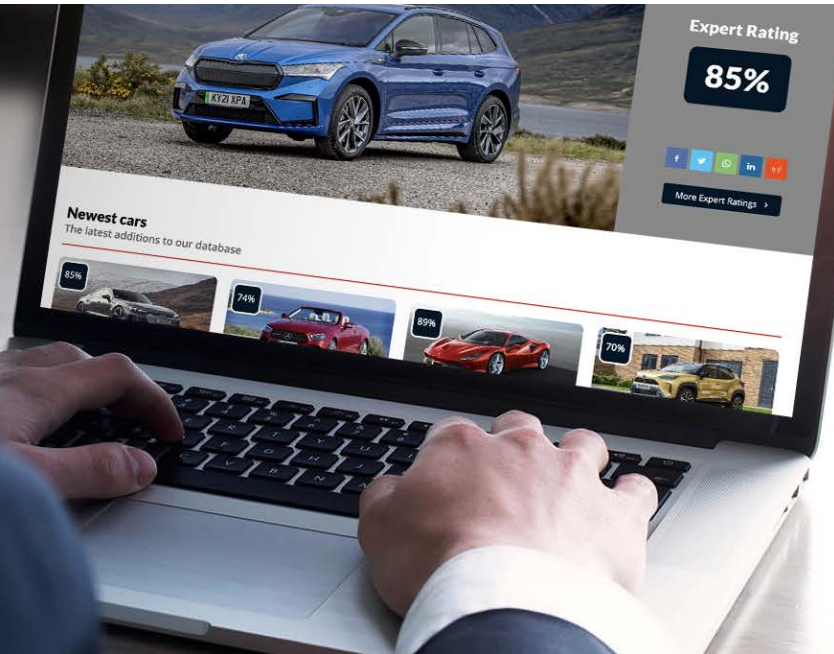


Electric cars on the march



Executive Summary

Adoption of electric cars in the UK is accelerating, and we are now at an inflection point of electric vehicles (EVs) making the jump from niche to mainstream.

This is no kneejerk reaction to recent fuel shortages and increasing pump prices. Consumer demand has been steadily building over the last 18 months, matched by a rapidly increasing number of new EVs being offered by car manufacturers. With many more new models set to arrive in 2022, the pace of the UK's motoring electrification will continue to accelerate.

But it's not just sales where EVs are taking off. The latest generation of electric cars is a big step forward over earlier models, and our Expert Ratings show that new EVs are consistently getting better review scores than their petrol and diesel equivalents from the motoring media.

Report highlights

- Key new electric models have arrived in the UK over the last few months (eg: Skoda Enyaq, BMW iX3, Hyundai Ioniq 5, Audi Q4 e-tron)
- Electric cars are achieving better Expert Ratings than their petrol and diesel equivalents, particularly with medium and large vehicles
- Increasing number of smaller and lower-priced electric cars entering the marketplace
- Plug-in hybrids continue to be the preferred route to electrification for larger vehicles

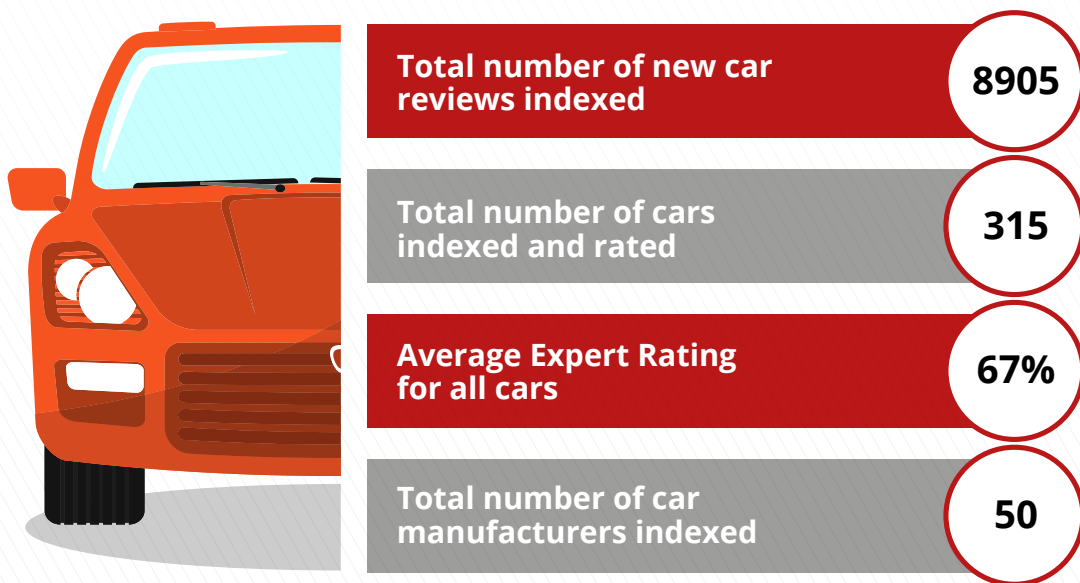
"The electric revolution is gathering pace, and there's no turning back now."

