

# Monthly Market Intelligence

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

MAY 2026

 Autotrader

# New and used car perform as electric peak continues.

## New car registrations



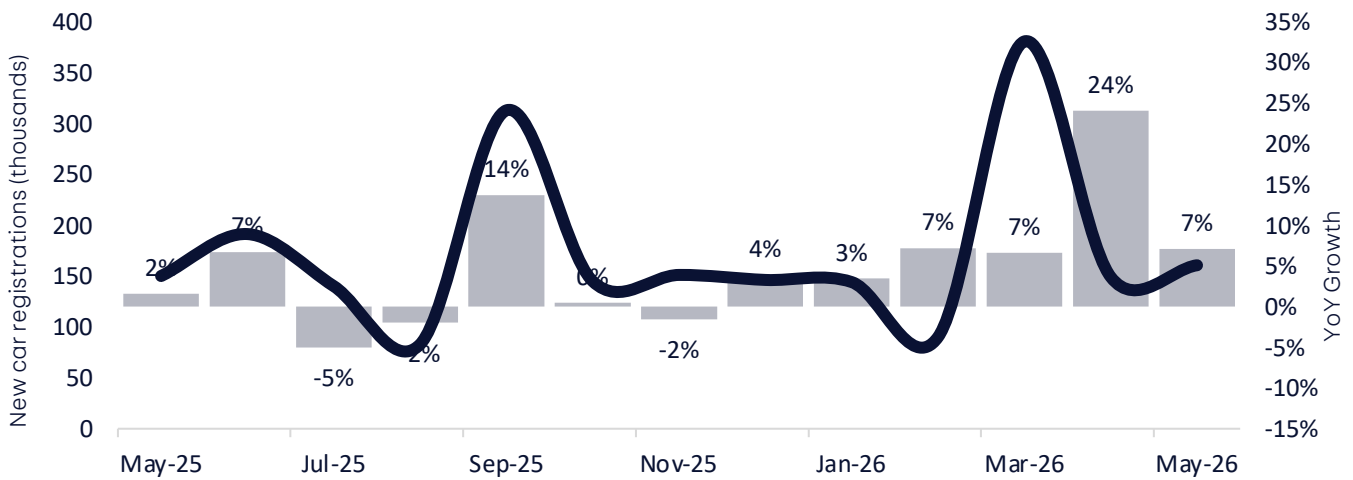
New car registrations grew 7% YoY in May, with over 160,000 registrations and the best May performance since 2019. The resurgence in private demand continued, 17% YoY, with strong discounts and widening choice driving buyer activity. Strong electrified performance continued, with EVs 34% YoY and Plug-in Hybrids 24% YoY.

# 160,662

New car reg. (SMMT)

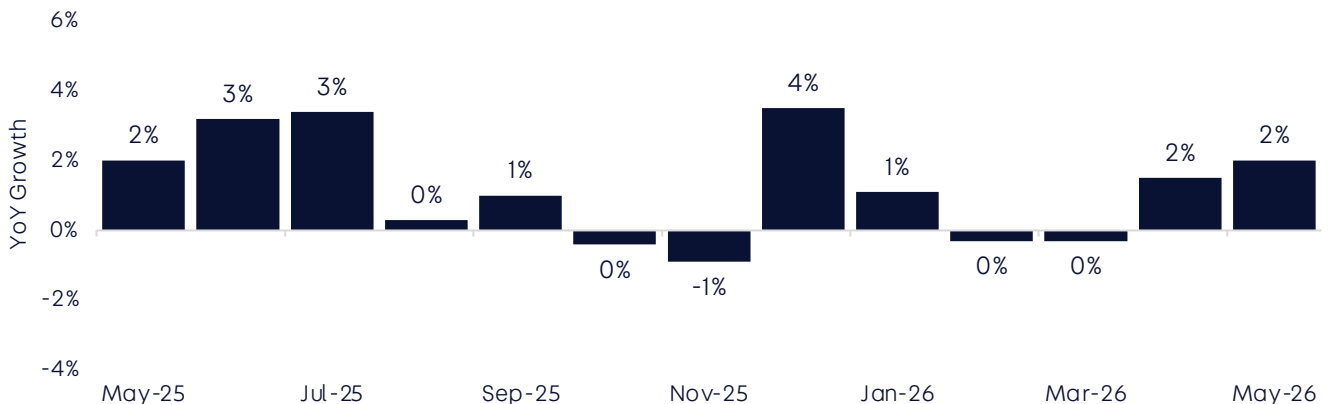
# +7.1%

(vs. May 2025)



