Monthly Market Intelligence

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

FEBRUARY 2026

Autotrader

Resilient demand supports continued market stability

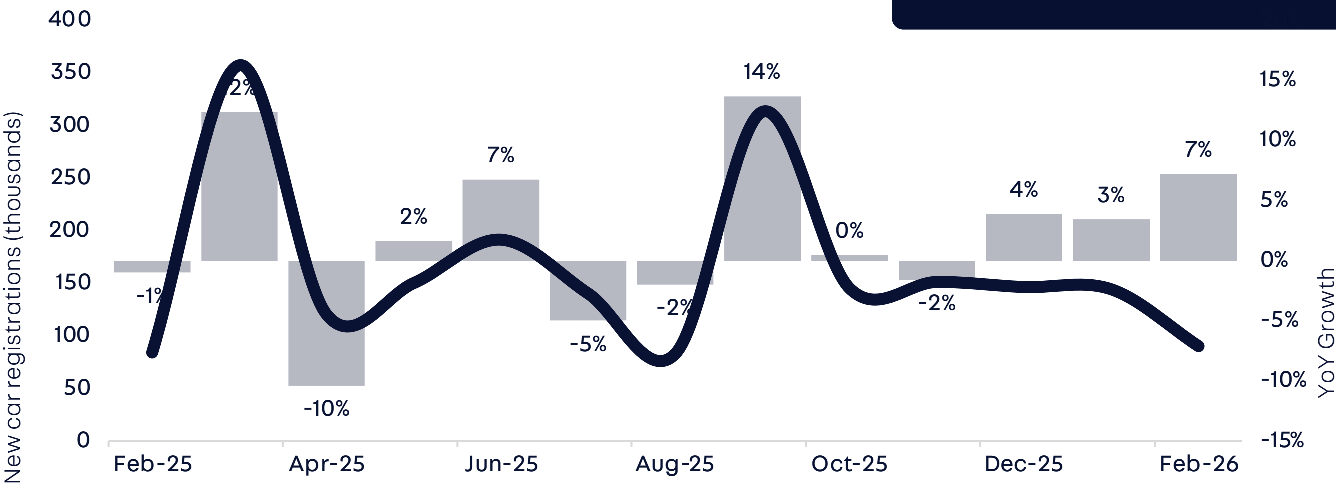
New car registrations

Autotrader

February new car registrations rose 7% to their highest level since 2004. Although February typically accounts for around 4% of the year's volumes, growth was driven by an 18% increase in private sales while fleet growth lagged at 2%. EV volumes grew 3% but lost share for a second month, with PHEVs the only fuel type to gain share year-on-year.

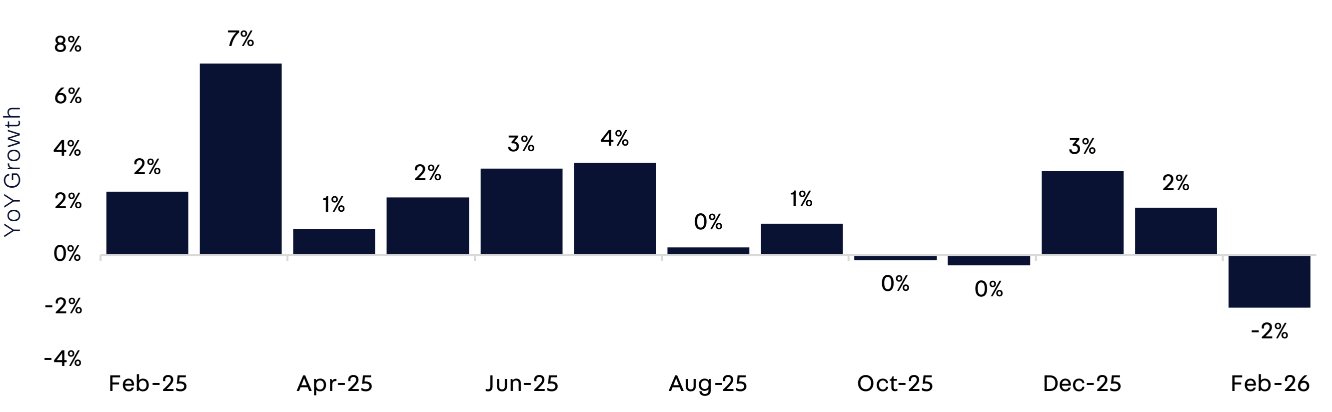
90,100
New car reg. (SMMT)

+7.3%
(vs. Feb 2025)



Used car sales (Year-on-year)

Used car transactions fell slightly by 2% in February based on stock removed from Autotrader, with a 5% decline in Franchise retailer transactions and Independents steady. Petrol and diesel vehicles saw drops of 5% and 15% respectively while electric and full/mild hybrid vehicles saw significant growth, both up 25% year-on-year.