Stuart Masson

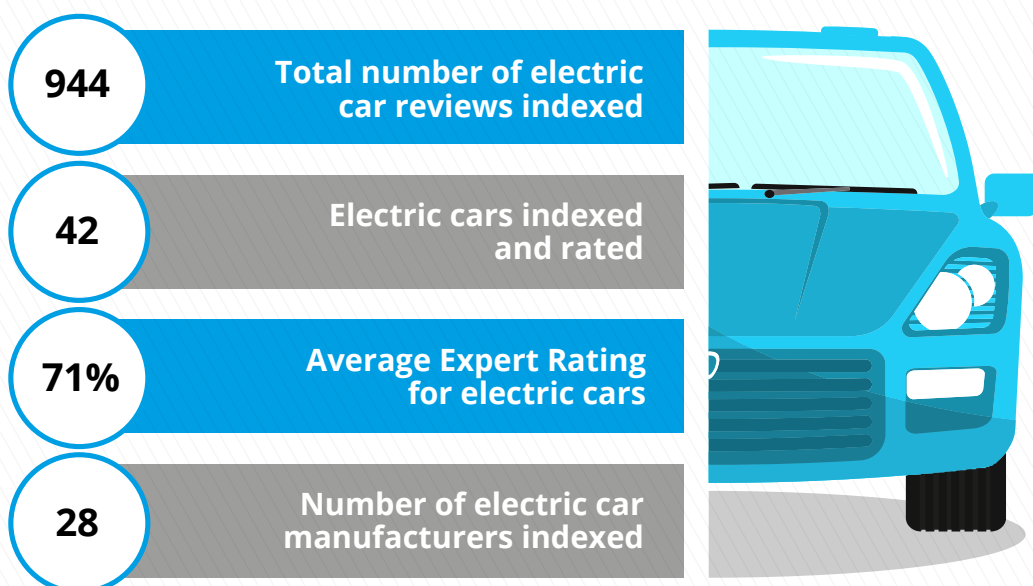
Editorial Director, The Car Expert

The Index in numbers

All cars



Electric vehicles



Overview

The first quarterly report from The Car Expert's pioneering new Expert Rating Index comes at a critical point for a revolution in the global car industry.

Electric cars are no longer 'coming soon'. Adoption of EVs is accelerating, and they are now at an inflection point of making the jump from niche to mainstream.

September, which is traditionally one of the two peak months for new car registrations in the UK, was the first time that electric vehicles outsold diesel cars.

The growth of new electric cars contrasts sharply with the decline of diesel cars, especially in smaller vehicles. In larger vehicles, particularly large SUVs, diesels still make up a substantial proportion of the marketplace.

The current semiconductor chip shortage is affecting supply of all vehicles, however. Even when some models are nominally available, supply is sometimes non-existent or with lengthy waiting periods.

But it's not just sales where EVs are taking off. The latest generation of electric cars have taken a giant leap forward, and our Expert Rating Index shows that EVs are consistently getting better review scores than their petrol and diesel equivalents.

For the last decade, EVs simply didn't meet the needs of average households and were rated poorly by motoring journalists – typically, they were too expensive and couldn't go far enough on a battery charge. While there were a handful of early adopters who were prepared to put up with these shortcomings, an EV simply wasn't an option for most households.

This is no longer the case. Most new electric cars have a battery range of more than 200 miles, while prices have been steadily falling. When factoring in the lower running costs of EVs, for many people there is no longer a significant difference in the total cost of ownership between a petrol car and an electric one.