## Used car sales (Year-on-year)

May used car transactions rose 2% YoY based on stock removed from Autotrader\*. Electric growth continued to stand out, growing 57% YoY, with Plug-in Hybrid also seeing strong performance at 21% YoY. Franchise retailers saw a 4% rise, supported by stronger electric supply, while Independents recorded a 1% increase.

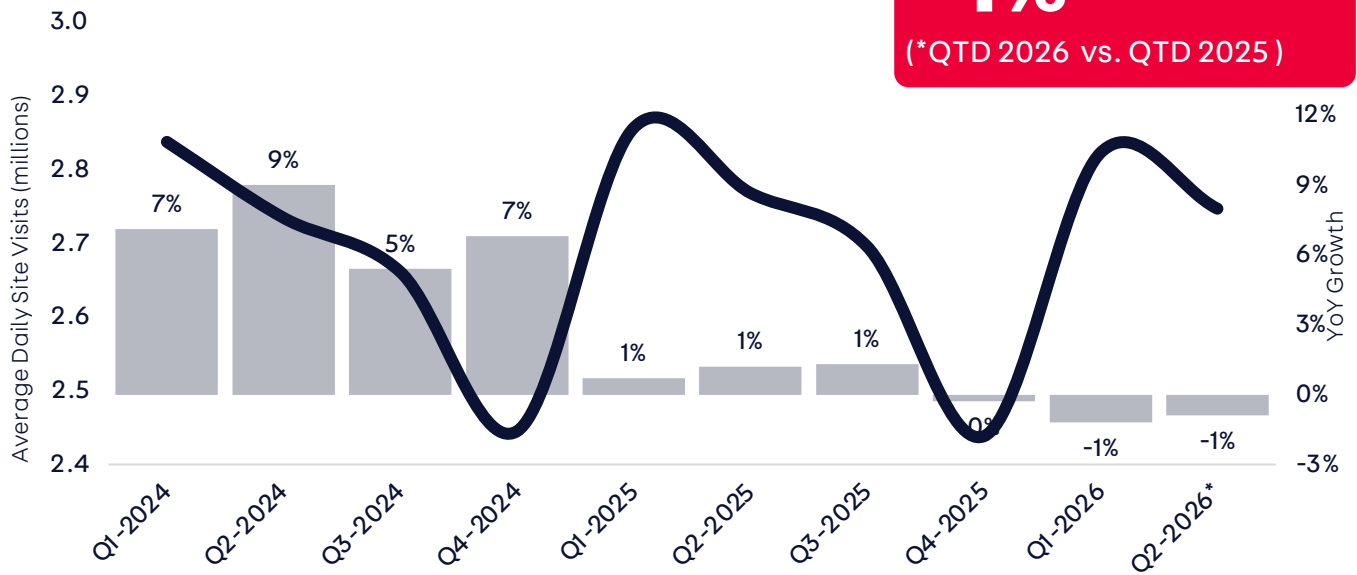


\*Data based on vehicles removed from Autotrader. We assume that the vehicle is sold on the last day we saw it on our site. Strong historical correlation to official SMMT used car transactions and retailer data. Ongoing improvements to the data means historic figures may change slightly each month.

Site visits to Autotrader in May declined -3% YoY, as warm weather impacted traffic. Despite softening, traffic continues to track above 2024 levels, demonstrating resilience against a strong historical base. Despite continued macroeconomic uncertainty, GfK consumer confidence improved 2 points MoM to -23, and Autotrader browsers continued to report confidence in purchase. 75% said they planned to purchase in the next 6 months<sup>1</sup>.

