# UK electric car sales hit record high in September 2025 amid government support



Sales of new electric cars in the UK surged to a record high in September 2025, reflecting a significant shift in consumer preference and government policy support. Industry figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) reveal that 72,779 pure battery electric vehicles (BEVs) were registered last month, marking a 29.1% increase compared to the same month in 2024. Electric cars accounted for 23.3% of all new car registrations, up from 20.5% the previous September, underscoring the growing dominance of zero-emission vehicles in the market.

This surge was partly driven by the Department for Transport’s (DfT) Electric Car Grant scheme, a £650 million initiative offering discounts of £1,500 or £3,750 depending on the vehicle’s sustainability credentials. The grant was fully operational for the first time throughout September, making electric cars more affordable and accessible to a broader range of consumers. The government’s intervention came at a critical moment for the industry—September is traditionally the busiest month for car sales due to the introduction of new registration plates, which typically stimulate buyer activity.

According to Mike Hawes, SMMT chief executive, the growth of electrified vehicles is powering overall market expansion after a sluggish summer, highlighting that while demand still lags behind ambitious targets, the industry’s massive investments are beginning to pay off. He emphasised that the Electric Car Grant is helping to dismantle one of the main barriers to adoption. However, he cautioned that further success hinges on resolving remaining challenges such as infrastructure development and energy costs—a sentiment echoed by many industry observers.

The UK’s zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) mandate, which requires at least 28% of each manufacturer’s new car sales to be zero emission in 2025, generally means pure electric vehicles, thus contributing to the increased uptake. The government’s policy signals a firm commitment to environmental targets and a decarbonised transport sector.

Supporting data from other sources confirms that September 2025 represented the best monthly performance for new car registrations since 2020, with total registrations reaching 312,887—a 13.7% increase year-on-year. Notably, electrified vehicles, including hybrids and BEVs, surpassed the 50% market share threshold for the first time, signaling a dramatic market transformation. However, despite these gains, private buyer demand remains a concern, with some manufacturers like Tesla reporting nearly flat growth in the UK over the past year, indicating that the market’s momentum might be uneven across different brands.

In addition to government incentives, the rise in electric vehicle sales can be attributed to greater consumer choice and manufacturer discounts on various models. The growing model variety caters to diverse consumer needs, which is essential for sustained adoption beyond early adopters. Still, an analysis by green transport research organisation New Automotive raised questions about the effectiveness of the grants, suggesting they may not be prompting additional buyers but rather incentivising those who would have purchased electric cars anyway. The Department for Transport disputed this claim, maintaining that the scheme is successfully breaking down cost barriers.

Industry stakeholders echo the importance of continued consumer education and stable support to maintain the positive trajectory. Tanya Sinclair, chief executive of Electric Vehicles UK, highlighted that adoption naturally fluctuates with seasonality, economic confidence, and perceptions around charging infrastructure, underscoring the need for consistent growth and awareness.

Meanwhile, the shift away from traditional internal combustion engine vehicles is stark. Diesel registrations fell sharply by around a third compared to the previous year, now comprising just 4% of new car sales. This decline aligns with the increasing preference for cleaner alternatives and reflects progress towards the government’s ambitious targets on vehicle emissions.

Despite the promising national figures, challenges remain, especially with the initial rollout of the Electric Car Grant reportedly marked by confusion and a chaotic launch phase earlier in the summer. Experts warned that this uncertainty may have delayed some purchases, although September’s figures suggest the market is beginning to stabilise as buyers respond to clearer incentives.