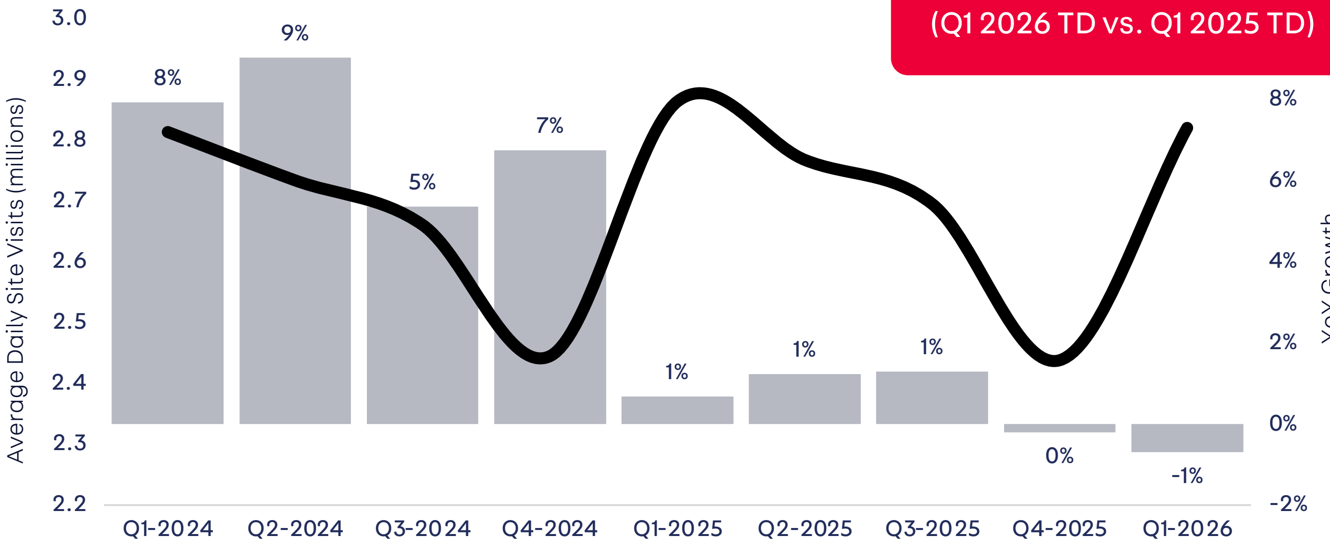
*Data based on vehicles removed from Autotrader. We assume that the vehicle is sold on the last day we saw it on our site. Strong historical correlation to official SMMT used car transactions and retailer data. Ongoing improvements to the data means historic figures may change slightly each month.

Autotrader audience

Site visits to Autotrader were 1% back from 2025's record levels, although visitor volumes held steady from January to February and slightly ahead of Q1 2024. This stability gives rise to optimism in the remainder of the quarter, with over three in five consumers feeling confident in their ability to afford a car.

Autotrader site visits
Average daily site visits, year-on-year

-1%
(Q1 2026 TD vs. Q1 2025 TD)