**Autotrader site visits**

Average daily site visits, year-on-year

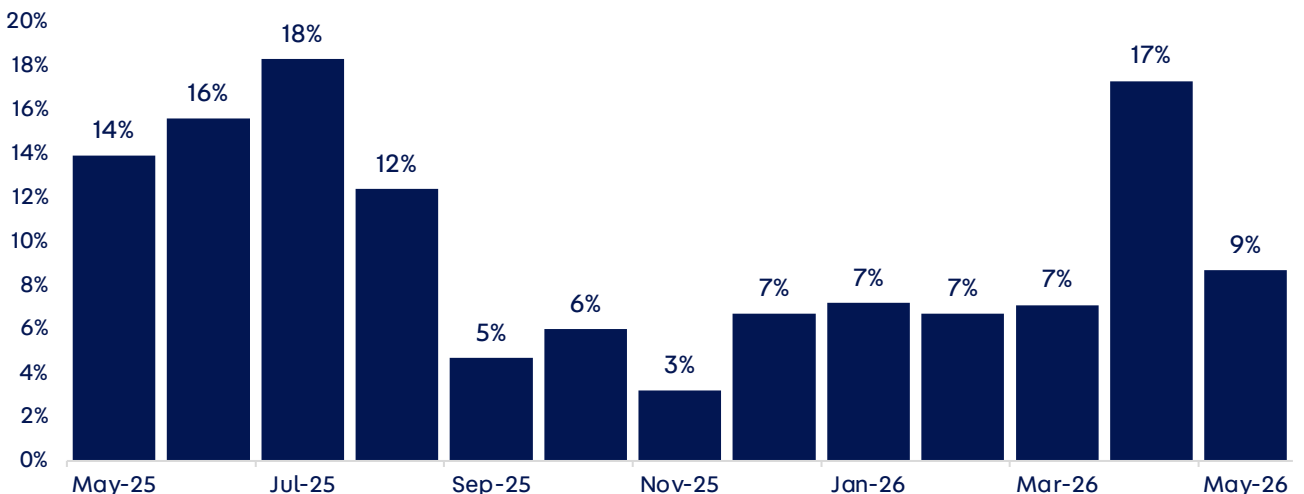


**New car activity**

A strong month for new car retail, up 9% YoY and solidifying a strong start to Q2. EVs continued to lead the fuel types with 28% lead share, having become the largest fuel type for the first time in April. PHEVs again broke their record share with 20% of total leads. Discounts increased vs prior month and year, finishing the month at 10.1%, highlighting the push dynamics at play driving private demand.