Comment

Stuart Masson

Editorial Director, The Car Expert

"As we approach winter, the EV revolution is really starting to snowball. A number of notable new models have launched in the last few months, and there are many more EVs set to hit UK streets as we head into 2022.

"With every new electric model that arrives, the quality is getting better. Most of the new EVs being launched have a battery range that exceeds the crucial 200-mile benchmark making them entirely viable for the vast majority of UK households.

"Meanwhile, supply issues are continuing to hurt every car manufacturer, regardless of what sort of motor is powering their cars. Many popular models have lengthy waiting lists, a problem that will continue through into the first half of 2022."

Average rating

Small cars		Medium SUVs	
Small SUVs		Large Cars	
Medium Cars		Large SUVs	

Overall new car marketplace

Number of new cars indexed: **314**
 Average Expert Rating: **67%**
 Number of EV options: **42**
 Number of PHEV options: **71**

64%

Small cars

Number of new cars indexed: **43**
 Number of EV options: **12**
 Number of PHEV options: **none**



63%

Small SUVs

Number of new cars indexed: **46**
 Number of EV options: **10**
 Number of PHEV options: **10**



68%

Medium cars

Number of new cars indexed: **44**
 Number of EV options: **7**
 Number of PHEVs: **14**



68%

Medium SUVs

Number of new cars indexed: **51**
 Number of EV options: **8**
 Number of PHEV options: **19**



74%

Large cars

Number of new cars indexed: **34**
 Number of EV options: **3**
 Number of PHEV options: **15**



68%

Large SUVs

Number of new cars indexed: **33**
 Number of EV options: **2**
 Number of PHEVs: **13**



Small cars



Average rating: 64%

Number of new cars indexed: 43

(29 petrol, 3 diesel, 12 electric, 3 hybrid, 0 plug-in hybrid)

Top-ranked cars:

- SEAT Ibiza **78%**
- Ford Fiesta **78%**
- Volkswagen Up **78%**

Bottom-ranked cars:

- Mitsubishi Mirage **21%**
- MG 3 **42%**
- Smart EQ Forfour **43%**

The **Small Cars** category covers hatchbacks, saloons and estates from the smallest (city car) and slightly larger (supermini) segments.

Small cars have always been big business in the UK, making up the greatest market share of any category. This continues to be the case in 2021, despite the continued growth in SUV sales.

We have seen rapid growth in the number of EVs offered in this sector over the last two years, although there are no plug-in hybrids at this level due to cost and packaging issues for smaller vehicles.

Diesel engines have almost completely disappeared from this segment, although they never really made up a huge percentage of sales anyway.

The SEAT Ibiza (petrol) has been the class of the small-car field for some time, with an Expert Rating score that just edges out the Ford Fiesta (petrol). The Volkswagen Up (petrol) is the top-ranked city car (the smallest class of car generally recognised).

At the other end of the scale, the Mitsubishi Mirage is a long way off the pace with an Expert Rating score of 21%. However, it will now disappear from the Index altogether as the company exits the UK market.

Unlike other categories, EVs don't necessarily rank more highly than petrol cars in this segment – in fact, the top three cars in this category are only available with petrol engines. That's partly because the additional cost of EVs is most strikingly noticed at the lowest price points of the new car marketplace.

Small SUVs



Average rating: 63%

Number of new cars indexed: 46

(33 petrol, 15 diesel, 10 electric, 4 hybrid, 10 plug-in hybrid)

Top-ranked cars:

- Kia e-Niro **84%**
- Volvo XC40 **79%**
- Hyundai Kona Electric **79%**

Bottom-ranked cars:

- Mitsubishi ASX **31%**
- MG ZS **41%**
- Ford EcoSport **43%**

SUVs tend to be larger than their conventional car equivalents – so some of the larger vehicles in the **Small SUVs** category may be a similar size to smaller vehicles in the **Medium Cars** category.

The small SUV/crossover segment is one of the fastest-growing areas of the new car market, and is taking sales from both small and medium cars. Like the **Small Cars** segment, we are seeing a rapid electrification in this segment, with a number of all-electric models on offer.

Unlike small cars, there are several plug-in hybrid vehicles available as well, although these tend to be found in larger and more expensive models.

The Kia e-Niro (electric) has been highly praised ever since it was launched back in 2019, so it's no surprise to see it top the Expert Rating Index in this category. Likewise, the Volvo XC40 (petrol, diesel, plug-in hybrid) continues to receive top scores.