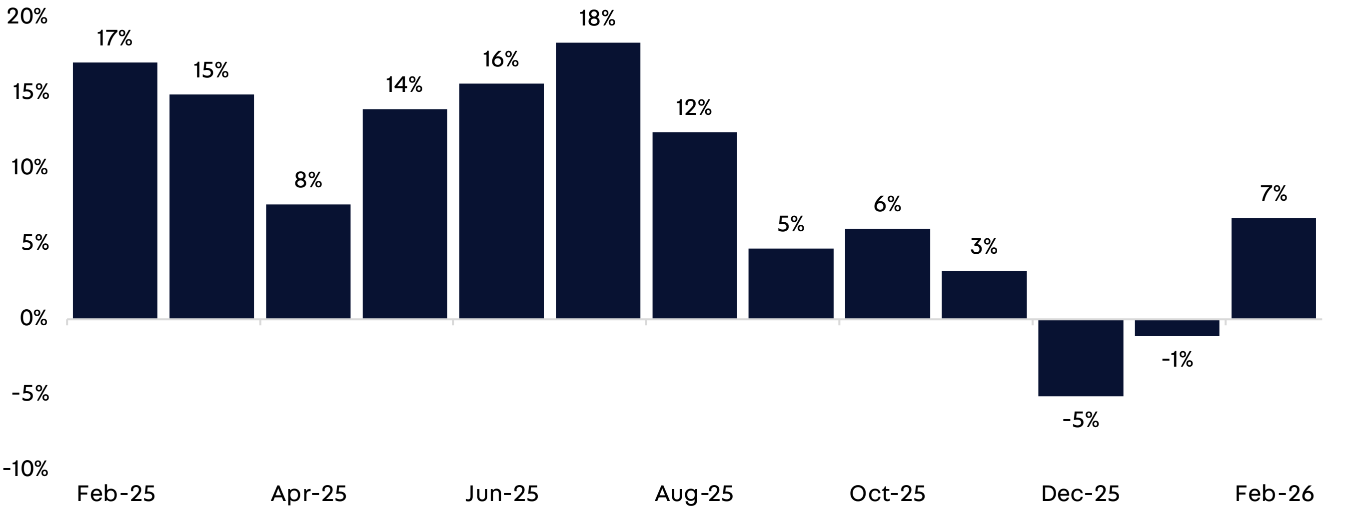
New car activity

New car site visits grew 7% in February driven by growing stock and incentives, as manufacturers continue to pursue buyer demand ahead of the plate-change. Discounts grew further in February, averaging 10.5%, the highest level recorded for the second month in a row. With EV discounts again the highest at 11.8%.

+7%
New car visits (vs. Feb 2025)
-0% MoM

21%
EV lead share
-1.1ppts MoM

Autotrader new car visits
Year-on-year



Used market health

Autotrader

Stability continued to underpin the used car market in February as supply grew marginally while demand remained stable. On average, cars sold every 27 days - one day faster than last year as consumer demand remains strong. Vehicles over 3-years-old sold faster than the market as they see the largest concentration of demand. Petrol vehicles were overall the fastest selling fuel type.

	Demand Year-on-Year	Supply Year-on-Year	Market Health Year-on-Year
vs. Feb 25	0%	+1%	-1%

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

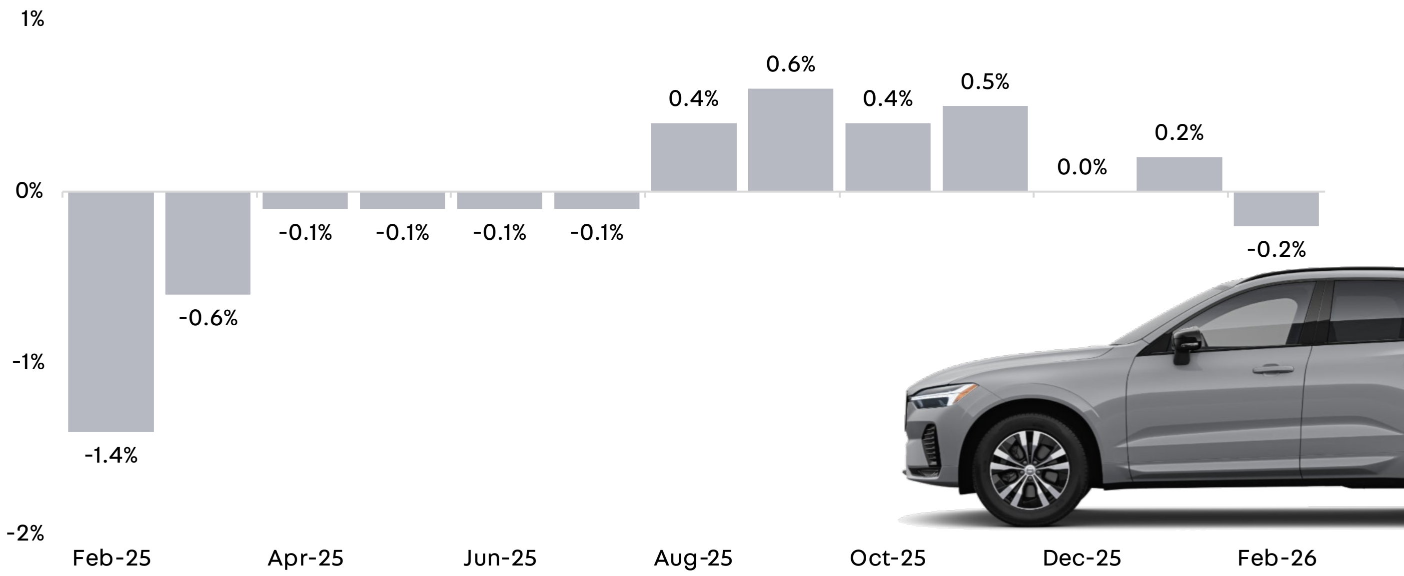
	Demand Year-on-Year	Supply Year-on-Year	Market Health Year-on-Year
Feb 26	0%	1%	-1%
Jan 26	-1%	-1%	0%
Dec 25	-2%	-1%	-1%
Nov 25	-2%	2%	-3%
Oct 25	-3%	2%	-5%
Sep 25	-5%	1%	-6%
Aug 25	-2%	0%	-2%
Jul 25	2%	1%	1%
Jun 25	0%	3%	-3%
May 25	1%	10%	-8%
Apr 25	-2%	9%	-10%
Mar 25	0%	6%	-6%
Feb 25	-2%	-2%	0%

