**SMMT NEWS RELEASE**

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**Hi-res infographics and tables available on Dropbox:** <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/7qmtgnefs7a1svs9kip7n/h?rlkey=cnqhdbagwhhh5romzgqmq1mxf&dl=0>

**More motorists go green but grey is still the colour of choice**

* Grey is Britain’s most popular new car colour for the sixth consecutive year, topping half a million registrations.
* Black and white complete trio of best-selling colours, marking sixth year of an identical monochrome podium.
* Green cars reach highest share of market since 2004.
* Cream, pink and maroon are Britain’s rarest colours, comprising just 0.03% of all registrations.

**Friday 19 January, 2024** Britain’s drivers cemented their preference for monochrome cars as grey topped the new car colour chart for the sixth year in a row, according to the latest figures published today by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT). Boasting a market share of more than a quarter (26.8%), more than half a million (509,194) grey cars were registered in 2023, with volumes rising 22.6% as the new car market enjoyed its best year since the pandemic.1

Completing the podium, black and white held second and third place, also for the sixth consecutive year, and recorded their best volumes since 2019. Almost two thirds (63.5%) of all new cars joining UK roads in 2023 were decked in monochrome, while blue rose 10.9% to take fourth place and red remained in fifth – although it also recorded its lowest market share since 2005 and has seen its popularity steadily decline since 2019.2

While Britain clearly has a preference for monochrome cars, drivers determined to stamp their style on their motor were able to choose from a variety of colour variations, with maroon, pink and cream remaining at the niche end of the colour palette – comprising just 604 registrations combined. Orange, bronze, turquoise and brown fell in popularity compared with 2023 volumes.3

Green, however, experienced a comeback, reaching its highest volume since 2005 at 53,426 units and a market share of 2.8%, the highest since 2004.4 While the colour may have environmentally friendly associations, ‘zero emission cars’ reaching Britain’s roads in record numbers last year followed the same grey colour trend as their internal combustion engine counterparts.

Grey also remained the most popular choice across the majority of segments, including the three bestsellers – supermini, dual purpose and lower medium. Three segments went against the grain, with black the favoured shade among executive cars and luxury saloons, and white appearing as the top choice for the multi-purpose segment.

Fleets, which drove investment in the new car market in 2023, also favoured monochrome, with grey making up more than a quarter (26.9%) of all registrations.5 Private sales saw more variation, brightening up roads as they were marginally more likely to opt for a green or yellow tint over fleets, with 29,919 and 6,964 units registered respectively.

The British regions were unanimous in for a preference for grey, with white ranking as the second most popular in the Channel Islands, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Black was the second most popular in England, Wales and the Isle of Man.

Strathclyde proved the best place to play the ‘yellow car’ game, ranking the most registrations of the bright shade, with 677 sold in the area and, while orange wasn’t quite the new black in Cheshire, drivers there registered the most cars in this colour of any county, at 1,140 units.6 Berkshire was home to more than one in 10 of pink cars registered (22 units) and was also the top spot for red motors at 8,034 units. Drivers in Greater London snapped up more green cars than any other county (3,650).

**Mike Hawes, SMMT Chief Executive, said,** “2023 was a bumper year for the British new car market, as buyers continued to gravitate towards familiar monochrome hues for another year – even as ever more motorists embrace new technologies. Car manufacturers have diligently expanded their offerings, with a huge selection of colour options available across hundreds of models and thousands of specification options. The extensive variety allows drivers flexibility in choosing a tint that embodies their individuality and style.”

**Car colours facts:**

* Grey recorded the biggest volume growth of the year, registering more than half a million vehicles (509,194) registered in the shade.
* 210 pink cars were registered in 2023, with Berkshire home to more than one in 10 of them.
* Strathclyde proved the best place to play the ‘yellow car’ game with 677 registrations.
* The nation’s least favourite car colour was cream, with buyers registering just 151 units.
* Wales recorded the highest proportion of new red and green cars, while Northern Ireland was home to the highest proportion of blue cars.
* Red recorded its lowest market share since 2005, posting a steady decline in popularity since 2019.

**Notes to editors**1 Grey cars registered in 2022: 415,199 units; New car registrations, full year 2023: 1,903,054  
2 Red market share, 2005: 7.3%  
3 Orange cars registered in 2023: 16,677 units  
4 Green car market share 2004: 4.6%; Green car market volume 2005: 61,453  
5 Grey fleet car registrations in 2023: 280,480 units  
6 Black was the second most popular car colour in Cheshire, with 23,529 registrations

**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 £67 billion turnover and £14 billion value added to the UK economy, and typically invest around £3 billion each year in R&D. With more than 182,000 people employed in manufacturing and some 780,000 in total across the wider automotive industry, we account for 10% of total UK goods exports with more than 150 countries importing UK produced vehicles, generating £77 billion of trade.

More than 25 manufacturers build over 70 models of vehicles in the UK, plus an array of specialist small volume manufacturers, supported by some 5,000 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/

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

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