**Autotrader new car visits**

Year-on-year

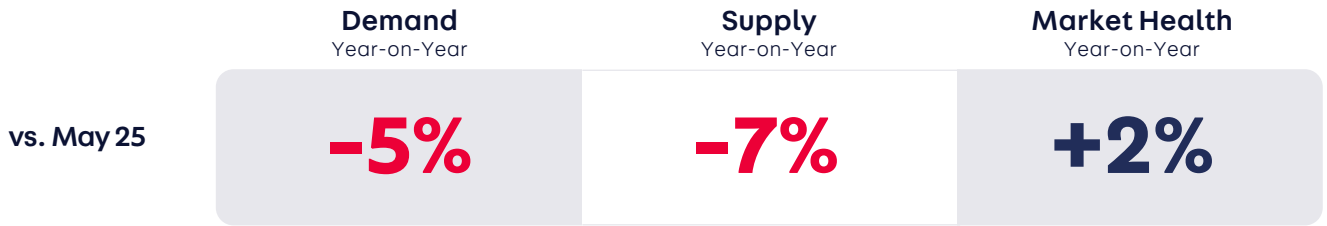


**+9%**  
New car visits (vs. May 2025)  
+1% MoM

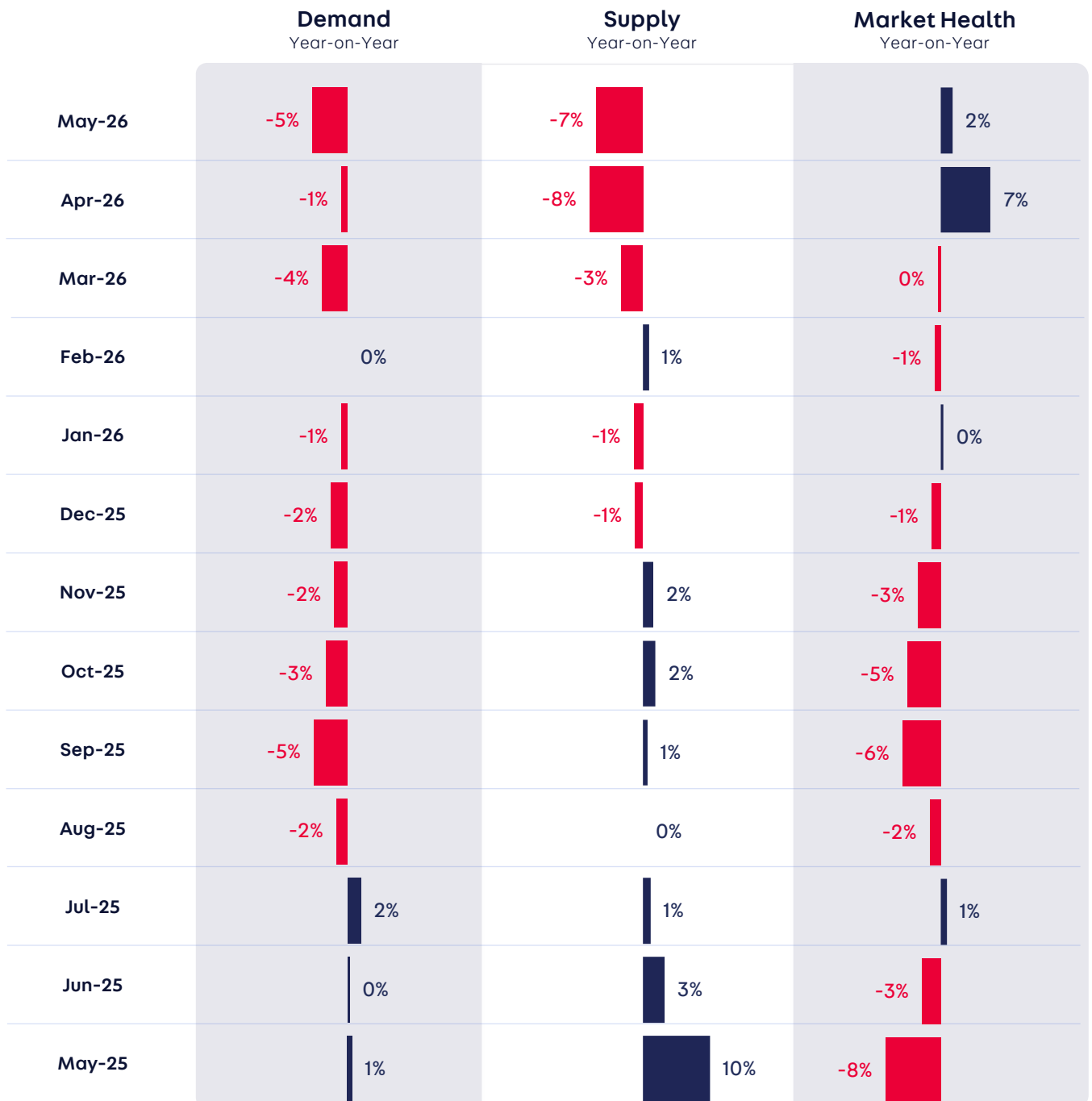
**28%**  
EV lead share  
-1.2ppts MoM

<sup>1</sup>Source: Autotrader Consumer Survey Data (n=1214)

Market health remains steady, with demand softening but in balance with softening supply. Stock levels were elevated in 2025 due to promotional activity, but are now also impacted by continued tightening of EV supply (-11% YoY), the result of rapidly-growing demand and sales. In fact, electric cars sold on average in just 24 days, 12 days faster YoY and at a market level cars are selling on average in 29 days, 2 days faster than last year.