The long-term outlook for electric car adoption in the UK depends not only on continued financial support but also on improvements in charging infrastructure and reductions in energy costs. The government, industry bodies, and advocacy groups agree that addressing these factors will be crucial to sustaining market growth and achieving environmental goals.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/electric-car-sales-hit-record-high-in-september-GNUDN2IH5VMCZOEWONTYKFORHY/), [[3]](https://news.sky.com/story/best-month-ever-for-uk-battery-electric-vehicle-sales-13443516), [[4]](https://www.gbnews.com/lifestyle/cars/electric-cars-dominate-sales-petrol-diesel-decline-september)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/electric-car-sales-hit-record-high-in-september-GNUDN2IH5VMCZOEWONTYKFORHY/), [[3]](https://news.sky.com/story/best-month-ever-for-uk-battery-electric-vehicle-sales-13443516), [[4]](https://www.gbnews.com/lifestyle/cars/electric-cars-dominate-sales-petrol-diesel-decline-september)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/electric-car-sales-hit-record-high-in-september-GNUDN2IH5VMCZOEWONTYKFORHY/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/electric-car-sales-hit-record-high-in-september-GNUDN2IH5VMCZOEWONTYKFORHY/), [[4]](https://www.gbnews.com/lifestyle/cars/electric-cars-dominate-sales-petrol-diesel-decline-september)
* Paragraph 5 – [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/electric-vehicles-drive-uk-new-car-market-best-september-since-2020-2025-10-03/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/electric-car-sales-hit-record-high-in-september-GNUDN2IH5VMCZOEWONTYKFORHY/), [[3]](https://news.sky.com/story/best-month-ever-for-uk-battery-electric-vehicle-sales-13443516), [[5]](https://www.autoexpress.co.uk/consumer-news/364549/1-5-new-74-plate-cars-ev-september-sees-record-electric-car-sales)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/electric-car-sales-hit-record-high-in-september-GNUDN2IH5VMCZOEWONTYKFORHY/), [[3]](https://news.sky.com/story/best-month-ever-for-uk-battery-electric-vehicle-sales-13443516), [[5]](https://www.autoexpress.co.uk/consumer-news/364549/1-5-new-74-plate-cars-ev-september-sees-record-electric-car-sales)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/electric-car-sales-hit-record-high-in-september-GNUDN2IH5VMCZOEWONTYKFORHY/), [[3]](https://news.sky.com/story/best-month-ever-for-uk-battery-electric-vehicle-sales-13443516), [[4]](https://www.gbnews.com/lifestyle/cars/electric-cars-dominate-sales-petrol-diesel-decline-september)
* Paragraph 9 – [[6]](https://www.autoexpress.co.uk/news/367705/one-four-new-cars-ev-electric-car-grant-chaos-holding-buyers-back), [[7]](https://www.proactiveinvestors.co.uk/companies/news/1077821/electric-car-sales-grab-largest-share-of-uk-registrations-despite-slow-uptake-of-govt-grant-1077821.html), [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/electric-car-sales-hit-record-high-in-september-GNUDN2IH5VMCZOEWONTYKFORHY/)
* Paragraph 10 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/electric-car-sales-hit-record-high-in-september-GNUDN2IH5VMCZOEWONTYKFORHY/), [[4]](https://www.gbnews.com/lifestyle/cars/electric-cars-dominate-sales-petrol-diesel-decline-september)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/electric-car-sales-hit-record-high-in-september-GNUDN2IH5VMCZOEWONTYKFORHY/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/electric-vehicles-drive-uk-new-car-market-best-september-since-2020-2025-10-03/> - In September 2025, the UK experienced its strongest new-car market performance since 2020, with registrations rising by 13.7% to 312,887 vehicles. This growth was notably driven by a record surge in electric vehicle (EV) uptake, which helped electrified vehicles surpass 50% of total registrations for the first time. September, a key month due to the biannual license plate update, typically represents about one-seventh of annual car sales. The increase marks a significant boost to the UK automotive sector, especially as it pushes to meet government EV adoption targets despite ongoing concerns about weak private buyer demand. Industry leaders, including SMMT Chief Executive Mike Hawes, stressed the importance of support like the Electric Car Grant in making EVs more affordable. However, data from New AutoMotive showed Tesla's UK year-on-year growth remained nearly flat.
3. <https://news.sky.com/story/best-month-ever-for-uk-battery-electric-vehicle-sales-13443516> - In September 2025, the UK saw a record number of battery electric vehicles (BEVs) registered, with over 72,000 new BEVs accounting for 23.3% of the total market. This 29% increase compared to September 2024 was attributed to the government's Electric Car Grant scheme and a growing variety of models. The grant, part of a £650 million initiative, offers discounts up to £3,750 on eligible electric cars, making them more accessible to consumers. The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) highlighted that this support is crucial for accelerating the adoption of electric vehicles and achieving environmental goals.
4. <https://www.gbnews.com/lifestyle/cars/electric-cars-dominate-sales-petrol-diesel-decline-september> - September 2025 saw nearly 70,000 new electric cars sold in the UK, capturing 23.2% of all new car registrations. This marked the second-largest monthly total of electric vehicles ever sold, driven by government incentives and new number plate changes. Diesel car registrations dropped by a third compared to the same time last year, making up just 4% of the new sales market. The data suggests that the UK is ahead of targets set out in the Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) mandate, which requires 28% of sales to be electric by the end of the year.
5. <https://www.autoexpress.co.uk/consumer-news/364549/1-5-new-74-plate-cars-ev-september-sees-record-electric-car-sales> - In September 2024, one in five new cars sold in the UK were electric vehicles (EVs), with 56,387 new EVs registered, accounting for 20.5% of all cars sold. This was the highest number of new electric cars registered in any month that year. The introduction of the '74' registration plate and the government's Electric Car Grant scheme contributed to this surge. However, the UK car industry expressed concerns about the sustainability of the discounts offered and the potential impact on manufacturer profitability.
6. <https://www.autoexpress.co.uk/news/367705/one-four-new-cars-ev-electric-car-grant-chaos-holding-buyers-back> - In August 2025, one in four new cars registered in the UK were electric vehicles (EVs), with 22,000 new EVs accounting for 26.5% of the market. Despite this growth, experts suggested that confusion surrounding the Electric Car Grant was holding back further market expansion. The grant, which offers discounts on eligible electric cars, had a slow and chaotic implementation, leading to delayed purchases and uncertainty among consumers.
7. <https://www.proactiveinvestors.co.uk/companies/news/1077821/electric-car-sales-grab-largest-share-of-uk-registrations-despite-slow-uptake-of-govt-grant-1077821.html> - In August 2025, electric vehicle (EV) sales in the UK reached a record 26.5% market share, with 21,969 new battery electric vehicles (BEVs) registered. This growth was attributed to broader model choice, manufacturer discounts, and early signs of demand stimulated by the new UK Electric Car Grant. However, the uptake of the grant was slow, with a phased release of eligible models, leading to some market uncertainty.