The Kia e-Niro and Hyundai Kona Electric both score much higher than their conventional petrol and hybrid versions, while the Volvo XC40 trends in the opposite direction, with the electric XC40 Recharge not as highly rated as the conventional versions.

At the bottom of the charts, the Mitsubishi ASX (petrol) has been on sale since 2010, albeit with a few upgrades over the last decade. It's clearly outgunned by newer rivals, and now bows out of the Index as Mitsubishi has abandoned all European markets.

Medium cars



Average score: 68%

Number of new cars indexed: 44

(32 petrol, 22 diesel, 7 electric, 4 hybrid, 14 plug-in hybrid)

Top-ranked cars:

- BMW 3 Series **85%**
- Tesla Model 3 **84%**
- Polestar 2 **78%**

Bottom-ranked cars:

- Fiat 500L **47%**
- Fiat Tipo **47%**
- Alfa Romeo Giulietta **49%**

For many years, the **Medium Cars** segment was the default category for most family cars, with models such as the Ford Focus and Vauxhall Astra being hugely popular. In recent years, sales have slipped away to SUV-style vehicles, but this is still a broad category.

The powertrain options are quite diverse compared to smaller vehicles, with all forms well represented (petrol, diesel, hybrid, plug-in hybrid, electric). What's also notable is that eight of the top ten ranking models in this category are available with either plug-in hybrid or full-electric power. Meanwhile, the bottom five cars are petrol and/or diesel-only.

The BMW 3 Series (petrol, diesel, plug-in hybrid) is a perennial class leader, but it's only 1% ahead of the game-changing Tesla Model 3 (electric). These two models are a clear distance ahead of the rest of the pack, which is led by the Polestar 2 (electric).

At the other end of the scale, it's a poor showing from two of Italy's grandee names. The Fiat 500L (petrol) holds the wooden spoon in this category, with the Fiat Tipo (petrol) only 0.5% better. The Alfa Romeo Giulietta (petrol) also scores poorly, although this model has recently been discontinued.

Medium SUVs



Average score: 68%

Number of new cars indexed: 51

(38 petrol, 20 diesel, 8 electric, 6 hybrid, 19 plug-in hybrid)

Top-ranked cars:

- Jaguar I-Pace **85%**
- Skoda Enyaq iV **85%**
- Hyundai Ioniq 5 **84%**

Bottom-ranked cars:

- Mitsubishi Outlander **47%**
- MG HS **51%**
- Subaru Forester **52%**

The **Medium SUVs** segment is essentially the new family car category, with the "Mondeo Man" of yesteryear morphing into "Medium SUV man" today. With 51 cars currently indexed and more arriving in coming months, it's comfortably the largest of the six categories we currently track, with the highest number of car manufacturers represented and price points that stretch from budget to luxury.

This is also the category where the electric revolution is most clearly illustrated – the top three cars (and five of the top ten) are purpose-designed EVs. Half of the internal combustion models in this segment are also offered with a plug-in hybrid powertrain as well.

Topping the charts in this category is the Jaguar I-Pace (electric), which continues to receive high praise more than three years after it was launched. The Jaguar sits narrowly ahead of two brand-new vehicles, the Skoda Enyaq iV (electric) and Hyundai Ioniq 5 (electric).

Down at the bottom of the charts, it was another wooden spoon for Mitsubishi, as the Outlander (petrol) languishes at the bottom with a score of 47%. Once again, it will disappear from the Index after this report as Mitsubishi exits the UK.

Large cars



Average score: 74%

Number of cars indexed: 34

(27 petrol, 18 diesel, 3 electric, 3 hybrid, 15 plug-in hybrid)

Top-ranked cars:

- Rolls-Royce Phantom **92%**
- Porsche Taycan **88%**
- Mercedes-Benz S-Class **88%**

Bottom-ranked cars:

- Maserati Ghibli **49%**
- Maserati Quattroporte **54%**
- Ford Mondeo **55%**

The **Large Cars** category has enormous breadth, ranging from mainstream MPVs to luxurious limousines and price points that start at £25,000 and run well into hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Overall, this segment is in sharp decline when it comes to the number of cars available and total number of sales, as buyers flock to SUVs instead. Electrification in this segment is also currently led by plug-in hybrids rather than full EVs, although this is set to change over the next 12 months with several new large electric cars set to be launched.