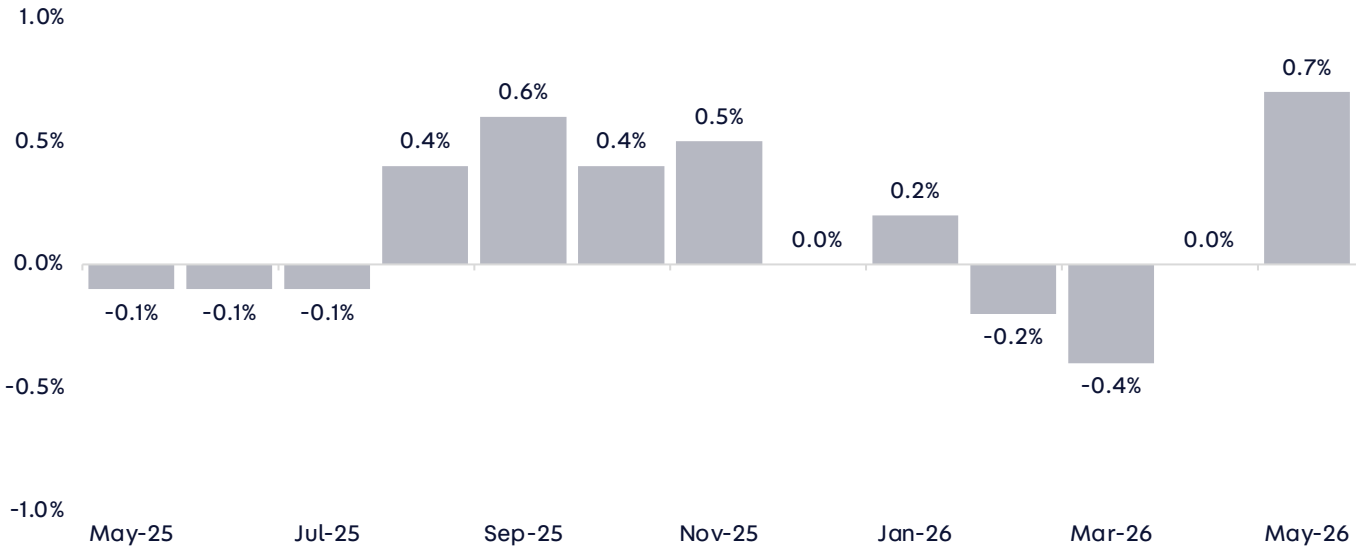
The Market Health metric shows the ratio of supply vs. demand compared to the previous year\*



Growth in used car retail prices has remained limited, although May saw a 0.7% year-on-year uplift, marking the strongest increase since August 2023. Cars aged 3+ saw positive growth, with 10-15-year-old continuing to lead pricing growth +8% YoY. Average asking price for 10-15 reached £7,213, the highest on record. For the first time since December 2022 EV pricing was not negative, with tightening supply and increased demand stabilising prices.

