Strictly embargoed to 00:01, Saturday 20 April 2024

**SMMT MOTORPARC 2023**

20 April 2024 (data for 2023)  
**Hi-res graphics and images available via Dropbox:** <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/llnp3dqbeh82ysihb9k8s/AMMgGl55oBf_aUaVUWfAUSU?rlkey=fwd01jpxg9bodw6xl8dpikty8&st=z9rmurjn&dl=0>

**EVs drive down carbon emissions and lift vehicle ownership to record high**

* Number of vehicles on UK roads reaches record 41.4 million in 2023, with car ownership up 1.6% to 35,694,845 units.
* The average car in use saw CO2 emissions decline by -2.1%, notably thanks to incentivised investment by business fleets into EVs.
* One in 40 of all vehicles on roads now zero emission, including 960,896 cars, 61,161 vans, 2,383 HGVs and 1,922 buses.
* Industry calls for more rapid EV infrastructure investment to drive uptake as latest analysis shows just one standard public chargepoint for every 35 plug-ins on the road – a figure almost unchanged from last year.

**Saturday 20 April, 2024** The number of vehicles on UK roads reached a record high in 2023, rising by 1.7% to 41,404,589 vehicles, according to new Motorparc data published today by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) – with plug-in vehicles driving the biggest growth in car ownership since 2016.1

Total cars on the road rose by 1.6% or 546,800 units to 35,694,845, after almost half a million new battery electric (BEV) and plug-in hybrid (PHEV) vehicles were registered during 2023.2 The number of BEVs in use increased by almost half (47.3%) compared with 2022, meaning these vital zero emission vehicles now account for 2.7% of all cars in use, up from just 1.9% in 2022.

With the industry now largely recovered from previous supply chain challenges that constricted deliveries in the aftermath of the pandemic, manufacturers could better meet robust pent-up demand. Implied scrappage rates of older vehicles has also fallen to the lowest on record with British motorists keeping their cars for longer, with the average car on the road now nine years old – with the average age of a car now up by more than a year since 2019.3

Despite a record number of motors on the road, average car CO2 dropped -2.1% – while company car emissions plummeted by -11.5%, thanks to compelling fiscal incentives encouraging fleets to invest in EVs and manufacturer investment in new lower and zero emission models.4 Providing private consumers with similar incentives to switch would help dramatically decarbonise UK road transport.

Record numbers of commercial vehicles are now in use, with 625,873 heavy goods vehicles and 5,012,632 vans in operation, up by 1.7% and 2.6% respectively. Zero emission workhorses also recorded a boost – with BEV van volumes rising by 43.5% on 2022 to 61,161, meaning 1.2% of vans on UK roads is now zero emission. Electric HGVs rose 146.4% in 2023, although at just 0.4% of the fleet, urgent action is therefore required on grants and infrastructure – especially given that new trucks under 26 tonnes have the same end of sale date as cars and vans.

The number of electric buses in operation also grew, up by 159.4% to 1,922 units, making the UK Europe’s biggest market for zero emission buses and coaches. However, despite a record year of registrations in 2023, the UK’s public transport fleet has shrunk to its smallest level since records began at 71,239 vehicles. In further evidence of the need for greater investment in this sector, one in five buses in use is more than 18 years old.

While overall EV use continues to grow, with 1,602,334 plug-in cars, vans, trucks and buses in operation, public chargepoint rollout is still lagging. 2023 was the best year for public chargepoint rollout, but there is still just one standard public charger available for every 35 plug-in cars on the road, only a slight improvement from one for every 36 last year.5 The situation is even more challenging for commercial vehicles, with no clear national plan for van-specific chargepoints, and just one dedicated public truck charging location for the entire country. With increasing numbers of electric cars and vans now being mandated for sale, the time to invest in infrastructure is now. That investment should be nationwide so that everyone – irrespective of vehicle type, location and accessibility – can access a reliable, convenient and affordable charging network.

