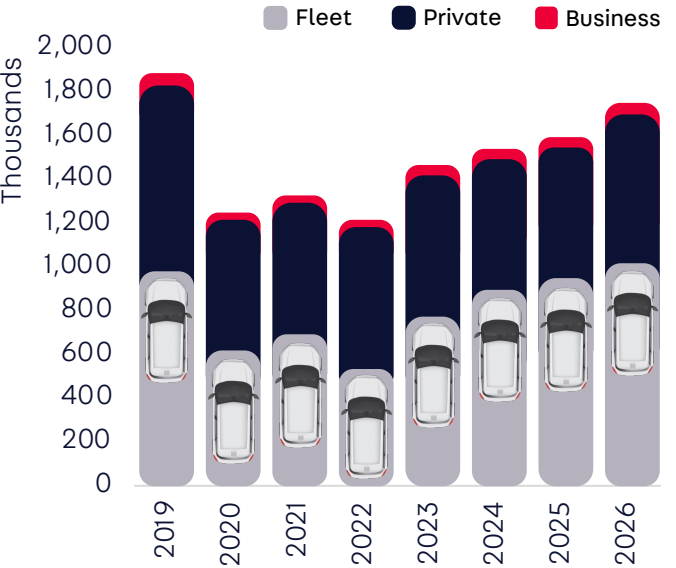
Strong new car market recovery



The new car market continued its strong recovery with registrations rising 10% YTD, although volumes remain 7% below 2019 levels.

Fleet is now back to 2019 levels, while private volumes remain 17% below, highlighting a slower recovery. However, Private volumes have grown 13% in 2026, outpacing fleet growth of 8% and driving a greater share of this year's growth. Continued high levels of discounting remain important in supporting demand.

New car registrations share by channel. Year-to-date. SMMT.



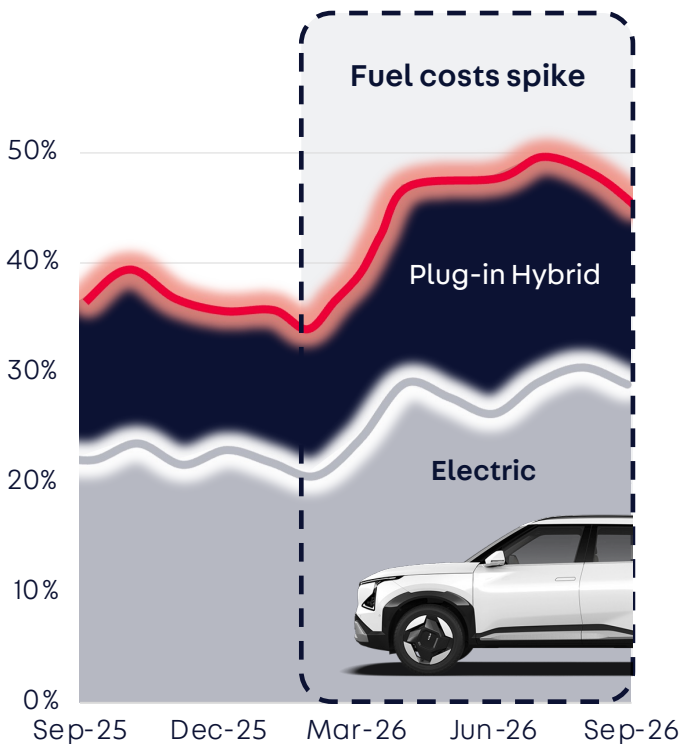
Sustained EV and PHEV momentum



Electric and plug-in hybrid have been key contributors to new car market growth, with registrations up 30% and 42% respectively YTD. EV now holds a 26% share YTD and PHEV 14%, with both continuing to grow as their role in the market increases.