## Year-on-year used car retail price growth

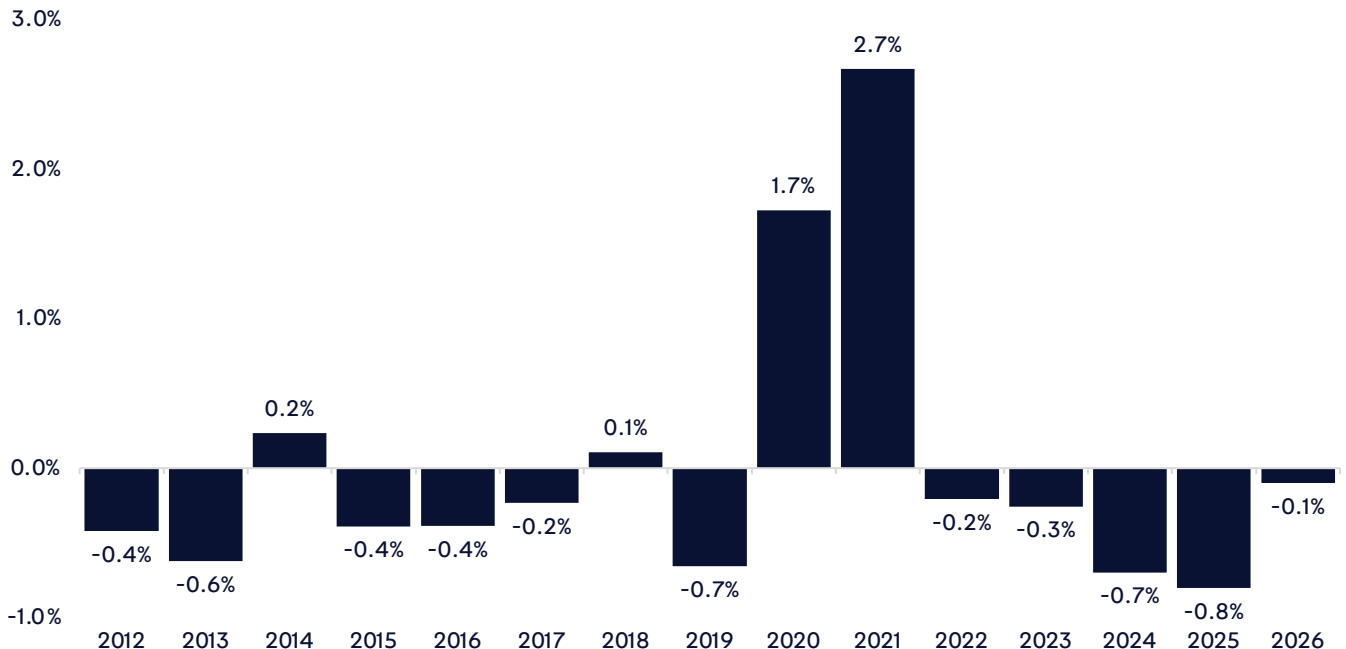
Like-for-like basis



Used car retail prices were stable month-on-month, showing more stability than prior years. Flat pricing was consistent across all age cohorts, but electric stood out as a fuel type with month-on-month growth of +1.4%, reinforcing the positive impact that demand has had on improving EV price resilience.

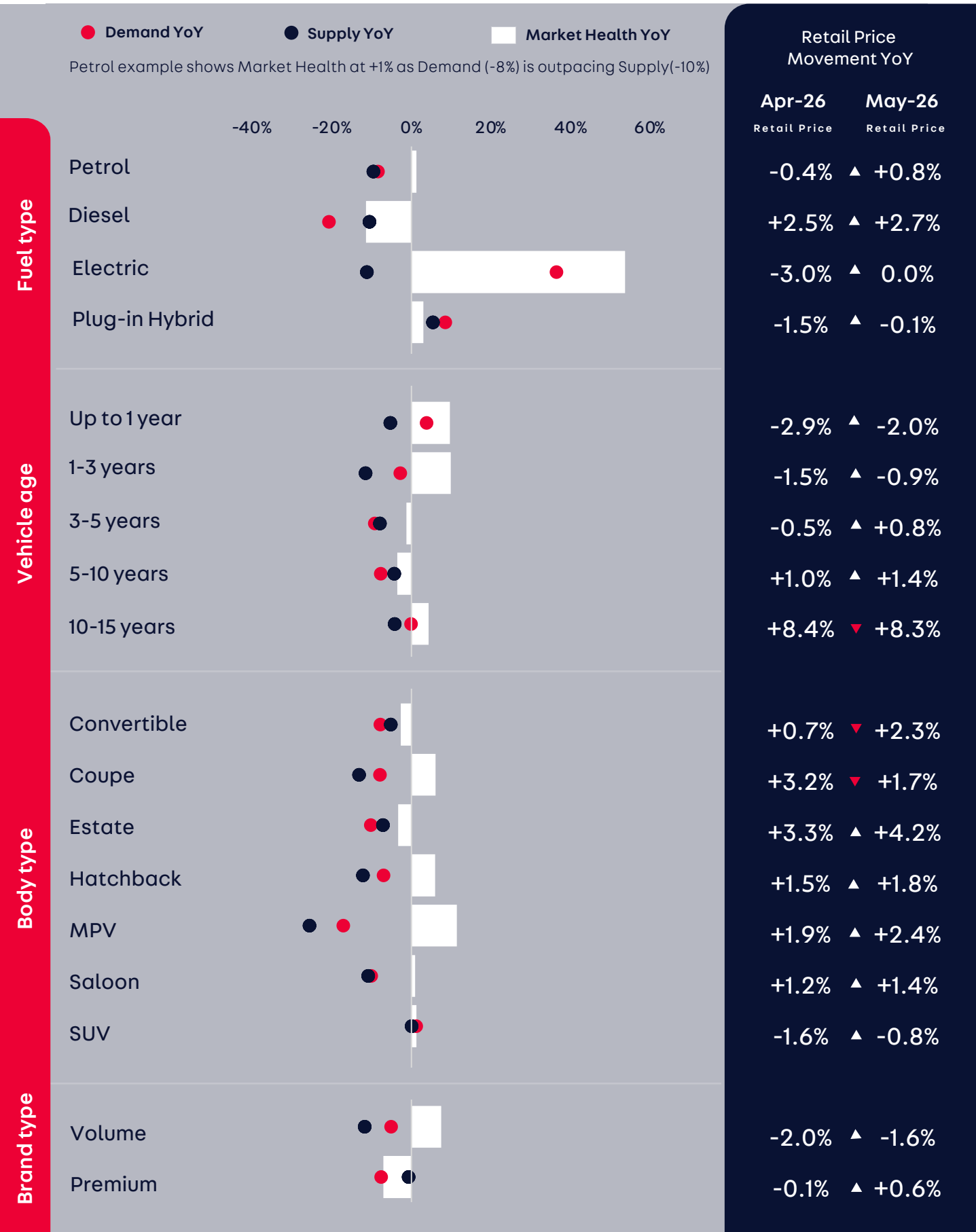
## Month-on-month used car retail price growth: May