Used car retail price growth

On average, used car prices remained stable in February, moving -0.2% year-on-year. Older cars and those where supply is contracting outperformed the market, with 10–15-year-old vehicles recording the most notable gains, up 9.4%. Diesel and petrol cars also saw the most significant improvements of any fuel type, up 3.4% and 1.0% respectively. Contrastingly, growing supply drove downward pressure across other market segments.

Year-on-year used car retail price growth

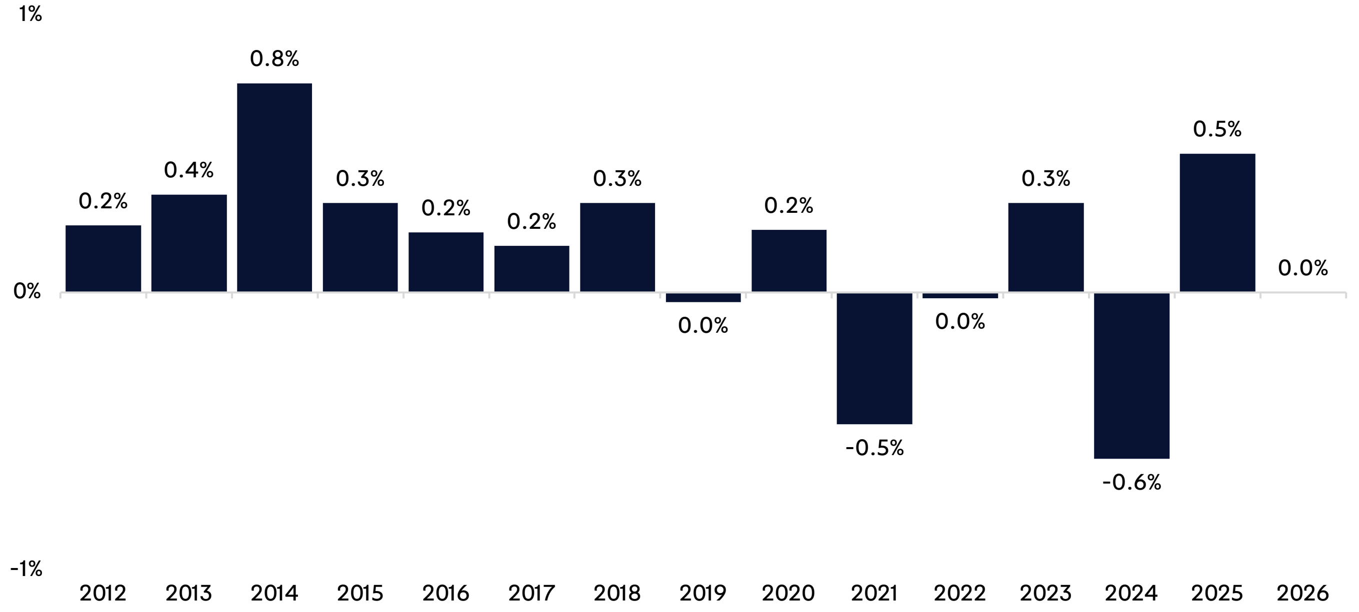
Like-for-like basis



On a month-on-month basis, used car prices held steady from January to February, recording relatively subdued movement compared to seasonal norms. Vehicles under-1-year-old saw prices fall more than others, dropping -0.8% from January to February, counter to the usual positive February movements for the cohort amid fast growing supply. EVs saw prices fall 1.2% driven with supply continuing to increase.