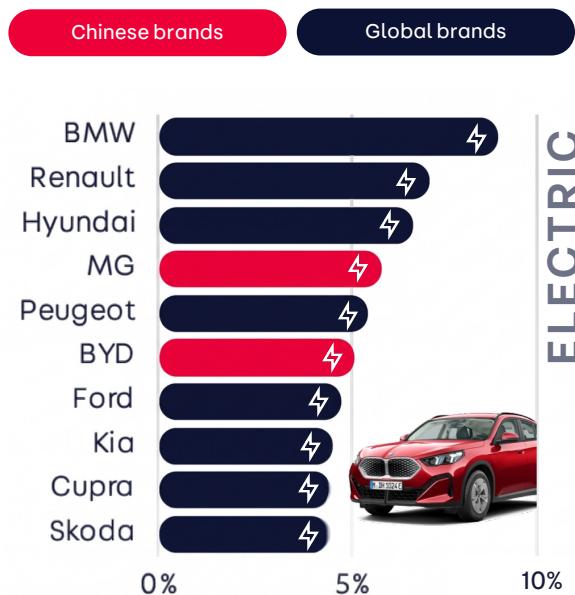
Demand for these fuel types on Autotrader has also grown strongly in 2026, with interest remaining elevated since March as rising fuel prices encourage consumers toward plug-in models. Combined, they have captured just under half of new car enquiries since March, compared with around a third prior to fuel price rises.

Share of new car enquiries. Autotrader.



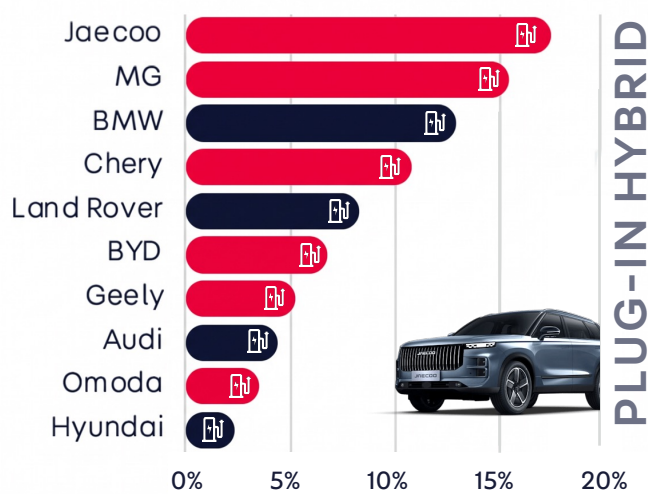
Chinese brands are gaining share through plug-in models, particularly plug-in hybrid, where they accounted for a 61% share of enquiries in September. While the Chinese are also gaining ground in electric, established brands still account for more than half of the increase in EV registrations.

Share of new electric enquiries by brand. Top 10. September 2026. Autotrader.



As ‘cars with plugs’ take a growing share of the market, established brands’ ability to maintain their position increasingly depends on the success of their EV and PHEV line-ups. Successful models such as the Renault 5 E-Tech, the most enquired-upon EV so far this year, are helping brands capture this growth. Renault, Kia and Skoda have all seen registrations rise above 2019 levels YTD, supported by strong EV performance.

Share of new plug-in hybrid enquiries by brand. Top 10. September 2026. Autotrader.

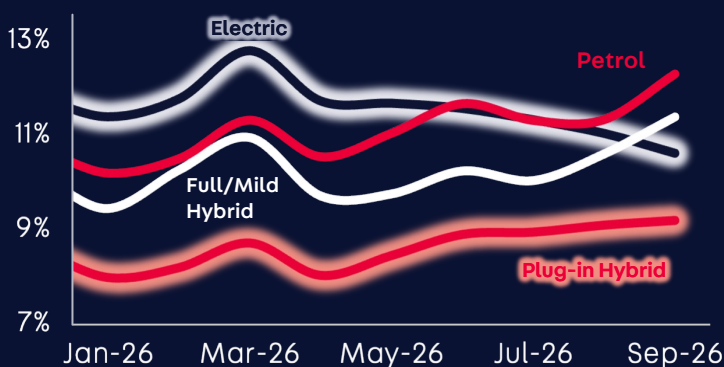


Discounts shift with market needs

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Overall discounting remains high, but competitive pressures mean brands are shifting strategies across fuel types. Electric discounting, while still elevated, has softened over the year - some manufacturers are confident in hitting their ZEV requirement and increasingly use petrol and full/mild hybrid discounts to meet total volume targets, with others still heavily discounting EVs. Strategies vary by brand, with discounts being targeted where they are most needed to protect volumes or stimulate growth.

New car average discounts by fuel type. Autotrader.



New car average discounts. September 2026. Autotrader.

SKODA			
Electric	11.5%	14.6%	
Plug-in Hybrid	15.7%	15.5%	
Petrol	17.8%	12.7%	
Full/Mild Hybrid	16.4%	12.0%	

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