**Mike Hawes, SMMT Chief Executive,** said, "After two challenging years of constrained supply, more people and businesses across the UK are now getting back behind the wheel – and increasingly, opting for greener options. However, given the ageing fleet, we now need to encourage consumers and businesses who have deferred purchases of new cars, vans, trucks and buses to upgrade. A stronger and stable economy, coupled with reduced living costs, would boost consumer and business confidence, while compelling fiscal incentives would ensure that these purchases are emissions free. Not only would this accelerate the transition – fundamental to the UK’s net zero ambitions – but it would also stimulate the economy and enhance the wider environment in which we all live."

**Did you know?**

1. The five most popular cars on UK roads in 2023 accounted for over 5.3 million in use – these are the Ford Fiesta at 1,487,925, Vauxhall Corsa at 1,050,579, Ford Focus at 1,049,818, Volkswagen Golf at 1,004,152 and Vauxhall Astra with 715,647 in use.
2. 35.1% of cars on the road are registered to women, compared with 51.1% to men – with the remainder either registered to companies or gender unlisted. This follows a rise of more than half a million women as registered keepers on 20186
3. The highest number of cars in the UK reside in London and the South East (8,910,951), followed by the North West (3,959,236) and the South West (3,572,387)
4. With electric vehicles increasing in popularity, manual transmissions have fallen to 63.5% of the parc, down from 66.0% in 2022.
5. London and the South East is also the region with the highest volume of electric vehicles with over a million (527,887) of these green vehicles making up 5.9% of all cars in the area
6. The UK might be the fifth rainiest country in Europe... yet that hasn’t stopped convertibles accounting for almost one in 35 cars on the road, with 1,022,849 in use – falling very slightly on 2022 by 0.1 percentage points7
7. Continuing their domination, superminis remain the most popular car type on roads, with one in three drivers choosing these more compact vehicles to get around
8. You’re more likely to see a car or van painted white than in any other colour in the UK, with 8,187,012 of them on the roads. Black and grey come in second and third place at 7,609,015 and 6,792,003 units respectively
9. Almost 25,000 pink cars can be found on British roads – with four in five registered to women. Wales has the highest proportion of pink cars, accounting for 0.1% of those in use. Scotland has the highest proportion of red cars at 12.3%
10. 2023 may have had a record year of vehicle registrations, but the UK's public transport actually recorded the smallest bus fleet level since records began at 71,239 vehicles, down from 72,766 in 2022 and over 100,000 in 2007.

**Notes to editors**1 Motorparc 2016 growth: 2.5%  
2 2023 new car registrations: 314,687 BEVs and 141,311 PHEVs  
3 Scrappage levels based on data from 2023 to 2000  
4 Total CO2 emissions, 2023: 132.1 g/km; Total CO2 emissions, 2022: 135.0 g/km; Mean CO2 emission figures for company cars, 2023: 103.3 g/km; Mean CO2 emission figures for company cars, 2022: 116.7 g/km  
5 DfT Electric vehicle charging device statistics, Jan 2024: 43,559 slow/fast chargers  
6 Female registered keeper volume growth, 2018 versus 2023: 523,531   
7 Based on [World Bank data](https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.PRCP.MM?most_recent_value_desc=true)  
  
**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 £78 billion turnover and £16 billion value added to the UK economy, and typically invests around £3 billion each year in R&D. With more than 208,000 people employed in automotive manufacturing, and some 800,000 in total across the wider sector, the industry trades globally, with exports worth £94 billion accounting for 10% of all UK goods exports.

More than 25 manufacturing brands build more than 70 models of vehicles in the UK, plus an array of specialist small volume manufacturers, supported by some 2,500 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.

**SMMT media contacts**

Paul Mauerhoff                       07809 522181 [pmauerhoff@smmt.co.uk](mailto:pmauerhoff@smmt.co.uk)    
James Boley                          07927 668565 [jboley@smmt.co.uk](mailto:jboley@smmt.co.uk)   
Scott Clarke                            07912 799959 [sclarke@smmt.co.uk](mailto:sclarke@smmt.co.uk)          
Rebecca Gibbs 07708 480 889 [rgibbs@smmt.co.uk](mailto:rgibbs@smmt.co.uk)         
Emma Butcher                07880 191825 [ebutcher@smmt.co.uk](mailto:ebutcher@smmt.co.uk)