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

Like-for-like basis

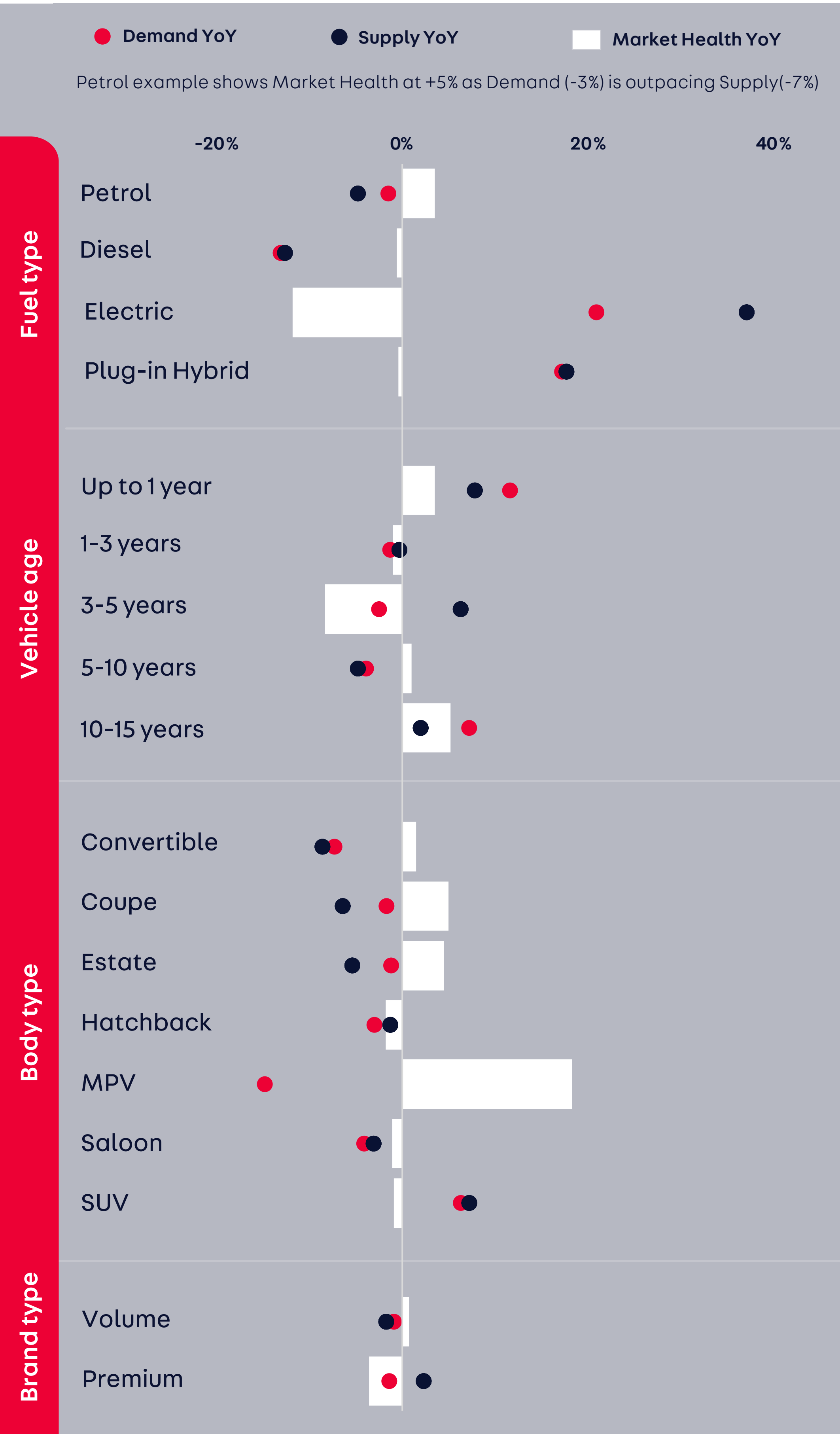


Retail price observations. Year on year like-for-like pricing. Removes the impact of stock mix shift to reflect true value adjustments

Demand, supply, market health & price movement

(YoY growth)

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.