Like-for-like basis



(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.



In focus this month

# Are electric cars closer than ever to a tipping point?

New EV demand pulls ahead of petrol



Electric cars are becoming increasingly mainstream, with over 2 million now on the road and more than half a million registrations forecasted in 2026. In a major shift in consumer interest, new EV enquiries overtook petrol for the first time last month – a trend that is continuing this month.

Heavy discounting across the new EV market is making electric cars cheaper on average than petrol cars after incentives are applied. Although comparable models still show around a 15% price premium in list prices, discounts have closed the gap.

The growth in EV demand is providing opportunity for manufacturers to expand their market share. Ford and Renault specifically have seen strong gains with affordable models such as the Ford Puma Gen-E and Renault 5 E-Tech, with ECG support helping to reduce ownership costs and drive consumer uptake.

**2 million**

Electric cars on the road

**£42,980**

Average price of a new electric car in May 2026 (Inc. discounts)

**28%**

Share of new car enquiries on Autotrader in May 2026

Surging used EV demand tightening supply



The used EV market has grown rapidly in 2026 as higher fuel prices and affordable stock continue to drive consumer demand. Among 0-5-year-old cars, electric reached a high point in April at just under a quarter of enquiries and remains elevated at 21% share this month. However, growing demand is now putting pressure on supply, which has fallen 11% compared with last year. As a result, used EVs are selling faster than ever at 24 days – 12 days faster than last year and 7 days quicker than in 2024.

EV share of used car market (0-5-year-olds). Autotrader.