Diesel cars are still popular in this segment, although the number is falling and their sales numbers are tiny in the context of the overall new car market.

It's no great surprise to see the Rolls-Royce Phantom (petrol), which is the most expensive vehicle in the Expert Rating Index, topping the chart here with an outstanding score of 92%. However, the real star of this category is arguably the BMW 5 Series (petrol, diesel, plug-in hybrid), with a rating of 87%, which is a fantastic score for a high-volume production saloon with a realistic price tag.

The news is not so good for luxury Italian brand Maserati, however, with its Quattroporte (petrol) and Ghibli (petrol) saloons occupying the bottom two places.

Joining Maserati at the bottom of the pile is the Ford Mondeo (petrol, diesel, hybrid), which is set to disappear sometime in 2022 as Ford shifts its focus towards SUVs and electric models.

Large SUVs



Average score: 68%

Number of cars indexed: 33

(26 petrol, 22 diesel, 2 electric, 3 hybrid, 13 plug-in hybrid)

Top-ranked cars:

- Land Rover Defender **85%**
- Aston Martin DBX **81%**
- Volvo XC90 **79%**

Bottom-ranked cars:

- Mitsubishi Shogun Sport **34%**
- SsangYong Rexton **50%**
- Nissan X-Trail **56%**

The **Large SUVs** sector is another broad category, covering everything from budget brands to some of the world's most prestigious automotive names.

Given the size and weight of the cars in this category, it's not surprising to see that most are still offered with a diesel engine, with only two fully electric models available (Tesla Model X and Audi e-tron). This is changing, albeit at a slower rate than for small and mid-size vehicles. There is strong representation from plug-in hybrids, however, with most of the top-ranked vehicles available as a plug-in version.

Given its number of different model variations, the Land Rover Defender (petrol, diesel, plug-in hybrid) has an impressive score of 85% to sit at the top of the large SUV table. In second place, the Aston Martin DBX (petrol) has an easier job with one body style and one engine. In third place is the venerable Volvo XC90 (petrol, diesel, plug-in hybrid), still achieving excellent review scores despite being on sale since 2015 and due for replacement next year.

At the bottom of the chart, it's another Mitsubishi that will vanish after this report. In this case, it's the Shogun Sport (petrol, diesel) with a very poor Expert Rating of 34%.

The Nissan X-Trail (diesel), currently the third-worst car in this category, has also finished production, so it will disappear from the next quarterly report ahead of a new model being launched.

Looking ahead to the winter report

Our next quarterly report will be Winter 2022, due to be published in January and covering the final three months of 2021.

There will be several new models making their first appearance in the next report, and in particular a number of new electric cars across all six categories that we are currently tracking.

- A number of keenly-awaited new EVs due to arrive by the time of next report (BMW i4, BMW iX, Kia EV6, Mercedes-Benz EQS, Tesla Model Y, Volvo C40)
- Other new arrivals also expected to replace existing models before the next report (Kia Sportage, Lexus NX, Mercedes-Benz C-Class, Range Rover, Skoda Fabia, Subaru Outback)

We will be expanding both the number of categories we track and the number of media sources we use to generate Expert Rating scores. We expect to have one new category added to the next report, with scores gathered from 30 media sources (up from the current 25).

We will also be publishing a 2021 Annual Report in early December, where we will crown the best cars in each category, as well as the best and worst new cars launched in 2021.

2022 report publication dates

- Winter:** Tuesday 11 January
Spring: Tuesday 12 April
Summer: Tuesday 12 July
Autumn: Tuesday 11 October