Retail Price Movement YoY

	Jan-26 Retail Price		Feb-26 Retail Price
Petrol	+1.5%	▼	+1.0%
Diesel	+3.8%	▼	+3.4%
Electric	-7.2%	▲	-6.9%
Plug-in Hybrid	-3.1%	▼	-3.8%
Up to 1 year	-2.9%	▼	-4.6%
1-3 years	-2.5%	▲	-2.4%
3-5 years	+0.4%	▼	+0.0%
5-10 years	+2.0%	▼	+1.6%
10-15 years	+9.0%	▲	+9.4%
Convertible	+5.5%	▼	+3.7%
Coupe	+3.6%	▼	+3.2%
Estate	+2.5%	▲	+2.7%
Hatchback	+2.7%	▼	+1.9%
MPV	+0.9%	▼	-0.5%
Saloon	+0.5%	▼	-0.3%
SUV	-1.9%	▼	-2.0%
Volume	-0.7%	▼	-1.0%
Premium	+0.5%	▼	+0.1%

In focus this month

Chinese brands accelerate into the used car market

The context - China speed in the new car market

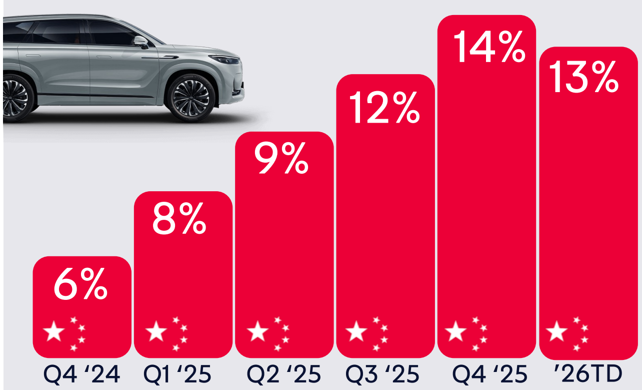
1 in 10
New cars in 2025 are Chinese

23%
Of new plug–in hybrids are Chinese

16%
Of new EVs are Chinese

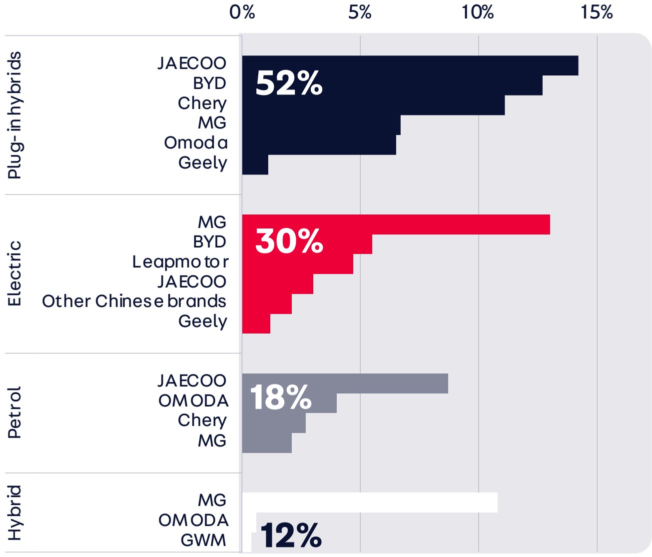
The rapid rise of Chinese brands* continues, with registrations and share more than doubling in just 12 months. This influx grew the overall new car market by 3.5% in 2025 – established brands' volume fell by 1.6%.

Chinese brand share of new car registrations. SMMT.



Success on Autotrader

Chinese brand share of new car enquiries on Autotrader. Feb 26



Interest levels on Autotrader were even higher, with Chinese brands taking 1 in 5 new car enquiries.

Plug-in hybrids and electric cars led the way, with 1 in 2 PHEV enquiries and 30% of electric enquires going to Chinese brands.