**+36%**

Demand in May 2026

**-11%**

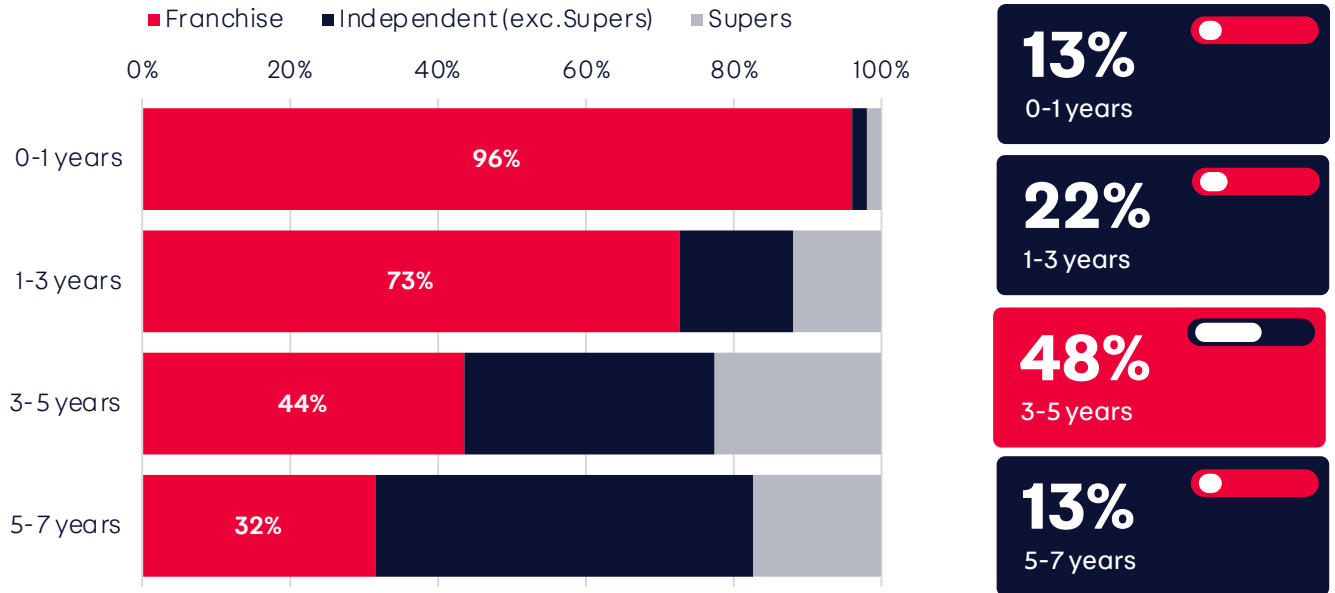
Supply in May 2026

## The 3-5-year-old EV powerhouse

As the EV market continues to mature, one in five cars under five years old on the road will be electric this year. Within this, 3-5-year-olds are becoming an increasingly important part of the market, attracting 48% of used EV enquiries and representing the fastest selling age segment. As supply and demand evolve, supermarkets and independent retailers are growing their share of this market, while franchise dealers continue to lead in younger EVs. One in three independents stocking 3-5-year-old cars now include EVs in their inventory.

EV supply by age cohorts and segments. May 2026 Autotrader.

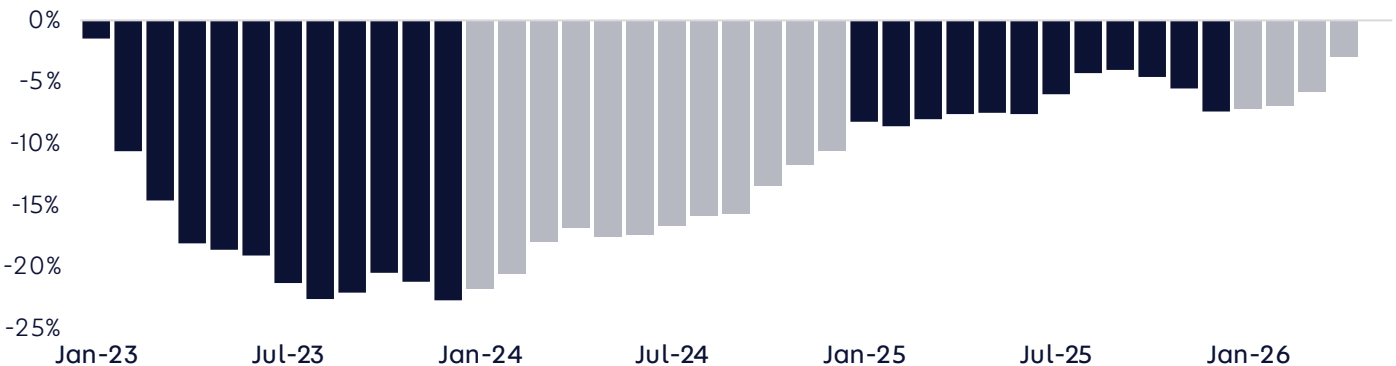
Mix of used EV enquiries by age cohort. May 2026 Autotrader



## Used EV prices stabilise

Used EV prices have stabilised year-on-year for the first time since November 2022, ending a decline that lasted more than three years. After a sharp market correction in 2023, EVs largely trailed the wider market. More recently, however, stronger consumer demand and constrained supply have helped strengthen monthly price movements. Market trends remain mixed by vehicle age, with EVs under 3-years-old still lagging, while 3-5-year-old models are seeing robust growth.

Electric year-on-year used car retail price growth. Like-for-like basis. Autotrader.



**-1.6%**

0-1 years

**-3.5%**

1-3 years

**+5.4%**

3-5 years

**+0.0%**

Total

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a question or suggest an *in Focus* topic!