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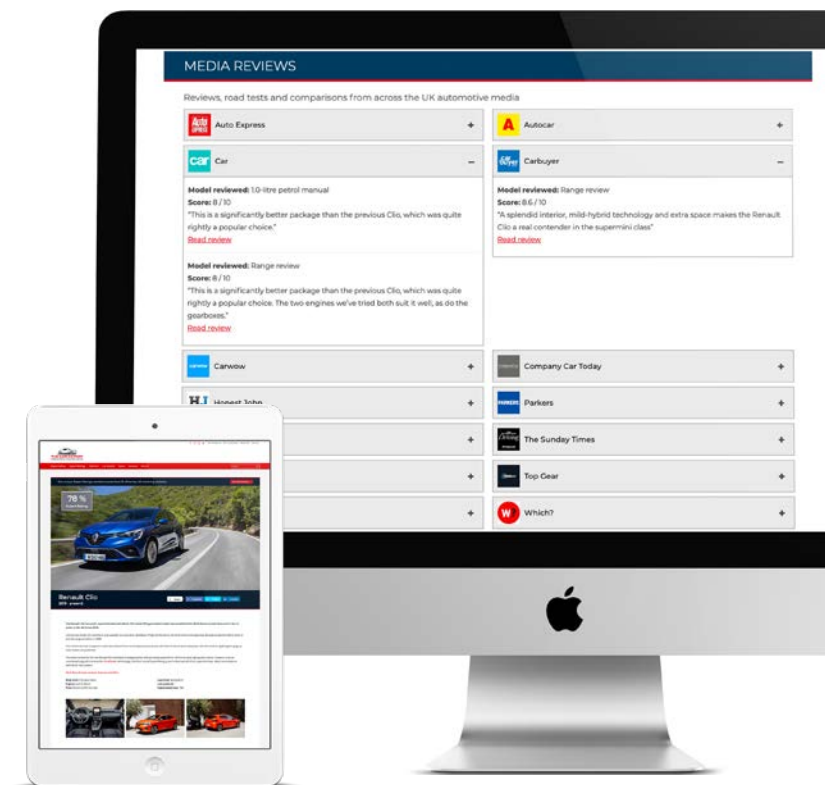
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Notes for Editors

About the Expert Rating Index

The Car Expert's Expert Rating Index is compiled using new car reviews from 25 UK media titles. As of October 2021, there are approximately 8,900 reviews in our database, covering more than 300 new cars from 50 manufacturers.

It brings a level of sophistication never before seen in ranking the best and worst new cars in the UK. The Car Expert's team compiles new car reviews from 25 of the UK's top automotive sites, then applies an advanced algorithm to produce a definitive rating for each car.

The Index brings science and data analysis to the subjective and old-fashioned world of reviewing new cars, using established aggregating principles in a similar fashion to sites like Rotten Tomatoes – the world's most famous review aggregator site – Metacritic and others.

The Expert Rating Index factors in the age of each review, so that newer reviews carry more weight than older reviews. It also breaks down the complex web of different scoring systems that various websites use in their reviews.

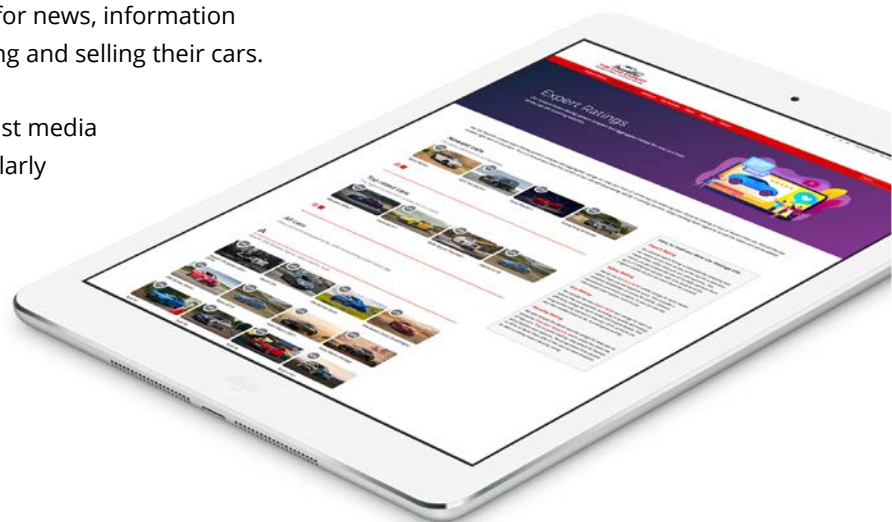
About The Car Expert

The Car Expert is the UK's most comprehensive automotive consumer advice site. It has been providing independent, impartial advice to UK car buyers and car owners for ten years.

Two million readers each year rely on The Car Expert for news, information and advice on every aspect of buying, financing, owning and selling their cars.

The Car Expert also provides expert advice to broadcast media in the UK and beyond, with editor Stuart Masson regularly appearing on TV and radio with the BBC and commercial stations.

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