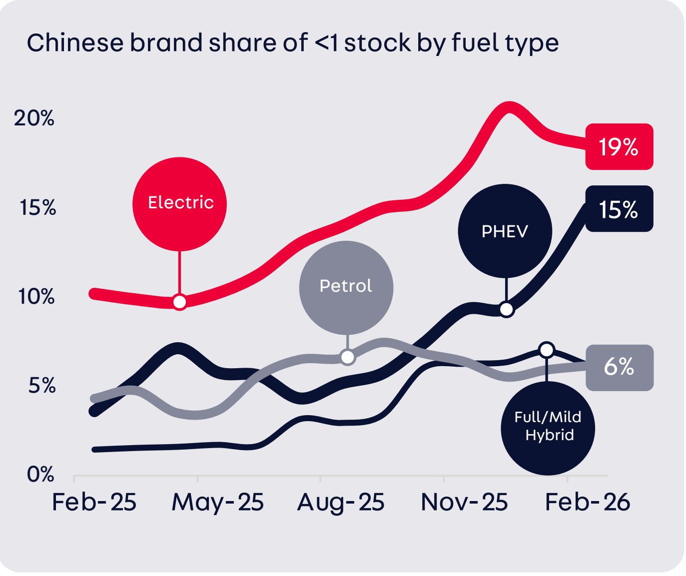
*Chinese brands: BYD, Changan, Chery, Geely, GWM, JAECOO, Leapmotor, Maxus, MG, Omoda, Polestar, Skywell, Xpeng.

Presence rapidly growing in the used market

Autotrader

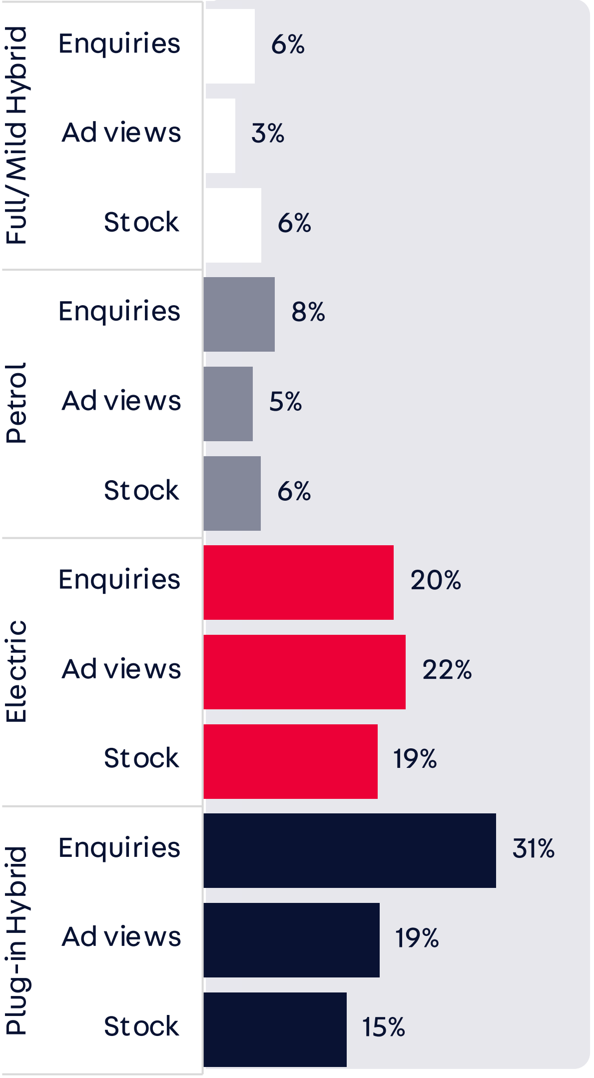
The shift begins in the used car market as stock flows through. The number of under 1-year-old Chinese brand cars has more than doubled in the past year, now accounting for 1 in 10 of all <1 cars on Autotrader. Meanwhile, 1-3-year-olds have grown by 18%, reaching a 6% share.

Electric was the initial growth area, but the supply of younger PHEV and full/mild hybrid has also risen strongly - presenting retailers with a timely opportunity to capitalise on fast-growing brand interest.



Signs of very strong buyer interest

Autotrader



Where the stock is growing consumer demand is following. Chinese brands now account for 9% of stock, 10% of consumer interest, and 13% of enquiries on cars aged under a year old, strengthening their position through the phases of buyer research.

PHEVs perform very well, with 1 in 3 enquiries going to Chinese brands. The big beneficiaries are Chery at 10%, BYD at 8%, and JAECOO close behind at 7%.

Other brands are trending upward across all fuel types, too, signalling deepening consumer confidence. Retailers looking to diversify their stock mix have a real opportunity to convert this demand into incremental sales growth.

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Autotrader Insight